



Despite all the uncertainty; the country shifting levels and regulations adjusted to measure-up to Covid-19 demands —we remain steadfast on the call for the decriminalisation of sex work.

The introduction of vaccine rollout to combat the pandemic brings renewed hope; a glimpse of survival among some and a learning curve for others. As we conquered the first half of the year, like many we too recognise and hope to one day celebrate some of these key days on our national calendar — days such as Workers' Day (**See page 5**) After commemorating International Sex Worker Rights Day on 2 June; we anticipate improved treatment; reduced stigma and discrimination towards all sex workers with a better understanding of sex work from our community members.

Yonela Sinqu

Alcohol Addiction

April, is Alcohol Awareness Month with the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

What is alcohol addiction?

Alcohol addiction, also known as alcoholism, a disease that affects people of all walks of life. Experts have tried to pinpoint factors such as genetics, sex, race, or socioeconomics that may predispose someone to alcohol addiction. But it has no single cause.

Psychological, genetic, and behavioural factors can all contribute to having the disease.

It's important to note that alcoholism is a real disease. It can cause changes to the brain and neurochemistry, so a person with an alcohol addiction may not be able to control their actions. Alcohol addiction can show itself in a variety of ways.

The severity of the disease, how often someone drinks, and the alcohol they consume varies from person to person. Some people drink heavily all day, while others binge drink and then stay sober for a while.

Regardless of how the addiction looks, someone typically has an alcohol addiction if they heavily rely on drinking and can't stay sober for an extended period of time.

What are the symptoms of alcoholism?

Alcohol addiction can be difficult to recognize. Unlike cocaine or heroin, alcohol is widely available and accepted in many cultures. It's often at the centre of social situations and closely linked to celebrations and enjoyment. Drinking is a part of life for many people. When is it common in society, it can be hard to tell the difference between someone who likes to have a few drinks now and then and someone with a real problem.

Some symptoms of alcohol addiction are:

increased quantity or frequency of use

high alcohol, drinking ate as first morn-work

wanting where always alcohol avoiding where

changes ships; with an addiction friends who heavily

avoiding contact with

hiding alcohol, or drinking

dependence on function in everyday life

increased lethargy, depression, or issues legal or professional problems such as job loss

As an tion tends to worse over portant to look warning signs. If treated early, an alcohol

may be able to avoid major consequences of the disease. If you're worried you know has an

tolerance for

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in friend-someone alcohol may choose also drink

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addic-get time, it's im-for early identified and someone with addiction

disease. that someone alcohol addic-

tion, it's best to approach them in a supportive way. Avoid shaming them or making them feel guilty. This could push them away and make them more resistant to your help.

What health complications are associated with alcoholism

Alcohol addiction can result in heart disease and liver disease. Both can be fatal. Alcoholism can also cause:

- ulcers
- diabetes complications
- sexual problems
- birth defects
- bone loss
- vision problems
- increased risk of cancer
- suppressed immune function

If someone with an alcohol addiction takes dangerous risks while drinking, they can also put others at risk. According to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drunk driving, for example, takes 28 lives every day in the United States. Drinking is also associated with an increased incidence of suicide and homicide.

These complications are reasons why it's important to treat alcohol addiction early. Nearly all risks involved with alcohol addiction may be avoidable or treatable, with successful long-term recovery.

Treating alcohol addiction can be complex and challenging. In order for treatment to work, the person with an alcohol addiction must want to get sober. You can't force them to stop drinking if they aren't ready. Success depends on the person's desire to get better. The recovery process for alcoholism is a lifetime commitment. There isn't a quick fix and it involves daily care. For this reason, many people say alcohol addiction is never "cured."

Rehab

A common initial treatment option for someone with an alcohol addiction is an outpatient or inpatient rehabilitation program. An inpatient program can last anywhere from 30 days to a year. It can help someone handle withdrawal symptoms and emotional challenges. Outpatient treatment provides daily support while allowing the person to live at home.

Alcoholics anonymous and other support groups

Many people addicted to alcohol also turn to 12-step programs like Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). There are also other support groups that don't follow the 12-step model, such as SMART Recovery and Sober Recovery. Regardless of the type of support system, it's helpful to get involved in at least one when getting sober. Sober communities can help someone struggling with alcohol addiction deal with the challenges of sobriety in day-to-day life. Sober communities can also share relatable experiences and offer new, healthy friendships. And these communities make the person with an alcohol addiction accountable and provide a place to turn to if there is a relapse.

Other options

Someone with an alcohol addiction may also benefit from other treatments including:

- drug therapy
- Counselling
- nutritional changes

A doctor may prescribe drugs to help certain conditions. For example, antidepressants, if someone with an alcohol addiction were self-medicating to treat their depression. Or a doctor could prescribe drugs to assist with other emotions common in recovery.

Therapy is useful to someone the every and ed to prevent a diet undo dam-alcohol done to son's such as gain or Alcohol may involve several methods. important everyone into a recovery program that will offer long-term support sobriety.

This could mean on therapy for is depressed, or treatment for severe withdrawal symptoms.

What are resources for

treating alcoholism?

For more information alcoholism or to help a

find options for may be best a doctor.

help teach how to manage stress of recovery the skills need-

relapse. Also, healthy can help the age may have the per-health, weight loss. addiction

treatment It is that gets

an emphasis someone who inpatient someone with drawal

about loved one

help, it to talk to They can

refer you to local programs, such as treatment centres or 12-step programs. Also, the following organizations may be helpful: Alcoholics Anonymous South Africa South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)

What is the outlook for alcoholism

Early treatment of alcoholism is most effective. Addictions that have gone on longer are harder to break. However, long-term addictions can be successfully treated.

Friends and family members of people who have an alcohol addiction can benefit from professional support or by joining programs such as Al-Anon.

Someone with an alcohol addiction who has remained sober for months or years may find themselves drinking again. They may binge drink once or drink for a period of time before getting sober again. But a relapse doesn't indicate failure. It's important that the person get back on track and resume treatment.

Ultimately, sobriety is the responsibility of the person who has the alcohol addiction. It's important to not enable destructive behaviours and to maintain appropriate boundaries if the person with the alcohol addiction is still drinking. This can mean cutting off financial assistance or making it difficult for them to fulfil the addiction.

As a loved one of someone with an alcohol addiction, try to be encouraging and provide emotional support.



Medically reviewed by Timothy

J. Legg, Ph.D., CRNP —

Written by Mara Tyler —

Updated on December 19, 2017

<https://www.healthline.com/health/addiction/alcohol>

The new kids on the block



Let us welcome **Meshack Fanafana Mabuza**, who takes Sisonke's Project Officer position. Meshack brings to Sisonke his expertise as an attorney with extensive experience from the private

sector and tertiary learning institution where he worked as an administrative officer. This die-hard activist spent some time at the Legal Resources Centre as immigration officer advocating for the rights of illegal immigrants detained at local police stations and Lindela Repatriation Centre. He has made appearances on various daily television shows.

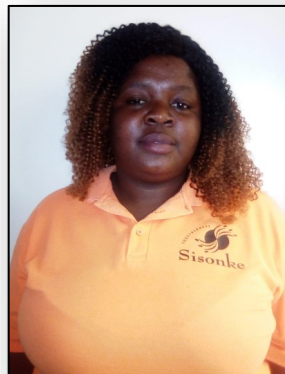
Young blood from Rhodes University joining Sisonke as an Advocacy Officer, is **Zintle Tsholwana**.

She holds a BA, majoring in Law and English from Rhodes University and now completing a Master's Degree in Publishing Studies at Wits University.

Sparked by her legal studies, Zintle, has vested interest in defending human rights and the dignity of the marginalised. She aspires to positively contribute to the transformation of the South African civil society, to one that is inclusive and reflects the multicultural landscape of the African continent.

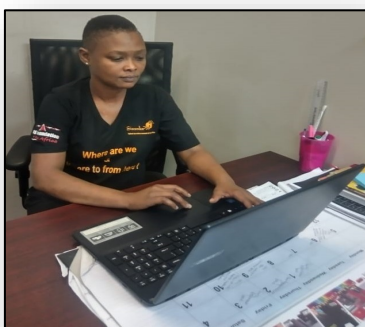


Former Izwi Lethu contributor for a year, **Maneo Mosia** takes the position of peer educator for Sisonke in Gauteng Province. Coming from an intimate family of three siblings, Maneo, is a coy youngster, fond of dogs. She has previously worked as a bar manager and avid writer and creative who enjoys swimming and reading.



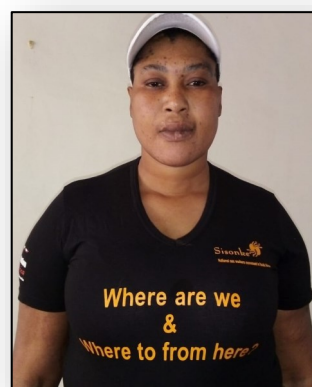
Mpho Talent Lekgwatha, a mother of one joins Sisonke as a Media Liaison in Limpopo. Coming from a rural village, Divhani in Toyandou, Mpho is a sister to three brothers and two sisters. Mpho, started school at Makhuya Primary School, where she passed Grade 7 before moving to Musina High School. The avid cricketer in her spare time has come a long way from working as a

housekeeper; to Peer Educator as Aidsfonds and later at WITS RHI, before making her way into Sisonke.



Dynamite comes in small packages, and so is **Sindisiwe Felicia Dlamini**, who joins Sisonke in KZN as a Peer Educator. The King Edward-born die-hard activist, grew up in Chesterville, Durban; attended Bonella Primary and Secondary School—

finishing in Grade 10; before heading to the Mother city to seek employment. Her dynamic personality has led her to fortunes and misfortunes, which she had to bounce back from. Going back to her hometown, in 2016, Sindi has found numerous ways to make ends meet. Earlier this year, she was nominated on a 3-month research programme as a Reactor to document human rights violations against sex workers.



Mapula Makhabela from Rustenburg in Ikageng Village joins Sisonke as a Media Liaison Officer in North West. The mother and grandmother of two, who loves helping people has been a

volunteer for 6 years at

CPC. Outside of work she loves letting her down, hosting friends and going out for fun. Among other things Mapula enjoys watching football and playing netball.



Eric Joseph Dondolo, a bundle of joy who enjoys being around friends joins Sisonke as a Gauteng Province Peer Educator. To alleviate the pressure for the hard day's work he enjoys reading or going for a run when not hitting the gym to flex out some muscle. Don't be fooled, by his smile and bubbly personality, he has his stern, no-nonsense side. The patient, tolerant and very empathetic to others Eric, is passionate about the health sector. He has been involved in numerous community organisations where he grew his career as both a leader and server. His background in community-based work includes: serving as a Peer Educator, Lay Counsellor and Youth Care Club Mentor, in addition he has worked as a volunteer at a mobile clinic where my responsibilities included advising patients on HIV-related issues as well as giving health talks among adolescents and adults. Among other things he has championed numerous HIV/Aids programmes and has been awarded the International Aids society Youth Champion where he advocates on matters of youth within Sub Saharan Africa. Adding to his accolades he has volunteered as an assistant at a local school to assist with the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI).

Staff development

After tirelessly and diligently serving Sisonke as a Media Liaison Officer in Gauteng Province for more than five years, **Katlego Rasebitse** now serves as Sisonke's Organiser. Without fail, Katlego has gone beyond his call of duty ensuring the call for the decriminalisation of sex work is elevated locally and beyond our shores. His promotion to the

Organiser position, will not be far removed from his duties as Media Liaison Officer; but will include added responsibilities where he will heighten his negotiation and persuasion skills engaging with various external stakeholders. Without fail, nor fear of favour, Katlego, has professionally and diligently, represented sex workers nationally and internationally.



The significance of Workers' Day

Originally born from the protracted struggle for workers' rights and social justice of the late 1800s, Workers' Day has been an international holiday in many countries since 1891.

In South Africa, a country with its own long and sordid history of labour and social conflicts. Workers' Day has been officially recognised and observed since the first democratic elections in 1994. The holiday serves both as a celebration of workers' rights and as a reminder of the critical role that trade unions, the Communist Party and other labour

organisations played in the fight against apartheid. Workers' Day in South Africa holds its own cultural significance, as the public holiday has come to signify not only the sacrifices made on the long road toward fair employment standards, but



Picture: Yonela Siqu

also the bitter battle against apartheid in which trade and labour unions played a key role. Because South Africa's working classes were those most oppressed by apartheid, the struggle for better working conditions and the struggle to overthrow systemic segregation became closely linked. Before the elections of 1994, labour and trade groups often used Workers' Day as a symbol to rally the population against the segregation and oppression of the apartheid system, organising demonstrations and encouraging widespread resistance.

• Courtesy: <https://www.gov.za/WorkersDay2021>

Your safety comes first

By Juliet

Sex workers are always exposed to risky situations that often times threatens their lives. Drastic measures to reduce these harmful situations need to be taken into account. Some of the tips which I can give to sex workers are as follows:

Trust your instincts

If you feel uncertain about a certain client there sure is a good reason for it and it's not worth ignoring and later wishing you had not. Never trust a client.

Appearance can be deceptive Don't assume that someone is ok just because they look respectable; the same goes for regulars.

Always look confident

When talking to a client, one should always keep a confident look on their face and be assertive, strong and in control.

Stick to your prices and limits

There is no negotiation when it comes to a contact you make with yourself, name your price and stick to it.

Know your limits

Before meeting with a client decide what you are, and are not willing to do.

Be friendly but firm

When talking services with a clients, explain your limits and don't be convinced by what the client says. Although friendly, don't be ashamed to turn a client away who has requests or suggestions you are uncomfortable with.

Never carry dangerous weapons

Carry a safety alarm, pepper spray, tazer and never be afraid to use them. Keep

them where you can easily get them, should the need arise. Always have a emergency numbers on speed dial. Avoid carrying dangerous weapons such as knives and other sharp objects which the person posing as a client might use to harm you.

Avoid working when intoxicated

Often people pose as clients and take advantage of you when you are intoxicated. A client who is willing to keep the drinks coming while eyeing you for business, is a red flag. Never accept a drink which is carried from the bar to you by a client, this includes your regular— fetch your own drink, even if they are paying.



Picture: Louis Hansel/ Unsplash



Picture: Maxim Hopman/ Unsplash

Always be aware of escape routes and surroundings

Upon entry to a place, familiarise yourself with the exists, be it the window or the door. Avoid working in high storey buildings. Familiarise yourself with the route take to get to the venue where you are set to work. But always prioritise choosing the venue, than the client doing so.

Avoid working in isolation

It is of utmost importance for sex workers not to isolate themselves from others. Sex workers should rather create an association with and keep a close eye on each other when one leaves with a client.

Be observant

Take a close look of who you're dealing with, and make a mental note of them (any particular scar, tattoo height etc), their car, registration of their car and venue where they take you. Those little things may be of great assistance during an investigation should something happen. Share this information with a member you work closely with.



Decriminalise sex work

By Juliet

My journey as a sex worker and a mother of 4 began in 2012. Life has changed since then, I have been struggling to make ends meet. I tried to find other work out of sex work, but with no success—as I don't have higher qualification at education level. The easiest way, that didn't require much from me, is the life on the street, so I can put food on the table and take my kids to school. It has not been a easy ride for me as my work is still not legal in South Africa. As sex workers, we are not safe in the streets; we get abused more and more. Police are more of the perpetrators in our trade, we get arrested constantly and get fines to pay. In some cases when you don't have money they will ask you to exchange for sex. I am a sex worker and I am HIV+. Police are risking with our lives. When you are in the cells, you are not be given your treatment and that is risky and put your life at risk more and more. It's painful and hard to be a sex worker in my country. I fully support the Movement that stand for the rights of sex workers because since I joined it, I can proudly say, yes, I am a sex worker, sex work is work! We deserve decriminalisation, so that we can be free, not only from the police, but from our community members too. I am mother and my work as sex worker, my work should not cost me my life.

By Ntombi, KZN MLO

I'm a sex worker, a mother of two beautiful children; a single parent who raise them with respect love.

I consider myself as a very supportive mother. I fell pregnant at a very young age, but I survive all the hardship. At first, for a long time, I was paying rent for my place.

Thereafter, I was able to save enough money to buy a place, where I built a house that I now call home for my children and granddaughter. I have always been a hard worker; a strong woman. My not so easy upbringing taught me to be strong; as a result I can now face

anything. I enjoy being a sex worker, cause it allows me to be my own boss—I choose the time to start working and when I finish, whether I want to go to work or not. I have always provided for my children from the money I have made from my work.

Being a sex worker, is not always as easy nor as fun as it may seem. Sometimes our client can be very difficult and aggressive, but I remain calm at all times. With our work still not recognized as work, we face triple the stigma, that most women of color face. But, because our most important reason of

coming to work is to make money, we take all the risks. There are days were we have to run for our lives and hide from dangerous people who pose as clients or sometimes just common thugs; sometimes it's the police who instead of protecting us, rape and harm us emotionally with the words they throw at us or the unnecessary arrest. Such people are the reason sex work becomes an unsafe place to find yourself in— it's here and because of these people we have lost so many of our colleagues and in more cases than usual, no justice has been served.



Picture: Marcus Lewis / Unsplash

Hard knock growing up

By Maneo

Beautiful, young 21-year-old Kelly from Bethal had an alcoholic unstable mother— at only 2 months, her grandmother had to step in, took her in and they never heard from her mother again. When her grandmother died when she was about 5 years old, she was taken into foster care. It all seemed fine until her foster father had his way with her at around the age of 6. She told the foster mother who did nothing about it, she seemed not to care. She managed to escape the horror house and was back at an orphanage again. Years went by with her at the orphanage; suddenly her mother came back

for her and with proof that she was the biological mother—Kelly was released into her care.

Kelly now was around 10 years and living with her mother and stepfather, but that also did not work out as she was raped again by the stepfather and got beaten by her mother every time she told her what had happened.

One day it happened on the day the social worker was going to the house for a follow-up/check-up.

She could not help, but call the police when finding Kelly in such conditions. She was taken back to the orphanage and the stepfather arrested for rape as Kelly had evidence on her body and his semen.

She escaped from the orphanage at

around the age of 13 and found herself homeless in the busy streets of Mpumalanga.

As young as she was at the time, it is here where she was taken in by a man who introduced her to having sex with him and others for money.

She lived that life with her so-called boyfriend who physically abused her to the point that he even knocked out both her front teeth and that's when she knew she had to escape.

Just before she put her plan in action she found out she was pregnant and that did not stop the abuse as a result she miscarried.

Upon her healing, she escaped to Johannesburg where she is still a sex worker at the age of 20.

Sex work knows no class

By Maneo

Liddy's bringing up was close to 'normal' with both her parents present and an older brother. In high school, she was more of a sneaky head, always wanted to bypass everything with nobody noticing, never liked the homework nor the teachers as she did not like being told what to do, waking up to go to school was one thing she disliked and as a result, she did not finish high school. Liddy grew up in Hillbrow a neighborhood exposed to a lot of sex work and drugs. At around the age of 14,15, she got attracted to fancy things, but both her parents not so pleased with her dropping out of school she knew she could not ask

her parents for the lavish things and one way of getting them without a job was to do what she saw other girls in the neighborhood do.

So she started making friends that introduced her to clients.

She recalls her first client was a person who offered her a ride home from a club she went to on that particular night.

On their way, she said the guy started complimenting her on her looks and that's when she told him that they could spend some time together considering her time was money which he obliged.

She got excited about the money that she did worry about going back home that night, she just thought of the money.

The next day when she went back home her parents were very furious and worried that she never returned home the night before.

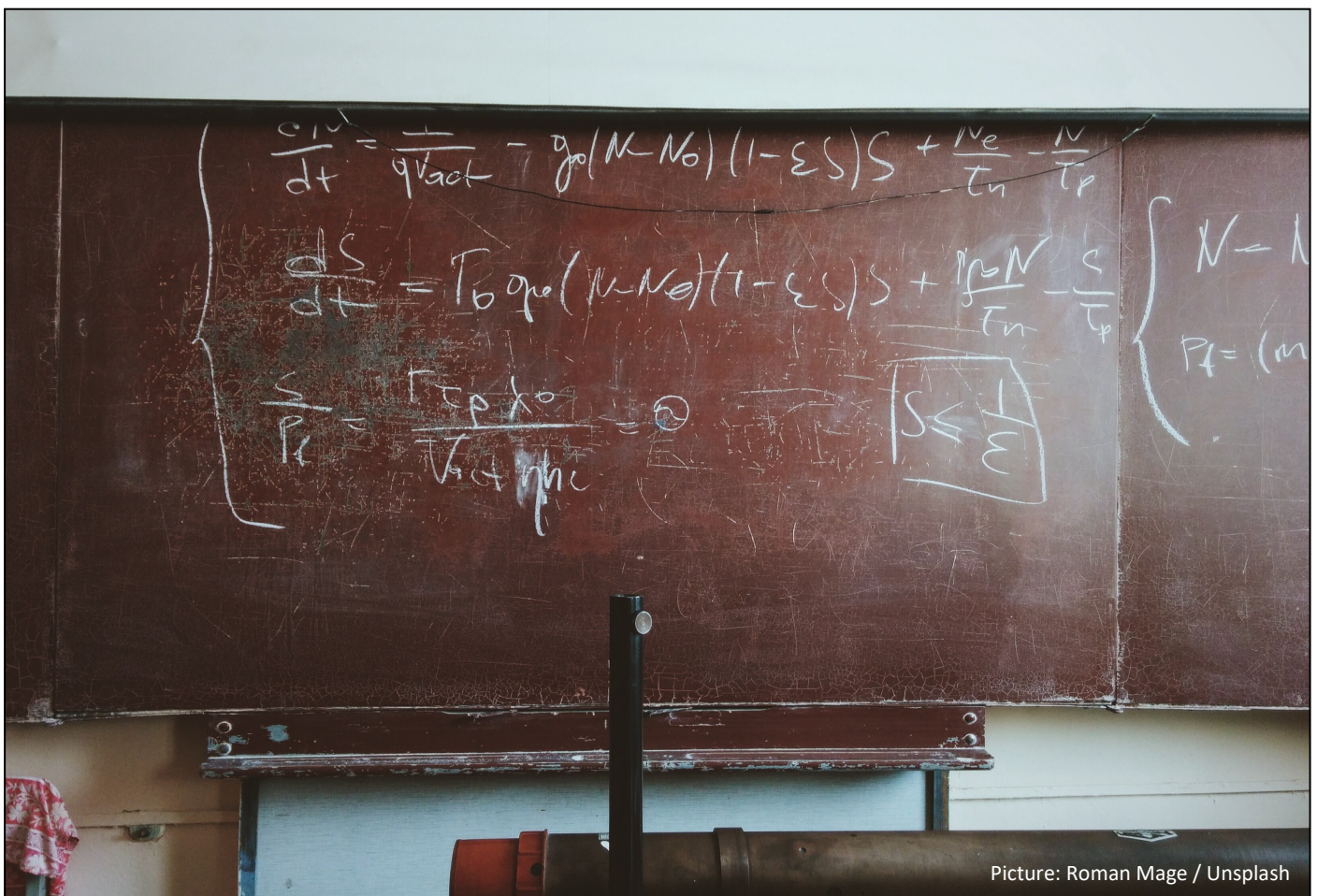
That is when she

decided to run away from home and found herself leaving with an abusive pimp that would take all of her earned money and gave her drugs instead.

As she grew older and wiser she managed to escape from the pimp, moved to another town, and was her own boss, but still took drugs which got her spiraling downwards, but even that did not drive her back home.

Liddy is now 28 with no children still a sex worker and not planning on going back home anytime soon.

She feels she's addicted to the lifestyle and the money...



Picture: Roman Mage / Unsplash



About 80 people from various sex workers' rights groups and supporters gathered at the Beyers Naude Square in Johannesburg for the FunkItImWalking initiative, by Ntsiki Mazwai. This group of activists walked to Constitution Hill singing struggle songs and chanting "Funk it I'm walking! Let's walk to freedom", drawing the attention of bystanders in the inner city. The walk was organised as a collaboration between Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT), Sisonke and Asijiki Coalition. The campaign aimed to raise awareness about making Johannesburg streets safe for womxn. Mazwai said supporting the decriminalisation of sex work may improve the safety of sex workers.



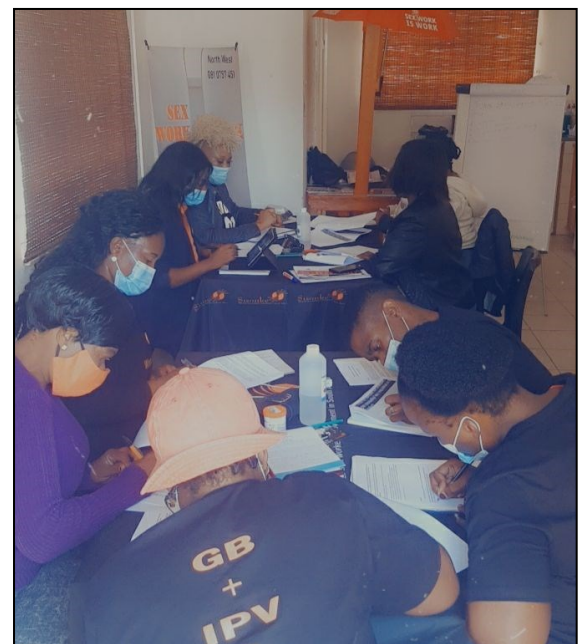
Above: Asijiki Coordinator, Constance Mathe, left, with Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT) Director, Emily Craven during the Funk it I'm walking! Let's walk to freedom campaign.



Left: Team Western Cape, came out to raise their voices against the brutal killings aimed at members of the LGBTQIA+ community.



Clockwise: National Sex Workers Sector representative, Katlego Rasebiste, Sisonke National Coordinator, Kholi Buthelezi and SANAC former Key Population Manager, Lebowa Malaka at the National Sex Work Sector meeting after the nomination and election of the sector representative. Eastern Cape Media Liaison Officer, Nomda Qweshwa, boldly out-and-about her community raising awareness with the strong messaging (*This is what a sex worker looks like*) scribed on her vest. KZN Treatment Action Campaign hosting, Sisonke and its members to address atrocities within the healthcare sector faced by people living with HIV and sex workers. Mpumalanga women out in numbers at the Standerton Magistrate Court during a court case hearing of a GBV-related matter. Sisonke North West hosting an intense discussion on the achievements and challenges affecting Sisonke members in the province.



Work, were beauty is vital

By Juliet & Maneo

Sex workers work by attraction, the more attractive you are the more clients you are likely to attract. It is mostly one's appearance that attracts clients in the sex business; since no one is looking for affection (even clients) it's just about the money and satisfaction. Most sex workers enhance their looks, by using make up.

Most believe the more make up you apply, the fancier clients get you. Well it might work by chance, but simplicity has proven to be a lot more effective at times.

Simple applications of make up makes it easy for one to prepare for their next shift; is easy to maintain and revive in any environment. A makeup kit is essential in every sex workers' bag. Not only does this apply to make up, but to hairstyles too — a simpler hairstyle is more advantageous for a person who works a number of shifts a day as it is easily maintained throughout. Clothes, shoes and lingerie are just as important to complete the look that is mostly likely fancied by clients. One has to understand their body, know what looks good on them and capitalize on it; cleanliness is just as important. Smiling is also one key of beauty taken for granted. It keeps the face glowing and welcoming; something clients are attracted to. Beauty, cleanliness not forgetting charm are very attractive; and by being able to maintain these key factors, you should be able to sweep anyone off their feet regardless of who they are. Maneo offers useful hacks to maintain your beauty without breaking your budget:

- Brush toothpaste on your nails twice a week to strengthen, whiten and speed up growth
- Use a sea sponge if you do not have



Picture:
Marcus Lewis / Unsplash

a makeup blender.

- Make your own wax with items in your cupboard: 1 cup sugar, 1/4 cup water, 1/4 cup lemon juice and boil the mixture for 5 - 7 minutes
- Always apply lotion on your skin before putting on foundation, that way your skin is protected
- Mix powder to a little foundation to cover a pimple
- Apply lip balm before lipstick for a smooth coverage
- Baby powder is a great replacement for highlighter

and brush

- For a longer-lasting and colorful effect, apply concealer under eyeshadow
- Always remove lipstick when doing a BJ as you might end up with lipstick all around your mouth and does not look so attractive
- Put your hand over the tip of the penis when engaging in Spanish (sex between breasts) so you do not get the semen on your face.
- If working, while on your period, use a red or black condom and use a dark-colored cloth instead of white.