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## Erotic Service Providers Legal, Education and Research Project

### Research Evaluation Tool for Erotic Service Providers©

This research evaluation tool will help the public, the media and our community to learn how to gauge if the research they've read or are embarking on or participating in meets this new standard as to increase respect, inclusion and relevance. Basic research must operate from ethics. There are a few golden rules in research: 1) "Do no harm," 2) informed consent, and 3) voluntary participation

The public, the media and our community benefits with this tool to help gauge in what manner research was and is being created, administered and interpreted on our behalf. This is especially important in light of the long history of suppression at any cost that has left us vulnerable to violence and marginalized our voices to the point to where we are rarely ever consulted on the direction, the perspective or the consequences of such research on our class.

#### 1. Is it community-based participatory research?

Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is a collaborative approach with equal partnership between trained academic researchers and members of a community. CBPR means that the affected community was involved in creating and administering the questions, helped decide the scope, was afforded the opportunity to interpret the results and to decide the manner in which to release the results as to insure no unintentional harm happens.

#### 2. Is there an IRB? How does the Institutional Review Board (IRB) protect human participants?

An Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a federally mandated panel that is charged with overseeing the protection of human participants as well as weighing the relative risks and benefits of research. IRBs typically consist of members from a variety of academic disciplines and most also include representatives from the community in which they reside. Research that is conducted with humans (as well as other animals) through a college or university, such as by a college student or professor, or any institution that receives federal funding is required to be submitted to and approved by their home

institution's IRB before being conducted. IRBs have authority to approve, require modification to, or disapprove all research activities involving human subjects. Following initial approval, IRBs must conduct periodic reviews of the research. The researcher should have a copy of their IRB approval with a protocol number. It is the researchers' responsibility to follow the protocol as reviewed and approved. Many professional associations have their own ethical standards as well.

Research should not cause physical harm. The potential for psychological or emotional harm must be carefully weighed in relation to the benefits of the research. This becomes a little more complicated as asking people questions about certain subjects could result in them becoming upset, e.g. attitudes about abortion. Overall, people must be safe. Those participating in a study are often told they will encounter no more harm than they are likely to experience in everyday life.

### 3. Informed consent: What is it, and why it's important in increasing respect, inclusion and relevance. How its obtained, how to revoke it.

People have a right to know they are participating in a study and of what that study will consist. This is pretty straightforward when a person is asked to be interviewed or to complete a survey. A researcher may read to you or have you read the informed consent. However, a researcher can obtain permission as an observer or participant observer at a particular site without having to inform every person that comes through that location that they are conducting research. So if erotic service providers and members of our larger communities encounter a researcher in the course of receiving social or judicial services for example, it may be important to ask if the contents of your conversation will be included in any research piece.

Since part of our mission statement is about archiving and rating research on erotic service providers and our larger communities, we offer an evaluation system by which researchers can submit their work to help educate the public, the media and our communities about what inclusive, respectful and relevant research looks like as to increase empowerment, privacy and lessen discrimination when using research to craft public policy regarding erotic service providers and our larger community.

### 4. Voluntary participation:

This usually goes hand-in-hand with informed consent. People have a right to decide if they want to participate in a study. They can also stop participating at any point with no penalty. You can always refuse to answer a question or withdraw your participation completely. Since part of our mission statement is about archiving and rating research on erotic service providers and our larger communities, we offer an evaluation system by which researchers can submit their work to help educate the public, the media and our communities about what inclusive, respectful and relevant research looks like as to increase empowerment, privacy and lessen discrimination when using research to craft public policy regarding erotic service providers and our larger community.

## 5. Is the research comparative?

Good research does not need always need to be comparative as sometimes comparisons can be more stigmatizing because they assume a “normal” group, non sex worker group to be compared to the “deviant” sex workers. researchers must always candidly point out the differences in the way the studies were done that may lead to unequal results and make them difficult to compare meaningfully. Since erotic service work is essentially a revenue-generating activity, we insist on employing approaches that compare erotic service work with other sexual service work and other forms of service sector work so as not to re stigmatize ourselves as perpetual victims and perpetrators. In this way it will insured that our community isn't going to be re-stigmatized and traumatized by the untrained and careless professionals making unqualified statements

## 6. Privacy-how is the researcher/investigators going to protect my privacy? What are their legal obligations?

Research relies on the trust and good faith of their participants therefore they should always act towards us with respect as many of us have tenuous legal situations and status not to mention the always present risk of exposure to negative social stigma and real life discrimination. Research participants can participate anonymously as getting accurate information is paramount to informing ourselves about us. (We, ESPLERP acting in partnership will be keeping all the 'raw data' so as not put researchers in a legal situation but this is an internal policy not to be published).

## 7. Has the research been peer review?

Academic researcher at universities may publish their findings in professional journals of their peers who are made up of other university academics like themselves. Academic in the same field verify the means upon which the questions and methodology were used to lessen the possibility of bias as to maintain the integrity of the research results. Some researcher are not associated with an intuitions like universities. They represent an independent class that is available for higher. The reports they generate are not peer reviewed. Our community has suffered at the hands of these later types employed by our political foes to manufacture information to further stigmatize and discriminate against us. Their questionable methodology is rarely exposed to the public while their results may take on legendary proportions.

## ABOUT US

ESPLER is a diverse community-based erotic service provider led group which seeks to empower the erotic community and advance sexual privacy rights through legal advocacy, education, and research. In our legal advocacy, we seek to create change through a combination of impact litigation, policy statements, and voicing our concerns for our community in political arenas. Through educational trainings and outreach, we will empower and build the capacity to address discrimination of erotic service providers and the greater erotic community. Lastly, we strive to archive and rate much of the research which has been done by and of the sex worker community, and build on this history with research which seeks to be increasingly inclusive, respectful, and ultimately, relevant to the erotic service providers and the larger erotic community.

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Further Resources National Institutes of Health Ethical: Research Involving Human Subjects, Guidelines & Regulations

[http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/hs/ethical\\_guidelines.htm](http://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/hs/ethical_guidelines.htm)

