

# COVID-19



Reynolds Health Strategies

## Sex Work, COVID-19 and Harm Reduction

While there is still no evidence that COVID-19 is sexually transmitted, close and intimate physical contact still poses a risk. The following is a non-exhaustive resource for sex workers, clients and allies. These tips have been selected from a number of excellent resources and guides on this topic, written by and for sex workers, included below. Please consult these resources for more comprehensive information.

***A note for harm reduction service providers:*** As programs experience challenges in moving services online or incorporating physical distance, it's a good reminder that similarly, it's not that simple or easy for sex workers to "just go online" the way they're often advised to, especially in a post-SESTA/FOSTA landscape—particularly for populations without much access to tech, tech and privacy protection skills, and without considerable resources to invest in overhead and branding costs. As always, couch these tips in harm reductionist language (i.e., "if possible," "when you can," etc.), given that not all are possible for everyone to follow strictly.

**Learn more:**

1. ["Here's How Much It Costs To Be An Online Sex Worker"](#),

### Tips for Sex Workers: Revenue Loss Mitigation and COVID-19 Prevention

- **Check in with regulars.** If you have regular clients, try to maintain your regular client relationships, even if you're not seeing folks in person right now— whether you're asking for support or just sending a "hello, hope all's well with you and yours" message. See if you can upcharge in-person regulars for nudes, sexting, or camming—this is much easier than trying to totally rebrand yourself as an online sex worker for a new clientele in an already saturated market.
- **Be clear with boundaries.** If continuing to book in-person, try to be as transparent as possible around your boundaries, especially any new ones related to COVID-19 transmission. Try to avoid taking clients who have cold- or flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, or fever, and/or keep tissues on hand for folks to cough into and dispose. Try to avoid allowing kissing or clients touching your face and/or try to stick with positions that keep your faces further apart, like doggie-style.
- **Avoid using hand sanitizer on or inside genitals.** Stick with soap and water to avoid infection.
- **Use condoms/dental dams** when possible, especially for butt stuff. There has been some evidence of COVID-19 found in fecal matter, so be especially careful with rimming.
- **Wash hands before and after touching your own or others' genitals.** Ensure clients do the same.

**Learn more:**

- [Coronavirus and the Club: Part 3 - Adapting to New Conditions](#)  
[Can I Get Coronavirus via Sex and Other Horny Questions, Answered](#)

More info at

[PreventEpidemics.org](https://PreventEpidemics.org)  
[ResolveToSaveLives.org](https://ResolveToSaveLives.org)  
[VitalStrategies.org](https://VitalStrategies.org)

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## Tips for Clients

- **Continue to pay service providers.** Like domestic workers, hair stylists, tattoo artists, etc., not everyone's work translates easily—or at all—to a virtual space. If you have a regular service provider, continue to pay them for meetings you would have had.
- **Seek or offer alternative meetings** over the phone, video chat, etc. Your service provider may be hesitant to offer these alternatives, so ask or offer first. These are great ways to continue support safely through a pandemic.
- **Respect boundaries and don't be predatory.** Your service provider is considering which best practices to adhere to so both of you can stay safe; respect their boundaries. Avoid pressuring service providers to violate these boundaries.
- **Be open about your own boundaries and concerns.** Take responsibility for your mutual health and hygiene; share what concerns you may have around COVID-19 and infection, and be flexible with solutions to those concerns. Your service provider has likely considered these, and may be hesitant to raise them first due to predatory or exploitive behavior by others.
- **Tip generously.** Times are hard right now, and work continues to be uncertain across industries. Tip your provider well.
- **Don't be racist.** There is no reason to avoid our Asian or Asian American neighbors, and it is critical that we push back against racist rhetoric and behavior in responding to the COVID-19 outbreak. Likewise, if you were already patronizing service providers of Asian descent, continue to do so.

### Learn more here:

[03.19.20 – Sex Work and COVID-19-2.pdf](#)

## Tips for Allies

- **Don't shame service providers.** If sex workers continue to engage in in-person services, they have likely considered the risks and have determined it is still necessary for their survival to do so. We are all making the best of a hard situation, so avoid knee-jerk shaming, and instead...
- **Check in/ask how you can support/offer resources** to individual sex workers or mutual aid funds in your area. If you're still doing outreach, think about/ask sex workers what they might need (e.g., gloves to handle money, masks, sanitizer spray to use on surfaces they work on.)
- **Donate directly** to individuals, relief funds, and/or to supportive organizations. Many higher-earning sex workers online have pledged their stimulus checks and/or 10-20% of their April profits to marginalized sex workers, and are encouraging allies to do the same if they can afford to.
- **Avoid invoking the “sex-workers-as-vectors-of-disease” narrative**, no matter how well-intentioned you might be in raising it. This is an old and dangerous narrative that has persisted from syphilis in the Victorian era to HIV/AIDS today, and it always leads to more policing and surveillance of sex workers. [Baltimore city councilor Natasha Guynes used sex workers' supposed potential for COVID-19 transmission as a pretext to advocate for their continued and increased policing after State Attorney Marilyn Mosby froze all arrests for minor offenses like sex work and drug possession.](#)

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- **Include sex workers in advocacy and policy.** If you work in harm reduction, public health, and/or drug policy and advocacy, hire sex workers as consultants and include them in your budget and policy requests to ensure their inclusion in relief, emergency funding, and other services.

### Learn more here:

[03.19.20 - Sex Work and COVID-19-2.pdf](#)

[UNAIDS PRESS STATEMENT Sex workers must not be left behind in the response to COVID-19](#)

## COVID-19 Guides

### COVID-19 Mutual Aid Resource Compilation by Lysistrata

*Strong U.S. focus, also includes global resources*

An evolving google doc including not only sex-worker-specific resources, but also many for those with overlapping marginalized identities. Includes many lists of sex worker relief funds, a breakdown of regional and international resources, resources for prisoners, and resources for gig and service workers.

[Lysistrata COVID-19 Mutual Aid Compilation](#)

### COVID-19 Sex Worker Resources (U.S. Based) by COYOTE RI

Comprehensive resource, continuously updated, including: tips for working online, sex workers offering advice, sex worker-friendly website hosting options, sex worker mutual aid funds, tips for allies, and more. This excellent resource was created by a community of queer/trans sex working people of color in Rhode Island.

[COVID-19 Sex Worker Harm Reduction Resources \(U.S. Based\)](#)

## Additional Resources

- **Bay Area Workers Support (BAWS)** – [Navigating COVID19 For Sex Workers & Allies: Info & Support Guide](#)
- **Free Speech Coalition** – [4/10/2020 Update: Coronavirus Production Hold to Remain in Place Until Further Notice](#)
- **MPact Global Action for Gay Men's Health and Rights** – [Sex Can Still be Sexy in the Time of COVID-19](#)
- **Red Umbrella Fund** – [Sex-workers' resilience to the COVID crisis: a list of initiatives](#)
- **Slixa** – [SPECIAL EDITION: Resources and Tips for Getting What's Yours and Staying Safe](#) by Kate D'Adamo  
*includes great detailed information on how small businesses which include "prurient sexual performances" are excluded from the Small Business Association's Disaster Loan Program and why you should still probably apply anyway.*
- **SWOP-Sacramento** – [California Sex Worker COVID-19 Stimulus Survey](#) [Estímulos COVID-19 de l(o/a) Trabajador(a) Sexual de CA]
- **SWOP-Sacramento SWOP USA** – [Notes on Coronavirus and Sex Work Part 01](#)
- **Tits and Sass** – [Sex Workers: YOU CAN AND SHOULD REQUEST PANDEMIC RELIEF](#)
- **Holy Shit: Adventures in Survival Sex Work and Stimulus Checks** <http://titsandsass.com/holy-shit-adventures-in-survival-sex-work-and-stimulus-checks/>
- As a good counterpoint, this [Twitter thread](#) by Las Vegas based sex worker activist *whoreganizer* points out why many marginalized sex workers will still not be getting the stimulus check or state unemployment benefits, for a variety of reasons.
- [Twitter thread](#) by [Caty Simon](#) of **Urban Survivors Union** and **Whose Corner Is It Anyway** is consistently updated with regional, national, and international sex worker relief funds.