

# NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US: SEX WORKER CREATION OF A COMPREHENSIVE SEXUAL HEALTH HANDBOOK

Josephine Shearer<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Magenta, Western Australian Sex Worker Organisation, Australia (of the Family Planning Association of Western Australia)

**Background/Approach:** Magenta offers support, health services, education and information to workers in the Western Australian (W.A.) sex industry. Magenta's new Workers' Information Pack (WIP) is a comprehensive sexual health and safety guide for W.A. sex workers. Developed over 3.5 years, the content, structure, design and translations were completed, led, and/or reviewed by diverse sex worker voices.

The WIP is a unique health promotion resource, having been consumer driven at every level of development. This model is transferable to all sexual health service providers, substantially increasing access and equity in health promotion amongst marginalised groups.

**Analysis/Argument:** Sex workers are one of the most successful groups in preventing STI/BBVs within community priority populations<sup>1</sup>. This is linked strongly to an emphasis on peer education<sup>Error! Bookmark not defined.</sup>, and is in contrast to well-meaning but often costly and ineffective attempts by outsiders to promote health in sex worker communities.

The author wishes to outline the process involved in developing the WIP. This included:

- Research into what sex workers wanted in a resource
- Authorship and review by sex workers from different backgrounds
- A peer-reviewed design process
- Peer edited document translation

**Outcome/Results:** Service users have reported the WIP to be highly engaging and comprehensive. The detail and relevance of content to sex workers, discreet appearance, and high clarity of images have made the resource exceptional in its capacity to provide health promotional information to this group.

**Conclusions/Applications:** Magenta has developed a unique resource for sex workers and identified several areas of improvement for future resource creation. The model Magenta has used is transferable to the development of other health promotional resources and has the potential to improve the health and wellbeing of groups previously unreachable by traditional resources.

**Disclosure of Interest Statement:** The author has no conflicts of interest to report.

---

<sup>1</sup> Australian Government Department of Health, 'Third National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2014-2017', <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-bbvs-sti>, 2014.