

# Evidence-Based Approaches



## To Address Trafficking & Exploitation

**Everyone wants to prevent youth and children from being exploited or trafficked for any purpose, including for the purpose of sexual exploitation.**

When considering actions to recommend or implement toward this goal, it is important to focus on evidence-based solutions that are informed by those with lived experience.

Only evidence-based solutions will prevent vulnerability to trafficking, provide real supports for survivors of trafficking, and uphold the rights of adults choosing to work in the sex industry.

**When being presented with information or a recommendation to address the trafficking or exploitation of children and youth, consider:**

- Does the presenter speak about various issues related to children and youth (e.g., online sexual exploitation, child sexual abuse) all with the term "child sex trafficking?"
- Does the presenter use the issue of child sex trafficking to advocate for criminalization of the adult sex industry?
- Does the presenter address all types of human trafficking (see the list to the right), or focus solely on sex trafficking?
- If the presenter is solely speaking about trafficking in the sex industry, what sex work experience or experience working at a sex work organization does the person have?
- What evidence or peer-reviewed research does the presenter cite?
- How have those most impacted (i.e., sex workers, trafficking survivors) been involved in the development of the presenter's recommendations?

### Industries where trafficking occurs:

- Factory work
- Agriculture
- Construction
- Domestic & care-taking
- Organ removal
- Forced marriage
- Sex industry
- Other



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## Instead, we recommend the following:

### 1. Support a decolonial approach to responding to those most marginalized and stigmatized in our communities.

- Decolonizing means, among other processes, questioning why we respond to health and safety issues with criminal justice approaches.
- In regard to issues related to the sex trade, a decolonial approach would be one that reduces the interference from police and the government in the lives of consenting adults.

### 2. Support peer-led, person-centered local services and organizations.

- If you are concerned about women in the sex trade, work with local sex work organizations, Indigenous organizations, and other community stakeholders in your area to identify which services, supports, and preventative measures your government could take to uphold peoples' rights.
- "Peer-led" means those with lived experience in a particular issue have decision-making power in how the program or service should run.
- "Person-centered" means that the person coming to use the service has their autonomy and decision-making ability respected and upheld, no matter what their decision is.
- Look into how you can provide funding to these organizations.

### 3. Support community-led responses rather than top-down enforcement.

- Convene and work with the frontline service providers in your community to hear from them directly about the needs of the most marginalized and vulnerable in your community, and to collaborate together on locally-specific solutions.
- One size does not fit all when it comes to municipalities of varying sizes, demographics, industries, priorities, and more.

## What else can local governments do?

- Hold training for your staff - including social policy staff and bylaw enforcement officers - to learn the difference between sex work and trafficking, including the trafficking of children and youth.
- Incorporate sex workers' perspectives into anti-trafficking policy and practice.
- Create staff Sex Work Response Guidelines to guide policy and enforcement to ensure you are not harming sex workers in your anti-trafficking initiatives.
- Review existing bylaws and make changes that ensure you are respecting those in the sex industry while simultaneously addressing the trafficking of children and youth.
- Create a municipal Sex Worker Safety plan.
- Review enforcement approaches by bylaw officers and police officers.
- Fund sex work initiatives and direct services.

Living in Community can provide guidance and support on these actions.  
Contact us to learn more.