

See: Male Pro Perspectives posted by SWAV in Toronto  
also see: Resources, Articles about male prostitution  
**Issues for Male Sex Workers by Vic St. Blaise**  
As submitted to The San Francisco Task Force on Prostitution

### A Male What?

Men are as much a part of the sex industry as women, and while we are at it, let's not forget our transgendered co-workers. As the task force member 'representing gay male sex workers', I offer my observations and theories involved in my participation in the task force, sex work, and the sex workers' rights movement. Men in the sex industry and the rights movement must be prepared to face homophobia and invisibility in addition to the traditional ignorance of and hostility toward the profession.

### Women and Children First

Most people, if not all, when they hear the word 'prostitute' automatically assume the feminine gender. This is understandable to a point. I am sure there are many more women in prostitution than men. If we accept that around 80 to 90 percent of the population is heterosexual, and that in general women seldom use the services of prostitutes, then it stands to conclude that the majority of customers are heterosexual men.

Unfortunately the development of the arguments for or against prostitution and studies on prostitution have until recently continued on a gender bias, with no concern for men involved in prostitution, either as workers, or more glaringly, as clients. Policies, services, research and rhetoric have chosen to participate in the battle between men (clients, cops) vs. women (prostitutes), instead of looking at prostitution as a ubiquitous ingredient of the human experience.

This bias is a by product of sexism in our society that oppresses women at every turn. Those who are against prostitution see the profession as yet another example of violence against women by men. Prostitution advocates see sex work as a way for women to empower themselves, at the expense, literally, of men. Sex workers of other genders do not fit easily into the equation, and no one has known what to do with us beyond the recognition that we exist.

Another part of the problem of sexism is the assumption that men in the industry do not need protection, rights or support. Since men cause all the problems in prostitution, what do male sex workers have to worry about? Surely a man would not attempt with another man the same shit he tries with women. Again, the narrow men vs. women model of prostitution ignores the other combinations, but the erroneous assumption that guys can handle themselves is reflected in the amount of services and education geared toward men in the industry.

What precarious support there is exists in the form of rescuing boys, since the rescuing of children shares similar popularity with the rescuing of women. Recently a network called CASH, Coalition Advocating Safer Hustling, grew out of an AmFAR grant set up to study the prevention of HIV/AIDS among male sex workers. The original constitution was amended, in part to accommodate the cries of protest from agencies that felt the organization presented a too strong pro-prostitution message. Because there are so few organizations that work with male sex workers, CASH toned down its press, if not its intent. Although it includes transgender sex workers in its charter, CASH continues to struggle to maintain a healthy number of participants.

### Homophobia and Sexphobia

I have encountered what I perceive to be homophobia among members of the task force as well as prostitute advocates, and sexphobia among gay men, in addition to whorephobia from all angles. Because a male prostitute is such a new animal to many people, those of us who are out and have opinions are easy targets for criticisms based on partially processed assumptions about being a man, being a queer, and being a whore.

Personally I take most of it in stride. I have been fortunate>