



**“We Don’t Need Your Pity, We Need Our Rights:”
Understanding the Experiences of Sex Workers
within the HIV Continuum of Care in the US**

Rights Not Rescue

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Nothing About Us Without Us

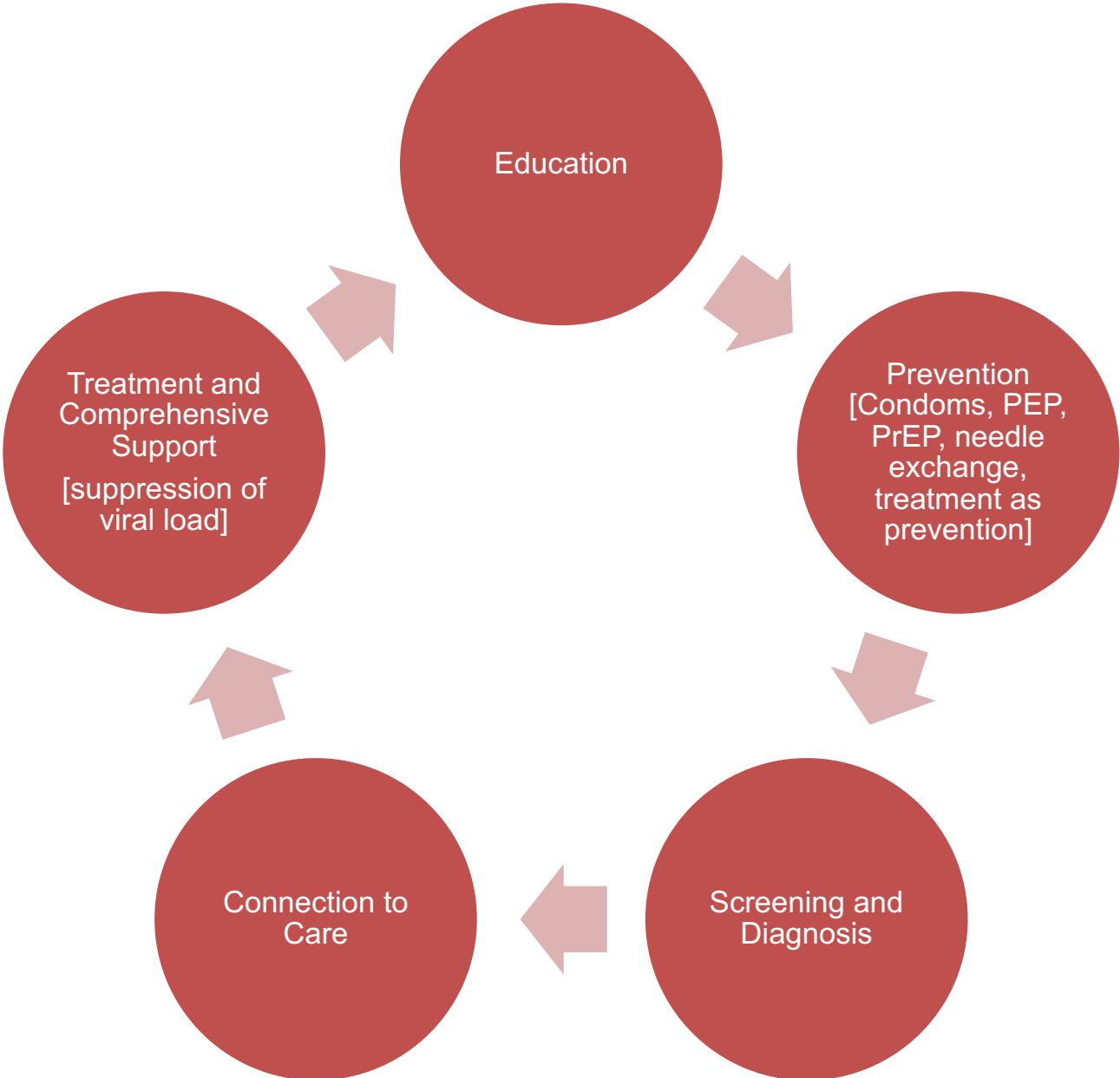
Nothing About Us Without Us

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April 19, 2018

Health and Human Biology

HIV Continuum of Care





PEPFAR

U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief





Kolkata, July 2012
Photo: Sujoy Dhar/IPS



COYOTE

A LOOSE WOMAN'S ORGANIZATION

“The majority of violence against sex workers is not just violence against sex workers—it’s also violence against trans women, against women of color, against drug users, against immigrants. We cannot end the marginalization and victimization of all sex workers without also fighting transphobia, racism, stigma and criminalization of drug use, and xenophobia.”

The Sex Workers Outreach
Project Behind Bars, Dec 17

Experiences within HIV CoC

Disclosure of Sex Worker Status

- Yes: 42%
- No: 58%

Would Disclosing Sex Worker Status Improve Healthcare

- Yes: 45%
- No: 25%
- Depends on the Provider: 30%

Experiences within the HIV CoC

Condom Use Among Sex Workers

- Condom Use While Working
 - Never: 9%
 - Rarely or sometimes: 13%
 - Most often or always: 78%
- Condom Use While Not Working
 - Never: 20%
 - Rarely or sometimes: 37%
 - Most often or always: 42%

2017 CDC Survey

- Condom Use Among Men
 - Sometimes: 34%
 - Always: 19%
- Condom Use Among Women
 - Sometimes: 24%
 - Always: 14%

HIV CoC as an Entry Point to Healthcare

Type of Healthcare Sought:

- **Primary Care: 30%**
- **Mental Health Care: 13%**
- **STI Screening: 50%**

- Emergency Room: 8%
- Gynecology: 5%
- Gender Affirming Healthcare: 1%
- Care After an Assault: 2%
- Chronic Illness: 4%
- Accidents or Orthopedics: 1%
- Substance Abuse Treatment: 0.5%
- Reproductive or Prenatal Care: 2%

I get tested whenever I can use the test to get my foot in the door of a clinic. I'm not very sexually active at all but I can't afford health care for numerous problems I do have. I have noticed however that most clinics will provide free STD testing and, once you are in the door, you can ask the doctor about other problems you're having or play dumb and claim you thought your other problems were related to a possible STD. [age 35]

Imagining Alternatives: How to Improve HIV Care for Sex Workers

“Just being able to disclose that I was engaging in commercial sex could have been invaluable. I was completely isolated socially, and didn't believe I could trust anyone with what I was living through.”

[age 36]

Imagining Alternatives: How to Improve HIV Care for Sex Workers

“Be patient if a sex worker tries to tell you their story because it signals that they are beginning to trust you. If you cut them off or act indifferent you will crush that trust, and you may not get another chance to regain it. Don't rush to conclusions.” [age 34]

Imagining Alternatives: How to Improve HIV Care for Sex Workers

“Just listen to what your patient has to say, try to understand / figure out what your patient is saying they need rather than assigning what you think they need to them. Sex workers are the same as other people seeking help. They will have job related specific issues, as everyone does, but are individuals.” [age 34]

Imagining Alternatives: How to Improve HIV Care for Sex Workers

“I think if medical professionals were educated further on the issue and industry, as well as some sensitivity training on engaging in a genuine and non-judgmental way, it [disclosure] could be invaluable. As the current stigmas and ignorance that exists among the general public, I don't know that it is generally helpful for sex workers to disclose.” [age 36]

Imagining Alternatives: How to Improve HIV Care for Sex Workers

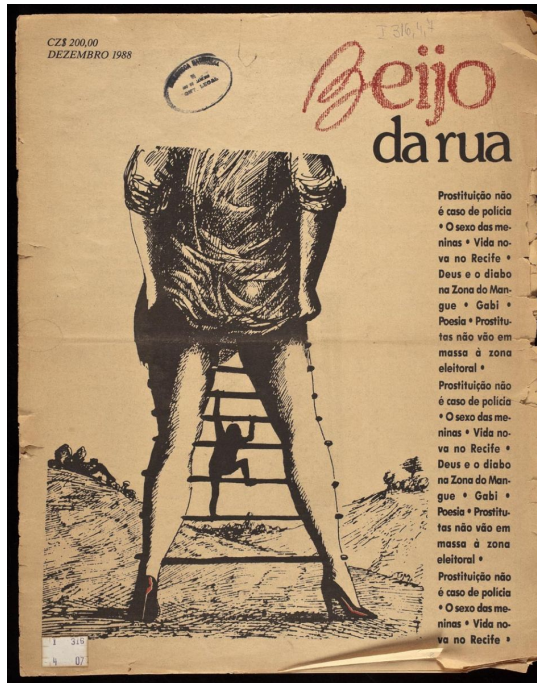
“Just be nice to us and understand that we deal with an unbearable amount of judgment and stigma already and cannot handle anymore side-eyeing or uncomfortable questions or unsolicited condescending advice. I don't want a lecture, or your pity. I'm just here for medical care. Please don't make it any harder.” [age 21]

Imagining Alternatives: How to Improve HIV Care for Sex Workers

“Treat us like any other patient, but with unique needs (that should not be stigmatized) due to the industry we're in.” [age 30]

“Treat us like humans. Don't make assumptions about who we fuck or how we fuck. If sexual info is necessary for care, ask using nonjudgmental, nonbiased language. A lot of us are trans, queer, survivors. Biased language hurts us.” [age 23]

Imagining Alternatives: Sex Workers Rights Outside of the US



Imagining Alternatives: Sex Workers Rights Outside of the US and Anti-Trafficking

“Maria Sem Vergonha/Maria Without Shame”
Campaign by Davida and the Brazilian Ministry of Health, 2002¹



Without shame of being a prostitute. Without shame, girl, you have a profession.
Without shame for fighting for your rights. Without shame girl, you have a profession.
Without shame for valuing your work. Without shame, girl, you have a profession.
Without shame about using a condom. Without shame, girl, you have a profession

¹ Leite, “Davida: Nossa Missão E Nossos Objetivos.”

Imagining Alternatives: Sex Workers Rights Outside of the US and Anti-Trafficking

2 de junho
Dia Internacional
das Prostitutas

“Não
aceitar as
pessoas
da forma
que elas
são é uma
violência”



011 ANOS
HEREDITES VIVAS

Secretaria de
Vigilância em Saúde

SUS+


Ministério da
Saúde

GOVERNO FEDERAL
BRASIL
PAZ, BEM E PAZ SEM PROTEÇÃO

**eu sou feliz,
sendo prostituta.**

Sou cidadã e só faço com camisinha

Nanci Fetjó
Coordenadora geral da Associação
Pernambucana de Profissionais do Sexo

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a dark blazer over a patterned top, is speaking at a podium. The podium has a microphone and a water bottle. The background is a wall with a grid of small holes. The text "Consensus delivered by Rani Ravudi" is overlaid in white.

Consensus delivered by Rani Ravudi

Survival Advocacy Network, Fiji

WWW.AIDS2014.ORG

COYOTE RI

Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics

Sex Workers Rights Are Human Rights



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