

The impact of stigma and discrimination on mental health support for sex workers

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Background

- Sex workers face **higher rates of stigma/discrimination**
(Benoit, McCarthy & Jansson, 2015)
- Stigma/discrimination can be linked to;
 - **Poorer psychological well-being**
 - **Poorer self-esteem**
 - **Depression**
 - **Stress**
 - **Suicidality**





Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	147	77.8%
Non-Binary	20	10.6%
Male	6	3.2%
Trans female	7	3.7%
Trans male	1	.5%
Identified in another way	6	3.2%
Declined to state	2	1.1%
Total	189	100%

Experiences of stigma/discrimination by mental health professionals

- **77.5%** reported having **experienced negative treatment, stigma or discrimination**
- More than **35%** said this occurred **often** or **always**
- **22.5%** report **never** experiencing such treatment.

n = 187



Experiences of stigma/discrimination in mental health settings

- **83%** had experienced **negative treatment, stigma or discrimination**
- More than **40%** said this occurred **often** or **always**
- **29.8%** report **never** experiencing such treatment.

n= 186



Advice for Mental Health Professionals

- **Don't assume**
- **Listen**
- **Don't focus on sex work**
- **Don't suggest that sex work is the cause of mental health difficulties**



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