

An illustration of three stylized human figures in shades of teal, purple, and orange, arranged in a circle with their arms raised, forming a ring. The background is a solid light orange color.

SEX WORKERS' RIGHTS  
ARE HUMAN RIGHTS!

KNOW YOUR  
RIGHTS!

SAFETY,  
DIGNITY,  
JUSTICE!

## **HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF FROM VIOLENCE & EXPLOITATION?**

RESOURCE GUIDE  
BY BUTTERFLY  
(ASIAN & MIGRANT SEX WORKERS  
SUPPORT NETWORK)  
2019

## HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF FROM VIOLENCE & EXPLOITATION?

Some of us may fear seeking help from law enforcement or service providers because of the discrimination and stigma that we face, the criminalization of sex work, the fear of being charged by bylaw officers, precarious immigration status as well as the potential risk of arrest and deportation.

You should be protected from violence or exploitation like every member of society. You should be able to access support and advocate for your rights.

Contact us to support you and your co-workers.

Butterfly (Asian and Migrant Sex Workers Support Network)  
416-906-3098  
butterflysw.org

Sex work does not inherently involve violence or exploitation. Like other jobs, sex workers may have good days and bad days at work, but violence and exploitation are never an acceptable part of any job. Unfortunately, mainstream attitudes in our society towards sex work can make us feel like these are normal parts of our job. It is very important to learn your rights to help yourself or your co-workers in case of violence or exploitation while working in massage parlours, holistic centres, body rub parlours, hotels, in-call locations or other sex industry jobs.

**UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS HELPS YOU TO PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR COWORKERS.**

- \* Keep your own record of hours and dates you worked.
- \* Your employer should not withhold your documents, e.g. ID or passport (keep them yourself).
- \*\* The Employment Standards Act laws (e.g. minimum wage, work hours, leaves and holidays) still protect you even if you do not have immigration documentation allowing you to work in Canada.

# HOW DO I PREVENT WORKPLACE VIOLENCE & HARASSMENT?

You have the right to protect yourself from workplace violence and harassment. You should be protected from violence and harassment like every member of society.

- No one can use any physical force or threaten you with physical harm.
- No one should harass you by teasing, yelling, bullying or sending offensive jokes or materials, or intimidating you.
- You should not be subject to harassment or sexual violence of any kind in the workplace, whether it comes from an employer, a manager or a colleague, clients or law enforcement (bylaw, immigration and policy) officers.

## **SEX WORK IS NOT VIOLENCE. VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT (E.G. SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT) ARE NOT PART OF THE JOB.**

- Consenting to provide sex services does not mean you accept violence against you.
- You always have the right to reject any unwanted sexual contact.

You are protected by the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA).

This means that you have the right to:

- *know about health and safety hazards*
- *participate in keeping your workplace healthy and safe*
- *refuse work that you feel is unsafe*

\*Domestic or sexual violence leave provides workers with a job-protected break from work when they or their children are facing domestic or sexual violence (after 13 weeks of consecutive employment). This means that you would have your job back afterwards.

You are protected by the Criminal Code.

You are legally protected from assault, bodily harm, sexual assault, theft, robbery, trafficking, kidnapping and forcible confinement.

# TEMPORARY WORK PERMIT (TRP) FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING.

If you have been trafficked, you may be able to apply for a Temporary Work Permit to stay in Canada temporarily (the length of the permit is generally 6 months to 1 year).

You are not required to collaborate with enforcement agencies or testify against your traffickers in order to receive the permit.

## ACCESS WITHOUT FEAR POLICY IN TORONTO

Toronto has been deemed “Access T.O.” by City Council, which was created to support undocumented residents (people without a valid student, tourist or work visa, refugee status, who are not permanent residents or citizens, or who otherwise do not have immigration documentation to be in Canada) of Toronto to ensure that all residents are able to access municipal and police services regardless of immigration status.

- You can access services in Toronto regardless of your immigration status.
- You are not required to disclose your immigration status to city officials, police or service providers (even if you are being asked).

**HOW DO I GET  
SUPPORT IF I DO  
NOT HAVE SECURE  
IMMIGRATION  
STATUS?**

# GETTING HELP FROM SERVICE PROVIDERS

Due to the conflation of sex work and trafficking, some service providers may see us all as trafficked victims. It is important to tell service providers what you want and need, and how they can support you. You also have the right to decide how to identify yourself to service providers (as a victim of trafficking, or not, as a sex worker, or not, immigration status, etc).

We encourage you to talk to service providers about your concerns related to disclosing your identity and/or information being shared with other services providers and law enforcement. It is important to discuss this before you disclose information, consent to share information with others, or sign any form. Remember, you have the right to object to the sharing of your information — including sharing information among service providers. Some organizations are not able to provide anonymous and confidential services. Ask in advance whether this is possible.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS! SAFETY, DIGNITY, JUSTICE!

SEX WORK IS WORK.

SEX WORKERS ARE ENTITLED TO SAFETY, DIGNITY, EQUALITY, AND JUSTICE.

### FILING COMPLAINTS AGAINST LAW ENFORCEMENT

#### COMPLAINTS AGAINST POLICE

Office of the Independent Police Review Director  
416-246-7071 / oiprdcomplaints@ontario.ca  
www.oiprd.on.ca

SOME OF US MAY BE SCARED TO  
FILE A COMPLAINT.  
YOU MAY CONTACT BUTTERFLY  
TO DISCUSS YOUR OPTIONS,  
INCLUDING CARRYING OUT THE  
COMPLAINT COLLECTIVELY AND  
ANONYMOUSLY.

No one has permission to violate our rights, and that includes law enforcement. You may file a complaint if you experience any misconduct, harassment, or violence from bylaw enforcement or police.

#### COMPLAINTS AGAINST BYLAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

The Customer Service Improvement Team,  
City of Toronto  
311 / mlsfeedback@toronto.ca  
City Hall, 100 Queen St. W., 16th floor, West  
Tower, Toronto, ON, M5H 2N2

\* You can give your feedback anonymously but you have to disclose your identity when you file the formal complaint

#### Ombudsman Toronto

(you must go through the city internal process first )  
416-392-7062 / ombudsman@toronto.ca  
www.ombudsmantoronto.ca

## **MIGRANT SEX WORKERS ORGANIZATION**

Butterfly (Asian and Migrant Sex Workers Support Network)

416-906-3098 / [www.butterflysw.org](http://www.butterflysw.org)

Provides 24/7 hotline, outreach, training, health and legal information and support, crisis and emergency support (e.g. when migrant sex workers are arrested or detained) in Ontario and cities outside of Ontario

The services and supports are anonymous. You do not need to provide any legal name or private information



## **EMERGENCY AND VICTIMS SUPPORT SERVICES**

Assaulted Women's Helpline

Toll-free: 1-866-863-0511 / TTY: 1-866-863-7868

[www.awhl.org](http://www.awhl.org)

Provides 24/7 counselling, emotional support, information and referrals to all women who experience abuse (200 languages) in Ontario

Distress and Crisis Centres across Ontario

[www.dcontario.org/centres.html](http://www.dcontario.org/centres.html)

Provides emotional support for people experiencing emotional distress (including suicide) and information about Distress Centres/Crisis Lines in Ontario

Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic

416-323-9149 ext. 234 (intake) / TTY: 416-323-1361

[www.schliferclinic.com](http://www.schliferclinic.com)

Provides legal representation, professional counselling and multilingual interpretation to women who have experienced violence in Ontario

The Victim Quick Response Program

[www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/ovss/vqrp.php](http://www.attorneygeneral.jus.gov.on.ca/english/ovss/vqrp.php)

Offers support to help cover emergency and essential expenses, funerals and counselling costs to victims of crime in Ontario. Victims of sexual violence, family violence or human trafficking may report to community organizations; others need to report to police

Emergency

911

Emergency services (e.g. ambulance and police) / Call when your health or safety are at risk

## SHELTERS

ShelterSafe.ca  
[www.sheltersafe.ca](http://www.sheltersafe.ca)

Online resource for women and their children seeking safety from violence and abuse

Toronto Housing Shelter and Emergency Support Central Intake Line  
416-338-4766 / [www.toronto.ca/housing](http://www.toronto.ca/housing)

Offers connection to a shelter or information about availability in Toronto



## HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

211 Ontario  
211 / [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca)

24-hour telephone referral service for all types of social services and online resource to locate community and social services across Ontario

Telehealth Ontario  
[www.ontario.ca/page/get-medical-advice-telehealth-ontario](http://www.ontario.ca/page/get-medical-advice-telehealth-ontario)

Free medical and health advice from a registered nurse

Fem'aide  
Toll-free: 1-877-336-2433 / TTY: 1-866-860-7082  
[www.femaide.ca](http://www.femaide.ca)

24-hour helpline for Francophone women in Ontario seeking support, referrals and information on woman abuse, including sexual assault

ConnexOntario  
[www.connexontario.ca](http://www.connexontario.ca)

Provides free and confidential health services information for people experiencing problems with gambling, alcohol/drugs and mental health in Ontario

eMentalHealth.ca (CHEO)  
1-866-531-2600 / [www.ementalhealth.ca](http://www.ementalhealth.ca)

Provides Mental Health Service Information and resources in Ontario (e.g. crisis line, e-counselling, emergency shelter and housing)

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)  
[www.camh.ca/en/health-info/crisis-resources](http://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/crisis-resources)

Lists organizations and contact numbers of mental health crisis supports across Ontario



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Central Health Line  
[www.centralhealthline.ca](http://www.centralhealthline.ca)

Provides information on health care services and resources in Ontario

Community Health Centres  
[www.ontario.ca/page/community-health-centres](http://www.ontario.ca/page/community-health-centres)

Provides primary care offered by doctors, nurse practitioners, social workers, dieticians and others for marginalized people (e.g. non-status, homeless etc.)



## **LEGAL INFORMATION AND SERVICES**

Legal Aid Ontario  
416-977-8111 / 1-800-668-8258  
[www.legalaid.on.ca](http://www.legalaid.on.ca)

Provides legal services for financially eligible, low-income Ontarians

Legal Aid Ontario, Refugee Law Office  
416-977-8111 / 1-800-668-8258  
[www.legalaid.on.ca/services/help-with-immigration-or-refugee-problems/](http://www.legalaid.on.ca/services/help-with-immigration-or-refugee-problems/)

Provides legal support to refugee claimants in Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa

Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO)  
416-408-4420 / [www.cleo.on.ca/en](http://www.cleo.on.ca/en)

Provides legal representation, professional counselling and multilingual interpretation to women who have experienced violence in Ontario

Human Rights Tribunal Ontario (HRTO)  
[www.sjto.gov.on.ca/hrto/forms-filing/#](http://www.sjto.gov.on.ca/hrto/forms-filing/#)

HRTO is a provincial administrative tribunal with broad remedial powers (can order training, damages, etc). This process is free and friendly to self-representatives. HRTO can facilitate mediations.

Human Rights Legal Support Centre  
416-597-4900 / [www.hrlsc.on.ca/en/contact-hrlsc/contact-information](http://www.hrlsc.on.ca/en/contact-hrlsc/contact-information)

Provides merit-based free legal representation and translation services

Family Law Offices  
Kenora: 807-468-7790 / Toll-free: 1-888-295-4986  
Ottawa: 613-569-7448  
Thunder Bay: 807-346-2950 / Toll-free: 1-800-393-8140

Family lawyers at 3 Family Law Offices in Ontario can represent people who qualify for legal aid



## LSUC Lawyer Referral Service

[www.lsuc.ca/lrsr](http://www.lsuc.ca/lrsr)

Makes online referrals to lawyers and paralegals in Ontario, who provide free 30-minute consultations



## COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINICS

### Community Legal Clinics

416-977-8111 / 1-800-668-8258

[www.legalaid.on.ca/legal-clinics](http://www.legalaid.on.ca/legal-clinics)

Provides services to people with low income who live in their area, and sometimes to specific cultural or language groups

### Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic

416-971-9674 / 1-844-971-9674

[www.csalc.ca](http://www.csalc.ca)

Provides legal support to low income, non-English speaking people in Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian communities across Ontario

### Income Security Advocacy Centre

416-597-5820 / Toll-free: 1-866-245-4072

[www.incomesecurity.org](http://www.incomesecurity.org)

Pursues test cases, Charter and appellate litigation to address systemic issues arising from federal and provincial (Ontario) income security programs, and from the political, economic and social causes of poverty

### Parkdale Community Legal Services

416-531-2411 / [www.parkdalelegal.org](http://www.parkdalelegal.org)

Provides legal support and information; deals primarily with social assistance, violence issues (assault and hate crimes), mental health, immigration and refugee issues, workers' rights, tenant issues

### HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic (Ontario)

416-340-7790 / Toll-free: 1-888-705-8889

[www.halco.org](http://www.halco.org)

Provides legal support and information to persons living with HIV in Ontario

### Black Legal Action Centre

416-597-5831 / Toll-free: 1-877-736-9406

[www.blacklegalactioncentre.ca](http://www.blacklegalactioncentre.ca)

Provides legal services to low or no income Black residents of Ontario

South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario  
416-487-6371 / [www.salc.on.ca](http://www.salc.on.ca)

Provides legal advice and services and public legal education to South Asians in Ontario and involved in community development and law reform initiatives in Ontario

ARCH Disability Law Centre  
TTY: 416-482-1254; 1-866-482-2728 / Toll-free: 1-866-482-2724  
[www.archdisabilitylaw.ca](http://www.archdisabilitylaw.ca)

Provides supports and legal representation to people with disabilities in Ontario

Centre for Spanish-Speaking Peoples Legal Clinic  
[www.spanishservices.org/en](http://www.spanishservices.org/en)

Provides legal supports to Spanish-speaking community across Ontario

Aboriginal Legal Services  
416-408-3967 / Toll-free: 1-844-633-2886  
[www.aboriginallegal.ca](http://www.aboriginallegal.ca)

Provides legal support for Aboriginal people (status or non-status), Métis and Inuit in Ontario



## **LABOUR RIGHTS**

Workers Action Centre  
416-531-0778 / [www.workersactioncentre.org](http://www.workersactioncentre.org)

Provides workers' rights information and education and supports workers to advocate for their rights

Ministry of Labour  
1-877-202-0008 / [www.labour.gov.on.ca](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca)

Administers and enforces the Employment Standards Act, 2000



## **SEX WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS**

Maggie's (Toronto Sex Workers Action Project)  
416-964-0150 / [www.maggiestoronto.ca](http://www.maggiestoronto.ca)

Provides services and support (sexual health, work safety, workshops, legal information, counselling and advocacy, social gathering and work tips) to sex workers in Toronto

Sex Workers' Action Program Hamilton (SWAP)  
[www.swaphamilton.com](http://www.swaphamilton.com)

Provides outreach support to street-involved sex workers, harm reduction support, and compassionate care

Safe Space London

[www.safespacelondon.ca](http://www.safespacelondon.ca)

Provides harm reduction and first aid supplies, HIV and STI educational resources, cosmetics, clothing, hygiene products, food, coffee, tea, peer support and information

SWANS Sudbury

705-280-8005 / [www.swansudbury.com](http://www.swansudbury.com)

Promotes safer personal and working conditions through education, advocacy, referral and peer support



## **IMMIGRANT, MIGRANT AND REFUGEE ORGANIZATIONS**

Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)

416-322-4950 / [www.ocasi.org](http://www.ocasi.org)

Acts as umbrella organization of community agencies that serve immigrants and refugees in Ontario

FCJ Refugee Centre

416-469-9745 / [www.fcjrefugeecentre.org](http://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org)

Provides refugee protection, settlement services and education for newcomers in Ontario, including shelter for women and their children

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services

416-324-8677 / [www.accessalliance.ca](http://www.accessalliance.ca)

Provides community and medical services to vulnerable populations, including newcomers, immigrants and refugees in Toronto

Migrant Worker Alliance for Change

1-855-567-4722 ext. 700 / [www.migrantworkersalliance.org](http://www.migrantworkersalliance.org)

Advocates for the rights of migrant workers in Ontario and federally

Settlement.org

[www.settlement.org](http://www.settlement.org)

Provides settlement information for newcomers

No One is Illegal  
[www.nooneisillegal.org](http://www.nooneisillegal.org)

Advocates for the freedom to move, return and stay in Canada and provides 'know your rights' training to service providers and undocumented people

OHIP for All  
[www.ca](http://www.ca)

Advocates for OHIP for all



## **OTHER COMMUNITY SERVICES**

St. Stephen's Community House  
416-925-2103 / [www.sschto.ca](http://www.sschto.ca)

Provides refugee protection, settlement services and education, including shelter for women and their children in Toronto

519 Community Centre  
416-392-6874 / [www.the519.org](http://www.the519.org)

Offers LGBTQ2 programming and groups, refugee support group, free short-term trauma-informed counselling, drop-in counselling, recreation and education in Toronto

Skylark Children, Youth and Families  
416-482-0081 / [www.skylarkyouth.org](http://www.skylarkyouth.org)

Provides counselling, educational and therapeutic learning experience and counselling to support children, youth and families struggling with complex mental health and developmental needs

PASAN  
416-920-9567 / [www.pasan.org](http://www.pasan.org)

Offers programs, education, harm reduction and case management for prisoners and ex-prisoners with HIV or AIDS

Pieces to Pathways  
647-209-2043 / [www.breakawayadditions.ca](http://www.breakawayadditions.ca)

Peer-led substance use support program for LGBTQ2SIA youth (age 16-29) in Toronto that offers drop-ins, case management and group counselling

# BUTTERFLY

Asian & Migrant  
Sex Workers Support Network

## OUR MISSION:

Butterfly's work is about building community with migrant sex workers: a place where we can share love, care, laughter, and tears.

Our community is what gives us the strength to support each other, resist oppression, grow together, and actualize our dreams.

## OUR GOALS:

- Promoting safety and dignity
- Building leadership, growing support networks, and promoting solidarity
- Enhancing access to legal rights, health, social, and labour services
- Promoting equality and eliminating racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, stigma, and discrimination against Asians, migrants, and sex workers
- Facilitating the voices of sex workers being heard
- Advocating for legal and policy change (e.g. decriminalization of sex work and abolishing the immigration prohibition of sex work policy)

## CONTACT US

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