

# **SEX WORKER MENTAL HEALTH TOOLBOX**

**Prepared by Mo**



**TW: This presentation contains sensitive topics.**





# About me

I have struggled with my mental health all my life . It has become a passion of mine to not only improve my own mental health, but to help others do the same on a peer support level.

I have also been a sex worker for 8+ years and have found a calling in sex work advocacy. I am the co-founder of Sex Workers Against Tyranny (SWAT).

Mo

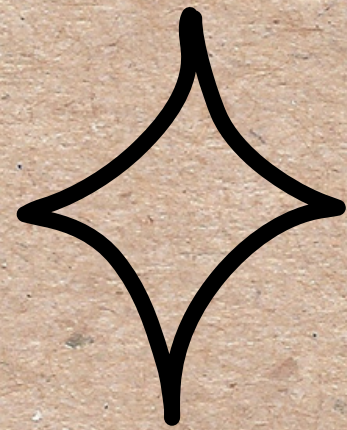


# WHY TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?



- More energy/focus on work
- Decreased depression
- Less anxiety
- Increased self esteem
- Better relationship building and outlook on community
- Awareness of your boundaries in your life and work
- Positive outlook
- Less burnout



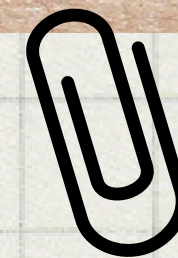


# HOW DO I KNOW I NEED HELP?



## Signs of Crisis

- Suicidal ideations
- Self harm
- Making reckless decisions
- Lack of boundaries
- Difficulties with self care
- Sudden mood swings





# CAREGIVER BURNOUT VS COMPASSION FATIGUE



AS SEX WORKERS WE CAN TAKE ON A LOT OF OUR CLIENTS EMOTIONS OR IN SOME SITUATIONS BECOME CAREGIVERS TO THEIR NEEDS. WHEN THIS HAPPENES WE OFFEN EXPERIENCE BURNOUT.

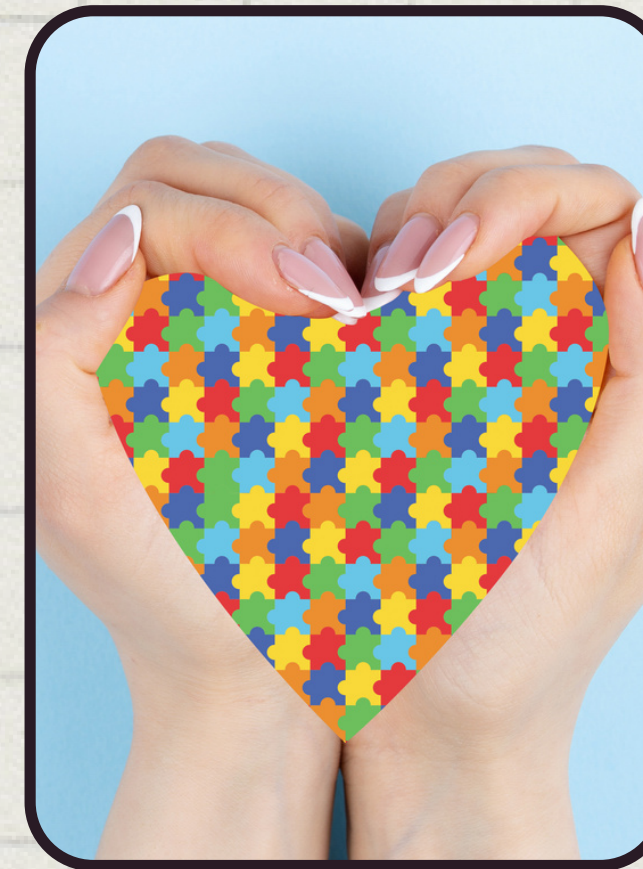
## Caregiver Burnout



When you are taking care of someone and you reach a state of complete exhaustion. You often have too much work or too many expectations.

Ex. You can experience burnout due to caring for their emotional, physical or sexual needs.

## Compassion Fatigue



When you become exhausted from carrying the emotional burden of others. You often have no more empathy left to give. You often want to keep doing your work but are exhausted from what you're being exposed to.



# THE EFFECT SEX WORK CAN HAVE ON YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



## Positive

- Gives you freedom to set your own schedule
- Gives a better understanding of boundaries
- Gives you a sense of community
- Build relationships
- Helping others
- Teaches consent
- Teaches marketing skills

## Negative

- Can expose you to traumatic situations
- Can take on too much
- Some sex work can be more dangerous than others
- Can become overwhelmed or burntout
- Potentially unstable financial situation (Good week with clients and then next week everyone cancels.



**Just because you have negative experiences does not mean you deserve to be criminalized!!**

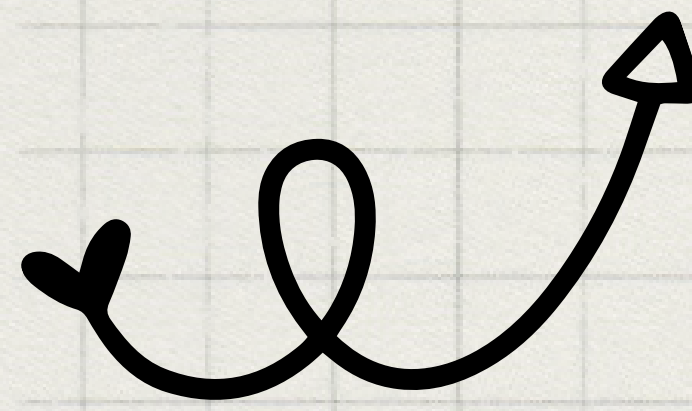
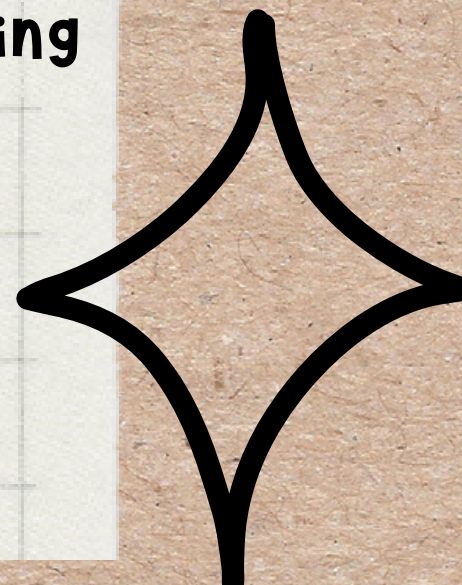
**Even though sex work is not often recognized as a "real" job we deserve the respect that everyone in any profession should. Don't let anyone tell you differently**





# Mental Health Benefits of Decriminalizing Sex Work



- Recognition of the work we do leading to respect in our workplace
  - Able to work with local authorities to report offenders
  - Able to report financials leading to better access to housing and medical care
  - No stress about possible arrest/incarceration
  - No fear of being outed
  - No fear of losing custody of children, being fired from other jobs, or loss of housing
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# TOOLBOX SKILLS

If you're experiencing suicidal thoughts please head to a local ER or call a hotline

## 5.4.3.2.1 Identify...

- 5 Things you see
- 4 Things you hear
- 3 Things you touch
- 2 Things you smell
- 1 Thing you taste

## Opposite to emotion

- If you don't want to go to work that day. You deliberately do the opposite.

## Make a gratitude list

- A list of all the things you are grateful for.

## Meditation

- There are guided meditation tools on youtube

## Box breathing

- Breath in for 4 seconds
- Hold for 4 seconds
- Breath out for 4 seconds
- Pause for 4 seconds

## Journal/mind dump

- Write down all your thoughts. You can rip/burn up paper after writing

## Frozen washcloth or orange

- Wet a washcloth and freeze it and then hold onto it, pulling it apart. Or freeze an orange and do the same.

## Take a walk

Yoga

Dance

Use a relaxation app like calm

Gentle stretches

Social media break

Hold onto ice

Shower/bath

Remove self from situation

Look at photos

Listen to music

Have safe people to talk to

Set aside time for self care

Read inspirational quotes

Rewatch comfort movie/show





# GROUNDING KIT

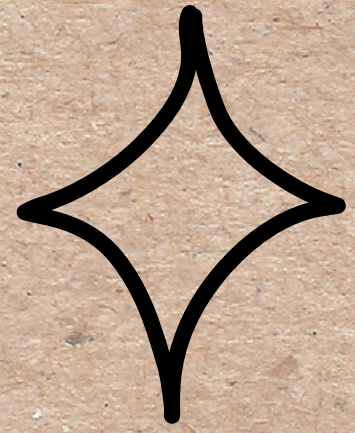


Grounding kits can be a box, a bag, anything. Inside of it is something that appeals to each of the five senses. It can be used during high anxiety periods to help calm.

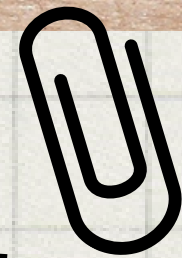
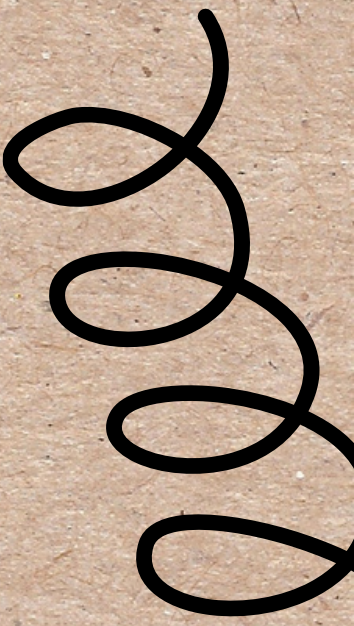
Here are some ideas for your kit!

- Sight— Photos, cards with skills written on them
- Hear—bell, maraca, pop its
- Touch—fidgets, slime, rock
- Smell— essential oils, perfume
- Taste— gum or candy

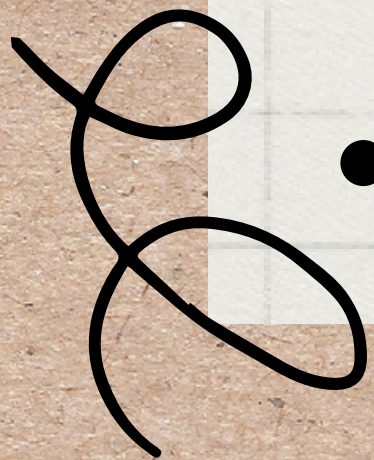




# COULD THERAPY WORK FOR YOU?



- Many therapists offer private pay and sliding scale fees
- There are sex worker allied therapists
- Gives a neutral and private party to speak to
- There are online/text options as well







# WHERE CAN I FIND A THERAPIST?



## Health, Help, Happiness + Find a Therapist

View the latest from the world of psychology: from behavioral research to practical guidance on relationships, mental health and addiction. Find help from our directory of therapists, psychologists...

 Psychology Today

Psychology today has an option to search for sex work allied therapists in your area as well as many other filters.



## Pineapple Support

Pineapple Support is an organisation supporting the mental health of adult industry performers across the US. Providing a 24/7 online support network as well as free and subsidised professional therapy and advice. Volunteer to be a listener and receive free, online, counselling training....

 Pineapple Support

"Pineapple Support provides 24/7 online, emotional support as well as free and subsidized professional therapy and advice to all performers and producers who have been active in the adult online industry within the past 6 months." (Only for online performers)



# OTHER OPTIONS

## Hotlines

**Disclaimer; if you are in active danger most hotlines are obligated to ensure your safety.  
This can include calling a welfare check from local authorities.**



**Substance abuse mental health services administration (SAMHSA):**

**(800) 662-4357**

**Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:**

**988 (Call or text)**

**Panic Disorder Information Hotline:**

**1-800-64-PANIC (72642)**

**The NAMI HelpLine:**

**1-800-950-NAMI (6264), text "HelpLine" to 62640**







**ANY  
QUESTIONS?**

**Thank You**

