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

Authors: Josephine Rayson ¹ Beatrice Alba ¹

¹ Monash University
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Binary</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identified in another way</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declined to state</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>189</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
Contact Details

josephinerayson@hotmail.com