

# **In the North: From Corner to Corner**

**The Needs, Trends, and Working Conditions of Sex  
Workers in Prince George, British Columbia**

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**A document of Prince George New Hope Society  
April 2007**

## Dedication

We would like to dedicate this report to all sex workers living in Prince George and outlying communities in the north region. 106 women and girls shared their stories as a contribution for community change. Thank you to those of you who took the time to break the silence and share your voice. We, at the Prince George New Hope Society, commit to ensuring that this report is used to create more awareness around sex work issues; enhance supports in and around the community; and, ensure the betterment of working conditions in Prince George.

## Acknowledgment

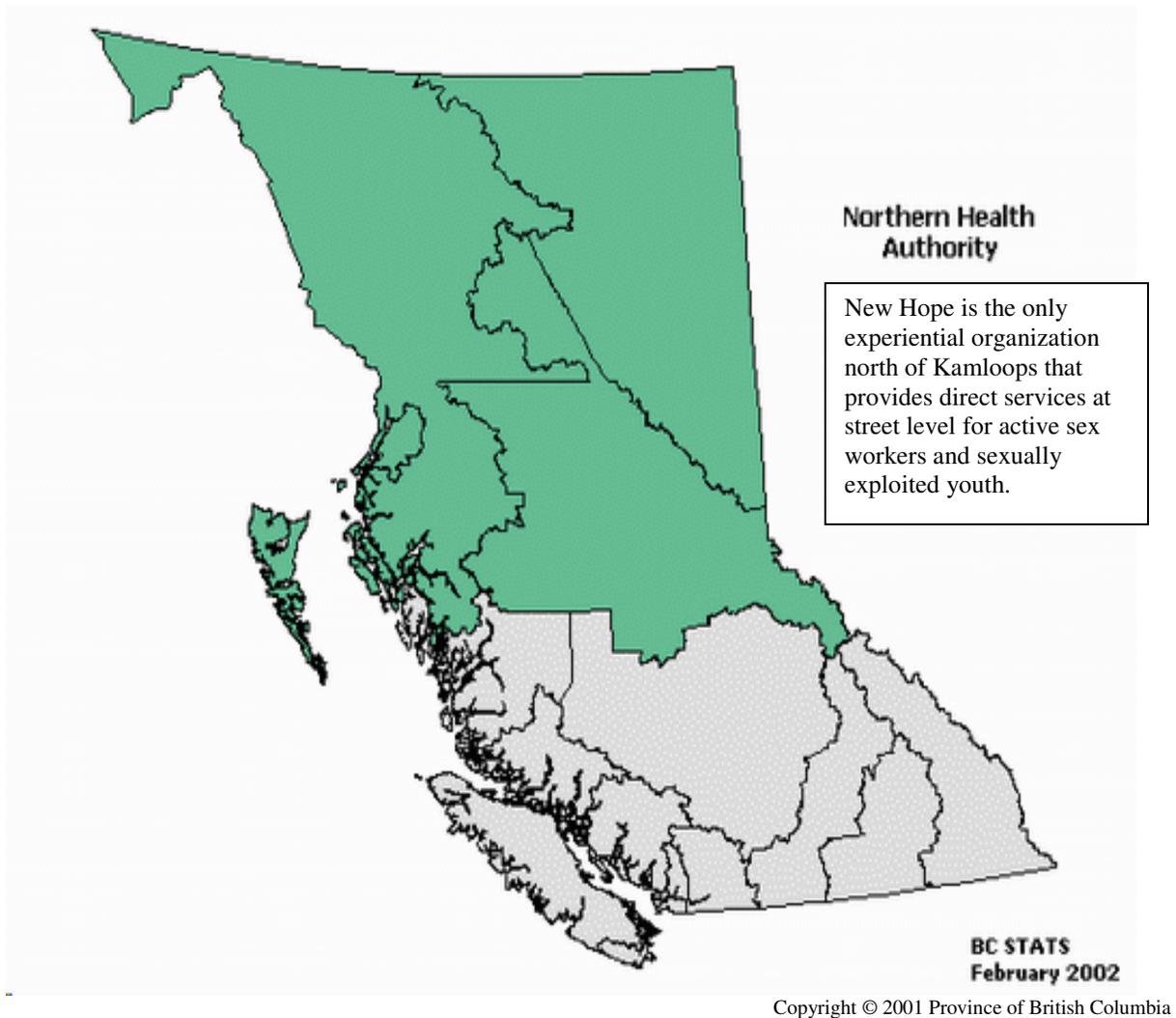
We wish to acknowledge and appreciate the support from Status of Women Canada and the Vancouver Foundation, without whom this report would not be possible. We would like to express our gratitude to the BC Coalition of Experiential Communities for their guidance during this project, as they bring an abundance of knowledge and experience around sex work and related issues. Thank you to the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union for allowing us to use a space that many sex workers in Prince George have come to feel safe in. We also would like to send a special thank you out to Jody Stuart, Theresa Healy, and Mary Jackson for sharing their knowledge of research and showing their support while writing this report. Most importantly, we would like to honour the women and girls who participated for their true value as human beings in a world that challenges their truth.

### Till We Meet Again

Gone but never forgotten  
Faces that we will remember forever  
For the lives they had were not who they were  
Friend, sister, brother, they were and will always be  
Glitters that shine bright in the night sky  
Waiting...  
For the comfort of our prayers  
The streets were only but a home for their lost souls  
Wandering aimlessly  
Searching for something or someone to believe in  
They were warriors  
Men and women standing in the face of a nation risen against them  
Their stories will not be untold  
Stamped out in the ashes of their deaths  
This is not goodbye  
Only till a moment in time when we meet again

*C. Capostinsky  
April 2007*

## Map of Northern BC Region



### Did you know?

The women and girls who participated in this research came from all over the northern region. Many of them travel back and forth from their communities to Prince George. It is common for sex workers to be unseen for long periods of time because they have gone back to their communities. It is good that they are staying connected to where they come from; however, many of these communities lack the resources to provide services to these women and girls.

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## Glossary - A Word about Language

**Experiential**—in the context of this report, we define it as having knowledge of sex work and survival sex from firsthand lived experience.

**Sex Work**—sex work is defined as the exchange of sexual services for remuneration or goods, where parties consent and negotiate the details of the transaction.

**Survival Sex** — survival sex is defined as the lack of opportunity to consistently exercise the right to refuse sex work in any circumstances. This lack of opportunity is due to predatory violence, criminalization of negotiation, poverty, abusive relationships and so on.<sup>1</sup>

**Sex Industry**—the sex industry is a term used to describe the vast range of sexual services available to consumers. Workers, especially women, are highly sexualized in these environments. Some examples of the sex industry include street level sex work, pornography, stripping, telephone sex lines, live sex performances and erotic performances, fantasy services (submission-domination, bondage, and cross-dressing), erotic massage, escorting, etc.

**Sexual Exploitation**— is a practice by which person(s) achieve sexual gratification or financial gain or advancement through the abuse of a person's sexuality by abrogating that person's human right to dignity, equality, autonomy, and physical and mental well-being. <sup>2</sup> Sexual exploitation includes sexual harassment, rape, incest, battering, pornography and prostitution. We believe that under no circumstance is it okay for buyers of sex to consort with children. This is sexual exploitation. We also believe that while sex work is not necessarily linked to exploitation, survival sex is most definitely sexual exploitation.

**Sex worker users**—there are different terms used to label those who use the services of sex workers. Some of these terms include client, trick, john, date, customer, sugar daddy, regular, etc.

**Bad Date**—a customer who refuses to pay or abuses a sex worker.

**Youth**—for the purpose of this research, we define youth as anyone aged 19 or under. The youth consulted for the purpose of this report were all young girls as we are an organization that provides services for women.

**Trigger**—to cause someone to remember something and/or to evoke strong emotion around lived experiences.

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<sup>1</sup> Bowen, R. (2003). E. Shannon (Ed.), *Pathways: Real Options for Women out of Survival Sex* (pp. 2-17). Vancouver: Prostitution Alternatives Counselling and Education Society (PACE)

<sup>2</sup> Taken from the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW). <http://www.catwinternational.org/about/index.php>

## **Introduction to Context**

It is important to note that sex work has inherent choice, meaning that sex workers control and negotiate the environment and terms. In Canada, sex work is legal; however, sections of the criminal code make it impossible for sex workers to work without legal repercussions. Raven Bowen from the BC Coalition of Experiential Communities states, “When sex work is criminalized, the ability to verbally and publicly negotiate terms is taken away (section 213)<sup>3</sup> or the ability to negotiate the environment (section 210)<sup>4</sup>. This leads to ambiguity, and shifts control from the seller to the buyer, who is the one with the money!” This can perpetuate the cycle of violence by creating or maintaining “power-over”. Criminalization, according to Bowen, “also increases instances of situational violence where customers have expectations that are not met, because they haven't been negotiated-only implied”.

The environments for sex work and survival sex are fluid. As environments and conditions change, workers find themselves sex workers one minute and survival workers the next. We must be aware that it is the environment or the conditions that are seen as survival, not the worker! It is important to understand this. More often than not, society blames the individual instead of the situation that perpetuates the behaviour (Bowen). Furthermore, recalling the definition of the term survival sex, any situation where workers are not permitted to exercise choice is a survival situation. It is important for our communities to ensure that adequate resources are in place and to create healthier environments, both on the streets and off the streets, where workers are able to move from instances of less choice to circumstances of increased choice (Bowen). We are at the forefront for creating awareness and education around sex worker issues to not only the public, but to the sex workers themselves. Most women in the sex industry are not able to exit without social support, addiction treatment, legal support and economic alternatives. For women in street level sex work, education and life skills play a large part in their success.

### ***Prince George New Hope Society***

Prostitution and sexual exploitation has been acknowledged as a social issue in Prince George. There has been a long history of visible and identifiable sex work and survival sex in this community. There has been some action taken to implement strategies around prostitution in Prince George. Much of the work involved in taking action has devolved to social agencies and groups that lack the funds to initiate solutions to sex work; furthermore, because sex work and survival sex encompass concerns at different levels, community entities have been working on targeting different aspects of the issue.

The [Prince George New Hope Society](#) is a street level organization for sex workers and survival sex workers. We strive to create an environment of inclusion, thus we are experientially driven. New Hope provides support services for women and girls who are actively, periodically or

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<sup>3</sup> An offence in relation to prostitution makes it difficult for a sex worker to contract her services out in public or be accessible to the public

<sup>4</sup> Bawdy Houses

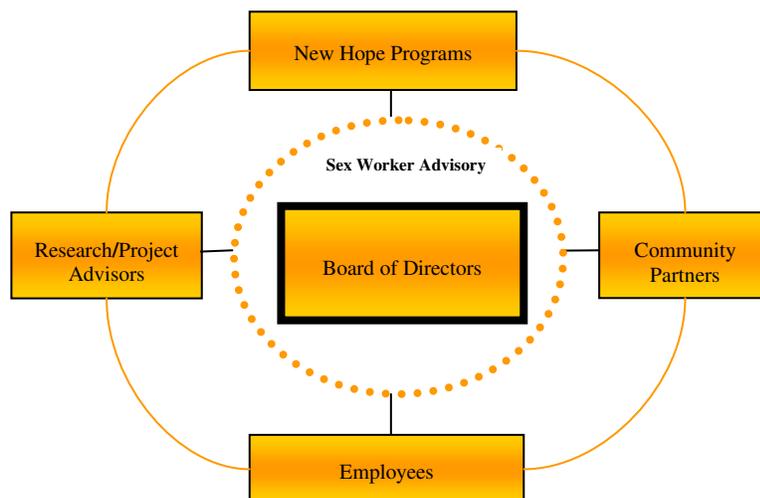
formerly involved in the sex industry. We started our organization at a time where there were no specialized services in northern BC exclusively for women and girls in and out of the industry. With the help of the BC Coalition of Experiential Communities (formerly known as the BC Coalition of Experiential Women), we were able to obtain federal funding to bridge the gap in services for sex workers and provide street level supports to women and youth in a dangerous industry. We have a strong board of directors that works in collaboration with a sex worker advisory to ensure that we are inclusive of the experiential voice. We do this to give sex workers an active role in being a part of the services and spaces that are created for them. New Hope space is owned and operated by sex workers for sex workers. This gives the women and girls a sense of belonging, safety and ownership over something that has become a part of their survival.



**Figure 1: New Hope Logo**

Our logo was created in September 2005 by Sherrice Lucier. It represents light, hope, courage and strength.

## Agency Structure



**Figure 2: Agency Structure**

The structure graphically represents the cyclical nature of the work and the need for an all encompassing web of support woven of knowledge, skills and commitment to social justice. We acknowledge the women who access services as part of the organizational structure because we strive to be inclusive. Without the women, we would not have an organization to maintain; furthermore, having direct input from the women supports our core philosophy.

## **Our Mission**

At New Hope we recognize that there is a lack of services for women in the sex industry. We strive to bridge the gap in services for sex workers through creating a place of safety and security for women to access support services pertinent to their needs. We offer relationships of hope – that do not try to exploit, manipulate or condemn them. Furthermore, we hope that the society becomes a place for opportunities to develop trust, in others and in self, and willingness to take new steps in life.

## **Mandate**

To identify and address the barriers that women, both adult and youth, face while working in sex work and survival sex in Prince George and Northern BC;

To facilitate educational opportunities that will empower women, both adult and youth, who work and live in this environment; and,

To improve the health status of people living with HIV/AIDS and HCV; furthermore, to address the issues around STI's and other diseases both with individuals and the community.

To support and promote experiential leadership, the development of essential services and a continuum of services for active sex workers.

To address the barriers and bridge the gap in services around mental health and addictions issues for sex workers in this community.

## **Vision**

New Hope believes in the fundamental human rights and dignity of sex workers and seeks to bring these women empowerment and support in making informed choices.

We understand that many women involved in sex work and survival sex may have lost a sense of safety and security because of the nature of their experiences and trade. We strive to provide a caring atmosphere of encouragement and safety using a non-judgmental approach to help bridge this gap and restore hope.

We recognize that women participating in sex work throughout northern BC face barriers around the key determinants of health, and as such, need support and advocacy in addressing these issues; therefore, through using harm reduction and mentorship models, we are committed to

working toward building a foundation for sex workers to feel equal and supported in making informed decisions around exiting sex work.

New Hope realizes that many women involved in sex work and survival sex are exposed to systemic oppression, and as such, we are dedicated in working towards independence, education and healthier lifestyles in Northern BC. We intend to advance dialogue around sex worker issues within our community, locally and regionally.

## **Purpose of the Consultation**

The purpose of the consultation was to look at the needs, trends and working conditions around sex work in Prince George. Many survival sex workers are transient and continuously move around, therefore they experience diverse needs depending on the communities in which they work. Though the work itself is the same as in more populated urban settings, the issues that encompass sex work are very different in more rural and isolated areas. To date, sex workers in the region have had little or no access to direct and specialized services to address these issues. The Prince George New Hope Society presents an opportunity to share these findings as it provides an opening for sex workers to share the realities of working in an industry that has proven to be very controversial over time. We also look forward to working with the community, both locally and regionally, to develop strategies with respect to sex worker and related issues. In the course of this research there were 106 women and girls consulted. These 106 sex workers who were consulted in no way come close to accounting for the numbers of women and girls involved in street-level sex work in Prince George and Northern BC. At the most, it is a representation of this population.

## ***Process Background / Methodology***

The *In the North: From Corner to Corner* consultation was designed, delivered, documented and disseminated by women in and from the sex industry. It took place over the span of 15 months, where two youth researchers were hired to consult with sex workers from across the region. There were 106 women and girls who were consulted during the project. Any person who self identified as ‘female’ was invited to participate in this research. This allowed us to include transgendered persons in the research. We felt this was important (for our study) in order to be inclusive because we also provide services to transgendered persons at New Hope. Of the 106 sex workers consulted, more than 40 were sexually exploited youth. The questions were designed to be administered as focus groups, interviews, and surveys, depending on the population of sex workers targeted and their level of comfort with group process. Data was collected in Prince George, but many of the workers traveled back and forth from their home communities (See Appendix A-C for complete list of questions). All sex workers interviewed had experience in both sex work and survival sex work. Often these terms are used interchangeably, especially when looking at street level work. Their experiences around sex work ranged from street level to escort and dancing. Most of the women and girls did not come from Prince George, but somehow ended up here with family. Their experiences spanned across BC and Canada and will be discussed further in the report.

In a 2005 report by the BC Coalition of Experiential Women, they stated that “information related to race or ethnicity, typically traditionally used to profile sex workers, was deliberately excluded from data collection.” Furthermore, they stated that their purpose in that was to “make the statement that sex working populations are as diverse as the community at large because sex workers are members of the community.”<sup>5</sup> We followed suit in this report for the same reasons. We did not ask for any information outside of the pre-formulated questions as we did not want to re-traumatize participants. We find that this can often happen when participants do not have healthy boundaries around self disclosure. Any other discussion that came from the interviews and focus groups (which had an interviewer present) was freely given by participants; however, it was not encouraged. One on one support was made available to those who felt that they needed extra support and debriefing. These sessions were of course confidential and not part of the research.

Given the lack of research on sex work in the north, this report presents original research carried over the year 2006/7 by the Prince George New Hope Society. We decided to conduct our research using interviews, focus groups and surveys. Forty three interviews were done one on one with the interviewer and the interviewee. Participants were given the option of doing the interview wherever they felt safe to do it. They were also asked if they wanted someone that they trust to be present during the interview process. The participants were briefed around consent and project details. There were 52 questions in total that were posed. Afterwards they were asked if they needed any briefing or support. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. The tapes were destroyed for reasons of confidentiality.

Four focus groups of 5 people were held at the PG New Hope Society. We kept the groups small so that we were able to maintain a level of comfort among participants during the focus group process. Like the interviews, participants were briefed and asked for consent. There were 27 core questions for focus groups.

Surveys, with 58 questions, were designed and delivered to different agencies in Prince George that work with youth. The youth were asked to fill them out, put them in an envelope and bring them to New Hope. Some of the youth needed help filling out the surveys. Towards the end of the project, we realized that we were behind schedule with the surveys so we hired a youth liaison worker to target the youth population. It worked out well and 43 surveys were filled out.

## ***Ethical Considerations***

This research was delivered in keeping with research guidelines, entitled *Research Ethics: A Guide for Community Organizations*, which were developed by sex workers and researchers.<sup>6</sup> At the Prince George New Hope Society we work with women and girls who are marginalized, impoverished, and often live in isolation. It is also significant to consider that the work that they do is heavily criminalized and as such, they continue to be targets of violence.

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<sup>5</sup> Bowen, R. (2006). *From the Curb: Sex Workers' Perspectives on Violence and Domestic Trafficking* (p 8). Vancouver: Prostitution Alternatives Counselling and Education Society (PACE).

<sup>6</sup> Bowen et al, 2006. Available May 2006 from PACE Society <http://www.pace-society.ca>

As a result, it is important to ensure the dignity, respect and honour of the women who share their stories. We developed the following as our code of ethics and practice:

1. We conduct our research in a way that will *not* bring harm to the research participants. It is important that they are not being put at increased risk because they are sharing information based on their personal experiences and knowledge with us.
2. We *must* also provide outside supports and resources for the women, if needed, after the interview session. Sometimes the research may bring up traumatizing past events for them so it is important that we ensure their safety and well being.
3. We *must* obtain free and informed consent from participants throughout the entire research experience. The women are given a brief summary about the research. After that they meet with the researcher if they are still interested in participating in an interview. When they meet with the researcher, they are guided through a consent form. They must sign the consent in order to participate in the research; however, they are also given the option to withdraw their consent at any time without financial repercussions. We do not withhold the honoraria if they withdraw their consent. After the research is compiled they are given the option to look everything over and withdraw their consent if they are not comfortable with the outcomes.
4. We *must* honour and respect the confidentiality of the participants and abide by the statements which are documented in the consent form.

### ***Informed Consent***

All participants were briefed on the purpose of the consultation. We did not consult with anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol because we felt that they would not be able to give free and informed consent under those conditions. Sex workers were told about the potential risks of participation and were free to withdraw their consent at any time in the process.

### ***Confidentiality***

It can be a challenge to maintain confidentiality in smaller cities and within smaller sex worker populations. To reduce the potential risks around sex worker participation, no names or identifying information was collected. To ensure the safety of participants, our goal was to summarize the data collected from sex workers and leave out potential identifying information. Raw data was not shared with any person or entity outside of the Prince George New Hope Society.

### ***Remuneration***

Participants were paid for their time in interviews, focus groups and surveys. We believe that time taken away from their work can potentially put them at harm for violence. We also believe

that they are working for survival and are entitled to remuneration for their time. Looking back, we did not provide payment in advance; however, we did ensure that the participants were given the opportunity to withdraw consent and end the consultation at any time during the process; furthermore, they were told that they would still receive payment if they chose to withdraw consent. In the future, we will ensure that payment is made in advance to strengthen the free and informed consent principle.

## Analysis

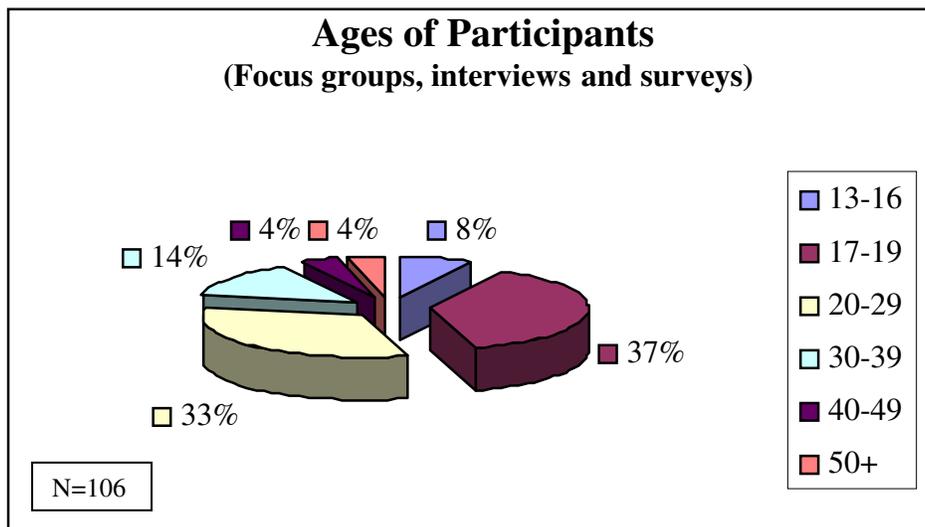
This consultation was mostly qualitative. After the consultations, we needed to decide how to code the information. Coding was done based on similar questions depending on interviews, focus groups and surveys (See Appendix A-C for complete list of inquiry questions.) Themes were drawn from the data and compared throughout each method. Data was graphed out and later on during the process we chose to display questions in graph and written form. Direct quotes from participants are used as a way to make it more meaningful.

This report is represented in chapters that explain the information shared from the research participants. Each chapter consists of questions and includes an analysis from the author. The graphs show the data collected and participant responses are incorporated throughout the report to give a quantitative response.

## Chapter one: Demographics

### Age ranges

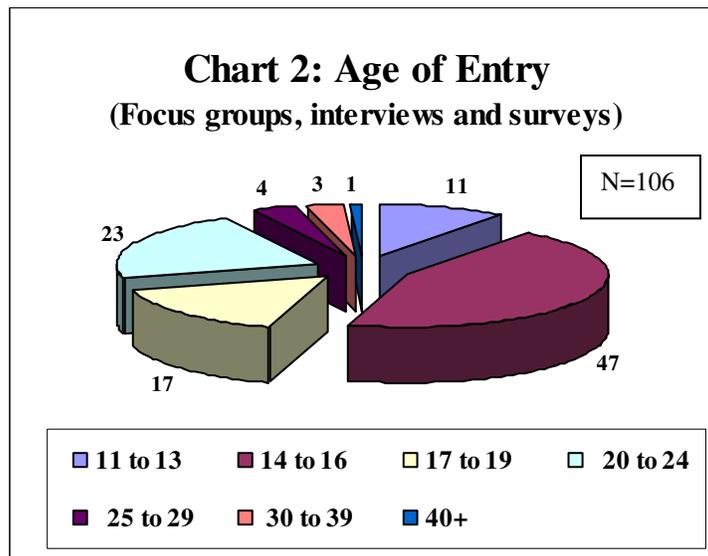
#### Question One: How old are you?



Graph 1: Age Range of Participants

When we initially drafted our research, we wanted to reach a population of sex workers that included sexually exploited youth. We were not only looking for an accurate representation of sex workers, but a rich and diverse combination of experiences. We ended up consulting with 106 sex workers and sexually exploited youth. The majority of participants in focus groups and interviews were over 19 years of age. Sexually exploited youth were the only participants in the survey. There were a few youth who wanted to participate after all the surveys were distributed, so we consulted with them in interviews.

**Question Two: How old were you when you got involved in sex work?**



Graph 2: Age of Entry

**Length of time in service**

**Question Three (a): Are you still working?**

It has been our experience that many of the women involved in street-level sex work move in and out of the industry. Women who participated only in interviews were asked this question. There were 43 women in total. Ninety three percent (40 participants) stated that they are actively involved in sex work. Seven percent were not currently involved, but may have recently been involved and/or anticipated involvement at a future date.

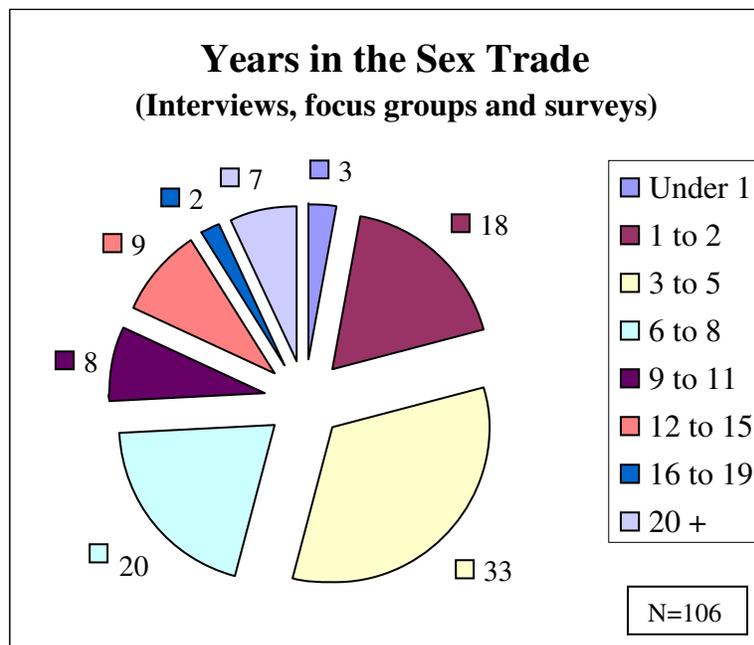
**Question Three (b): How often do you engage in sex work?**

This question was asked of the youth participants through the survey. Three youth did not answer this question. Two youth stated they no longer worked. This meant that out of the 40 youth that

answered the question, ninety-five percent, or 38 youth, were currently working<sup>7</sup>. For more information on youth participants who were asked this question during consultation go to page 60.

We did not ask participants in the focus groups if they were currently working because we used convenience sampling in the selection process. The women who participated in focus groups were chosen because they were actively working and accessing services at our drop-in centre. In analyzing all of the information around current working trends, we determined that out of 106 participants, 98 of them were currently involved in sex work and 3 participants did not answer.

Forty-five percent of the participants were under 19 years of age. When we look at the years that participants were involved in sex work, we can see a correlation with the participant ages. Fifty-one participants have worked for less than 5 years. We assume that this is partly because they are youth new in the industry; however, there are few sex workers who are older and newly involved in sex work.



**Graph 3: Years in the Trade**

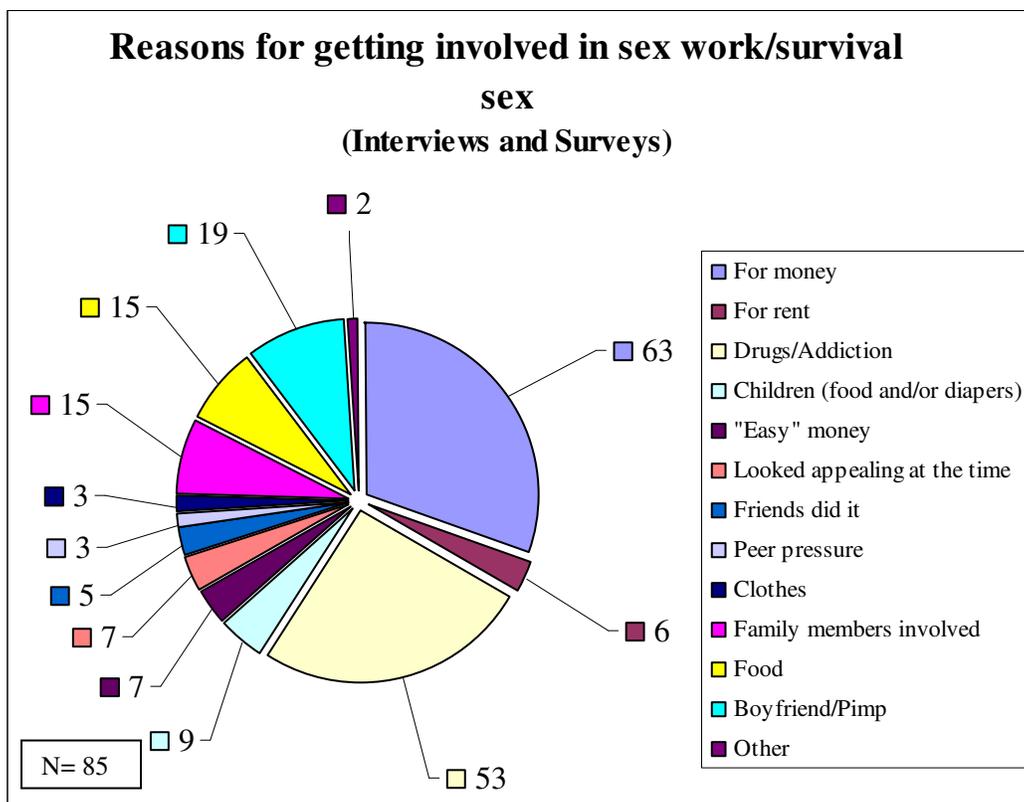
<sup>7</sup> There is a difference between youth who work in the sex trade and those who are sexually exploited. Some youth work because they need to make money for food, clothing, shelter, drugs and so on. Then there are others who are not working because they are making a conscious choice to do so, but rather because they are forced by family members, boyfriends, drug dealers, pimps and others to engage in sexual relations for money and drugs. Coercion, in this circumstance, is exploitation.

## Chapter Two: Involvement

### Question Four: What were the reasons you got involved in survival sex and sex work?

There are so many reasons why women and girls become involved in sex work. Many sex workers find sex work to be empowering<sup>8</sup>; however, there are many who do not. This is most accurate when it comes to survival sex. The reasons for involvement range from needing money to peer pressure. In this project, we asked participants what their reasons were for becoming involved in sex work. Participants from both the interviews and surveys were asked this question. Many of them gave more than one answer. One youth who filled out a survey did not answer this question.

**Young survey participant:** “My mom got me dates.”



Graph 4: Reasons for Involvement in Sex Work

**Survey participant:** “All my sisters used drugs and worked so I felt left out...stupid eh?”

Most street-level sex workers live in extreme poverty and sell sex for basic needs such as food and shelter. Four percent of the 85 participants who answered this question stated that they needed food and/or diapers for their

<sup>8</sup> Sex Workers and Civil Rights, by Kari Lydersen, AlterNet July 18, 2003. <http://www.rapeis.org/activism/prostitution/sexworkerscivilrights.htm>

children. Three percent of participants stated that they needed money for rent, and seven percent needed money for food. Sixty-three percent of participants said they needed the money; however, they did not remark on what they needed the money for. Often enough we saw that many of them were recruited by boyfriends and family members. This becomes an issue because it is normalized within families and can create a dangerous cycle.

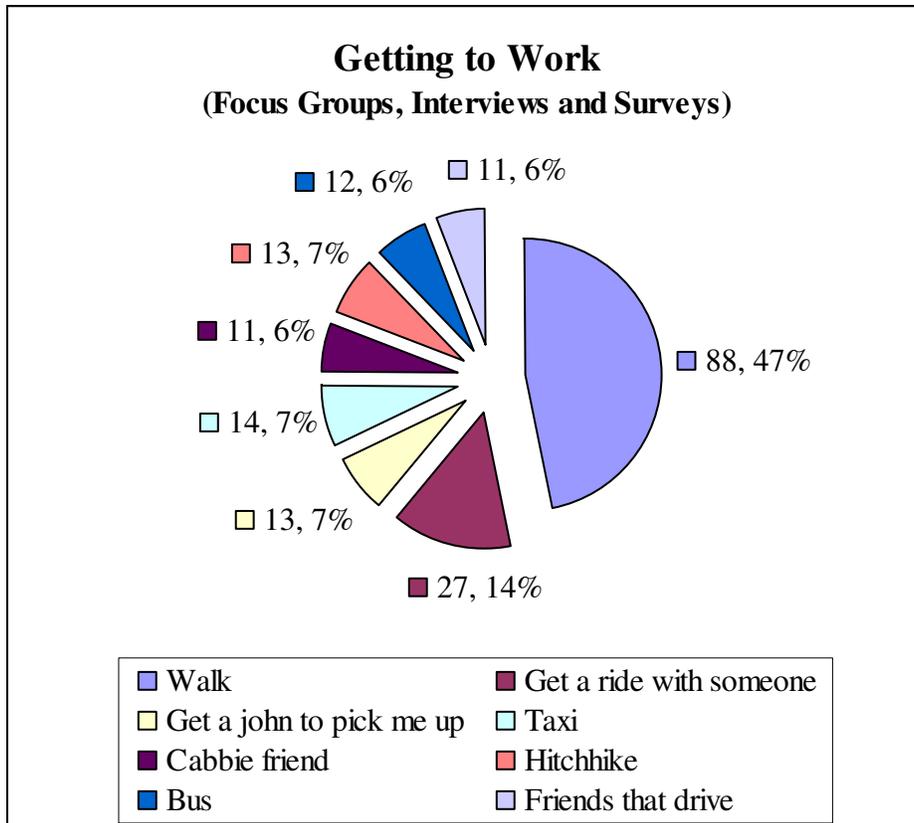
#### Their Voices:

- 👤 “I was living with friends downtown and after a couple of weeks I needed money. I was just walking downtown and some guy pulled over and asked me if I wanted to talk and the next thing I knew I had given him a blowjob and um then he gave me money.” About this experience: “I didn’t really feel anything...um...I felt wanted.”
- 👤 “It wasn’t until after I started working that I started using the drugs. It was just...um...really hard to keep working without being...um, high. Especially when I hated what I was doing. It made me feel dirty.”
- 👤 “I had just moved back to Prince George and me and a friend were staying in a shelter. Welfare turned down our application and there were sex trade workers staying at the shelter. We had no source of income so I started to work. All the girls had money and got to dress up and go out...it looked very appealing.”
- 👤 “I was raped as a child and my family was fucked up.”
- 👤 “My parents tried to give me what they could. They were poor, but they loved me...”
- 👤 “My dad molested me and my mom didn’t believe me...I didn’t think anyone else would believe me if my mom didn’t.”
- 👤 “I was 14 and I ran away from home because my family drank a lot and um my dad beat my mom.”
- 👤 “I was molested by one of my mother’s boyfriends when I was a child and I think watching my mother working the streets probably made me want to because she made a lot of money doing it.”
- 👤 “My mom was a drug addict and I was taken away. She cleaned up and I went back to live with her but then she fucked up again so I was constantly going to different family members to live with.”
- 👤 “I was raped by my dad and his friends when I was a little girl. I woke up and they would knock me out again.”
- 👤 “I was first introduced to it (sex work) by my first boyfriend, ah, he was abusive and I was pretty young, in love and not too smart.”
- 👤 “I grew up in a good home, middle class. I just got mixed up in the wrong crowd. Once I started the drugs, there was no turning back.”
- 👤 “My family always gave me everything, we were catholic. I was raised going to a catholic school. I just fell in with the wrong crowd.”
- 👤 “It became a need after when I started using drugs, like before I did it because I needed the money for somewhere to stay and then soon I would do a little bit of drugs because I’d be sick of what I did. I couldn’t go with guys without getting

high first and then I was like working to get high so it just turned totally backwards on me.”

### Question Five: How do you get to work?

We posed this question to participants in all methods of research. Some of them gave more than one answer. It is important to look at how sex workers are getting to work because many of them come from smaller communities and/or periodically live out of town. There have been many women that have gone missing along the ‘Highway of Tears’. Prince George is a city located along highway 16W, also known as the *Highway of Tears*. Many women and youth have disappeared and/or have been murdered along this stretch of highway. Due to the growing concern around the missing women, it is important to address the issues of women and girls walking along our highways. *One* woman hitchhiking is too many because that means there is potential for further missing person’s cases.



Graph 5: Getting to Work

### **Question Six: What are your relationships like with other sex workers?**

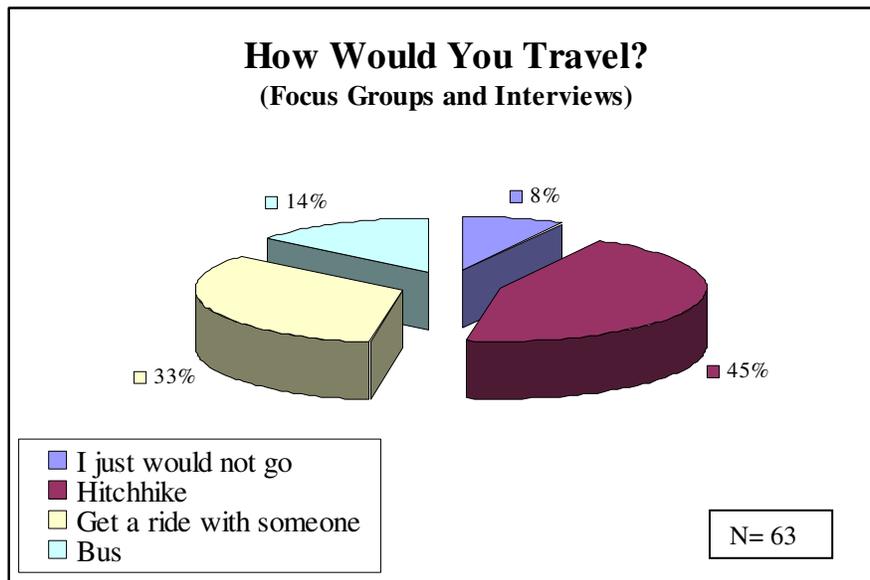
The question was posed to interview and focus group participants. The intention behind this question was to look at existing relationships between sex workers on the streets. Often enough sex workers do not have support from their families. Generally, they depend on the support of other sex workers. Though at times it can be a give and take relationship, sometimes these relationships can become extremely toxic. In response to this question:

- 🌸 25% or 21 participants stated that their relationships with other sex workers were good and that they were considered to be a part of a street family.
- 🌸 16% or 14 participants stated that they kept to themselves and preferred not to interact too much with other sex workers.
- 🌸 18% or 15 participants stated that they did not trust other workers.
- 🌸 14% or 12 participants stated that they considered other sex workers to be their “drug buddies”.
- 🌸 7% or 6 participants stated that they fought with other sex workers.
- 🌸 3% or 3 participants stated that their relationships with other sex workers were helping relationships.
- 🌸 8% or 7 participants stated that their relationships with other sex workers were okay and/or neutral.
- 🌸 7% or 6 participants stated that their relationships with other sex workers were argumentative, but that they still looked out for one another.
- 🌸 2% or 2 participants stated that their relationships with older sex workers were competitive.

### **Question Seven (a): Do you go to other towns to work?**

We consulted with participants from focus groups, interviews and surveys while asking this question. During our experience of working with the women and youth on the streets, we see that many of them move about from their communities to Prince George and back again. In light of the continuous fear of women going missing along the *Highway of Tears*, we wanted to find out just how many of them were doing this. Out of 106 participants, 76 have worked in other towns. This means that 33% of the participants do not work in other towns at the time of consultation.

**Question Seven (b): If you were to go to other towns, how would you get there?**



**Graph 6: How would you Travel**

These women are extremely marginalized and vulnerable to violence. In terms of the work to solve the murders and disappearances along highway 16, the realities of women’s lives and working conditions must be acknowledged. This way of life is really about survival for many of them. If they have to travel to another city to make money, then that is what they will do. Eight percent of the 63 women consulted said that they would not go. That is a small number compared to the other 92% that said they would either get there by bus, a ride or hitchhiking.

## Chapter Three: Safety

### Question Eight: Do you feel safe being involved in sex work?

This question was asked of participants from all three methods of research: focus groups, interviews and surveys. For those who are not, or have never been, directly involved in sex work the most obvious answer might be that it is not safe. This may be true; however, the question is asking whether or not sex workers *feel* safe. Not everyone feels afraid when they are working. When some women and girls have been exposed to sex work at a young age, it becomes normalized and from that, it can often be *natural* for them to become involved in sex work. Furthermore, there are vast numbers of women around the world, including Prince George, that are sexually exploited. In the past few years that I have been working at New Hope, I have seen young girls who have been exploited and in turn exploit other young girls. It is a vicious cycle that ruins lives and often ends in death.

**Understanding the graph:** When we consulted with sex workers on this question, it was asked differently on the survey. The survey has four different answers:

Yes    No    Often    Sometimes

We kept the responses separate when analyzing the data because we felt that the different categories were important in explaining this question. We merged the data in a more general way when we created percentages. Thirty-three girls answered yes, but they also reflected whether this was often or sometimes. Seven of them said yes, in general. One of them said they don't care and two said no, they do not feel safe. These numbers are alarming, especially coming from the youth as they are often considered to be more vulnerable. It is also concerning because if they do feel safe, will they still be as cautious? It is important to note that:

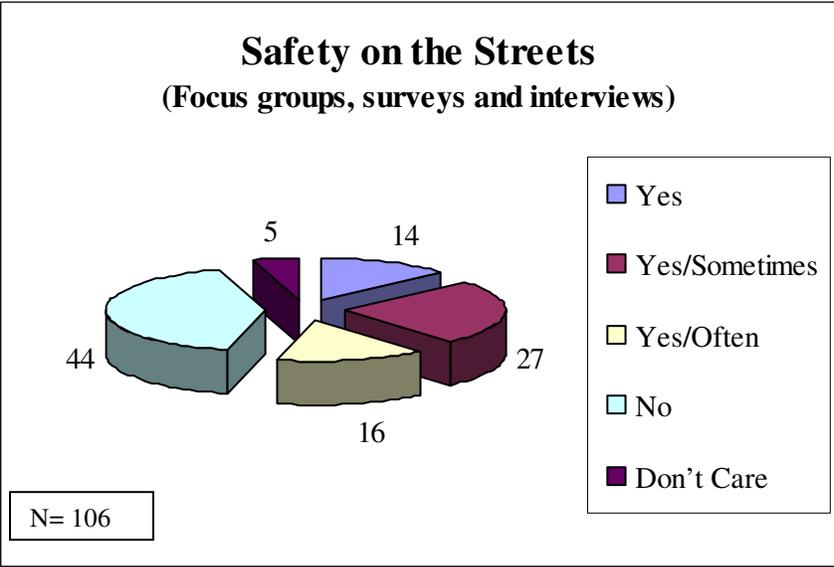
**Interview participant:** "I think probably when the girls only care about the dope, they rip the men off and then the next time he might pick up another girl and take it out on her."

- 🌸 Two of the girls said that if they did not feel safe, they would not be involved in sex work. Both of these girls had experienced bad dates when they answered this question.
- 🌸 One girl<sup>9</sup> said that she felt safe because her mom set up the dates for her.
- 🌸 Two of the girls were very new to the streets and may have lacked the experience to answer.

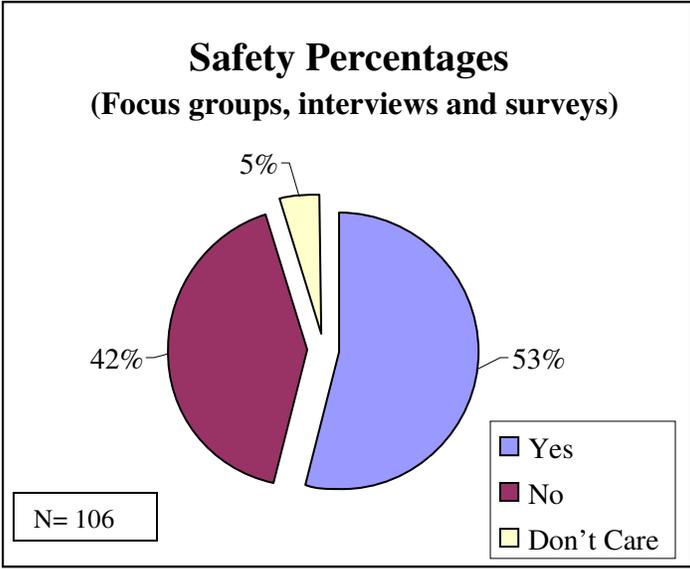
In the interviews and surveys most women either commented yes, no or that they didn't care; however, there were a few participants who elaborated on their responses. It was interesting to see that 42 women said that they did not feel safe working considering the high numbers of women and girls experiencing bad dates.

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<sup>9</sup> We use this term because when we consider the age of many of the participants, they really still are just 'girls'.



**Graph 7: Safety on the Streets**



**Graph 8: Safety Percentages**

This question of feeling safe may not give a realistic assessment from the participants consulted. In order to fully understand their responses, we would need to define their interpretations of feeling safe. Some of the women who come to New Hope have talked about how when they are engaging in the selling of sex, they have no choice so safety is neither an issue nor a priority for them.

## Participant Comments:

- 🌸 “They [‘johns’/customers] are stronger than I am.”
- 🌸 “I hear of bad things happening to women.”
- 🌸 “It’s scary sometimes. You don’t always know what is going to happen and uh, guys just turn on you sometimes.”
- 🌸 “Its scary business.”
- 🌸 “My friend was raped... yeah, it makes it more real when it happens to someone close to you.”
- 🌸 “I hate myself when I am out there! I mean how...um what is wrong with me? Um, I mean how many times to I have to have a guy shove my face in his dick before I stop? I just wish sometimes I wasn’t um, wanting the drugs so much.”

## Question Nine: What makes you feel unsafe about being involved in sex work?

This question was asked during interviews and focus groups. It was a difficult question that provoked bad reactions and triggered unpleasant memories from some of the women. A few of them chose not to go into detail and so they said “I don’t know.” Through some of the workshops held at New Hope the women have reflected that it can often be easier to not give a

**One girls answer on what it is like for her working:** “I guess I am lonely and I never know if I will make it home alive.”

direct answer than to remember a traumatic event when you are not ready to deal with it and/or lack the supports to address it. At New Hope we refer and provide supports but it is up to the women to choose whether or not they accept them. On the other hand, there may have been responses such as ‘I don’t know’ because of a lack of experience in the trade or irregularity of working. Many of the women shared similar responses; furthermore, there was often more than one answer given. For this question there were sixty-three participants. These were their responses:

- 🌸 33% or 42 participants stated specifically that the men that picked them up made them feel unsafe. A vast majority of customers of street level sex are men.
- 🌸 6% or 7 participants stated that contracting diseases made them feel unsafe.
- 🌸 18% or 24 participants stated that they felt unsafe because they were afraid of getting hurt.
- 🌸 10% or 12 participants stated that drugs made them feel unsafe on the streets while working.
- 🌸 10% or 12 participants stated that serial killers made them feel unsafe. Some of them lost friends at the hands of murderers of sex workers. Others felt unsafe because of the unsolved missing person’s cases along the highway of tears. One woman’s response during an interview was: “Knowing that there are guys like Robert Pickton out there.”
- 🌸 6% or 7 participants stated that poor lighting made it feel unsafe while working.
- 🌸 7% or 9 participants stated that losing friends involved in sex work and survival sex reduced their feeling around safety. This may or may not be related to the response around serial killers.

- 🌸 5% or 6 participants stated that they often felt alone, which caused them to feel unsafe.
- 🌸 5% or 6 participants stated that they ‘Did not know’.

### Question Ten: What do you do to keep yourself safe?

Sex workers can do all they can to make themselves feel safe, but that does not necessarily mean that they will be safe. They are working in a profession that is considered to be high risk. You can reduce the risk but usually cannot eliminate it entirely. Sometimes feeling safe gives us a sense of power and control when we are working. This question was asked during interviews and focus groups and a total of 63 participants were asked this question. We asked it as a way to go into more detail around the previous question on safety. Safety has always been an issue with sex work and more so with survival sex work. It can also be a means to reduce cloudiness in judgement so that we are more aware of our *gut instincts*. These are the participant responses:

- 🌸 3% or 5 participants stated that they did not do anything to feel safe.
- 🌸 11% or 17 participants stated that they stayed in more well-lit areas.
- 🌸 8% or 12 participants stated that they stayed in more populated areas.
- 🌸 8% or 12 participants stated they have regular customers.
- 🌸 5% or 8 participants stated that they carry cell phones for safety.
- 🌸 8% or 13 participants stated that they keep people informed so that they know where they are.
- 🌸 8% or 13 participants stated that they tell their customers there are people spotting for them. This does *not* necessarily mean that they actually have spotters at that moment: they may only be telling their customers that they have spotters. *Spotting* means that there is at least one person that sits at a distance and takes the license plate number, make/model of the car and any other identifying information about the vehicle and/or customer.
- 🌸 11% or 17 participants stated they just ‘don’t go’ if it doesn’t feel right.
- 🌸 1% or 2 participants stated that “being bigger helps”. Some women and girls are heavier set and it can give them a false ideology of feeling safe.
- 🌸 8% or 13 participants stated that they have spotters that watch out for them.
- 🌸 12% or 21 participants said that they carry weapons. There are lots of things that sex workers use that are not necessarily classified as a weapon, but can be use for a weapon. i.e. umbrellas, stilettos, purses, etc.
- 🌸 3% or 4 participants stated they stay safe by not going to work under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- 🌸 4% or 6 participants stated that they do not *rip* their customers off. This means that they do not steal or cheat the customer.
- 🌸 3% or 5 participants stated that they take the license plate numbers of the vehicle before they get in.
- 🌸 3% or 4 participants stated that they check the windows and doors before they get in the vehicle.
- 🌸 4% or 7 participants stated that if the customer does something that they do not like, she will stop the date. This is not something that can realistically happen and

often when women try to end the date, there is a probability that the customer may get angry.

🌸 3 % or 5 participants stated that they do nothing to make themselves feel safe.

**Interview participant:** Just having my mom around if something happens. She sometimes sets the date up for me because a guy will ask her if she knows any young girls so she will bring them to me...at least she knows where I am going.

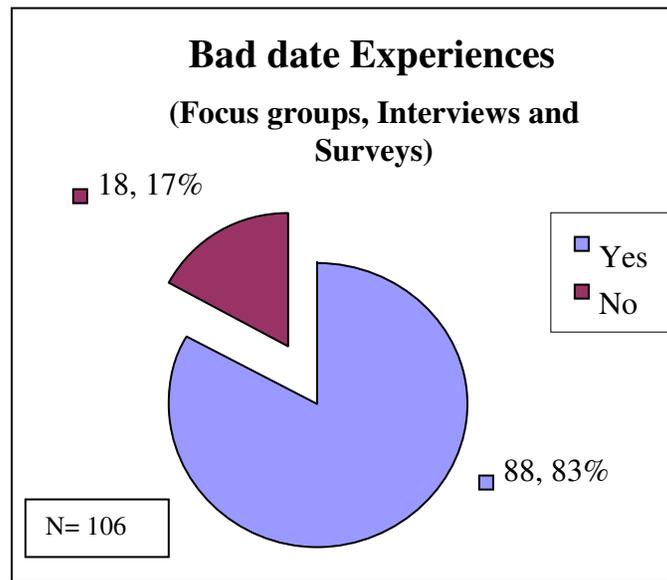
When working with sex workers, we know that staying in well-lit and more populated areas does not necessarily reduce the risk for violence. Violent customers who cruise the streets looking to pick up workers do not always refrain from picking up women and girls from these areas, yet 29 out of 63 participants stated that they feel safe working in these areas. When working in these environments one cannot really be safe, only safer. Though 17 participants stated that they “just don’t go if it doesn’t feel right”, this is not always a possible choice when it comes to survival sex. This is because there may be addiction issues, rent to pay or people who are forcing them to work. Four participants stated that they do not work under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, but many street-level sex workers choose to work when they are under the influence; furthermore, in consulting with the participants, we found that many of the women and girls can only work when they are under the influence because of the nature of the work that they do and past issues around trauma.

## Chapter Four: Violence

### Bad Dates

#### Question Eleven: Have you ever had a bad date?

This question was posed to participants in all three methods of research.



Graph 9: Bad Date Experiences

These numbers are alarming because they show us that a vast majority of the participants who were consulted had experienced a bad date. Furthermore, these women and girls continue to work on the streets. Many of the participants who responded as **not** having experienced a bad date had worked for less than 3 years; furthermore, some of these participants did not work every day, but only occasionally.

#### Question Twelve: How many bad dates have you had?

We did not ask this question of the youth who completed surveys; however, we did ask them if they reported their bad dates and the frequency of reporting. It was our experience while conducting the research that of all the participants who had not experienced having a bad date, many of them were youth. This may or may not have been because they did not feel comfortable disclosing. It was difficult asking this question because we did not intentionally want to trigger someone or rehash past traumatic events. When conducting surveys we did not want to trigger participants, especially since there was no ability to provide immediate supports for off-site participation. During the interview and focus group consultations, there were a number of

participants who remembered events that they had thought they forgot. Others had a hard time deciphering what a bad date meant to them because of the many different definitions and understandings that the women have around bad dates.

Responses from participants from *interviews and focus groups* (63 women and girls):

- 🌸 7 participants stated that they had not experienced a bad date.
- 🌸 11 participants stated that they had 1 bad date.
- 🌸 15 participants said they had 2 bad dates.
- 🌸 8 participants stated that they had experienced 3 bad dates.
- 🌸 9 participants said they had 4 bad dates.
- 🌸 13 participants remembered having more than 6 bad dates. A couple of the participants in this category were long time sex workers and disclosed that, over the years, they had more than a dozen bad dates.

These statistics are alarming because it shows that, at the time of the study, eighty-nine percent of women involved in sex work and survival sex in Prince George experienced at least one bad date while working.<sup>10</sup> Further in the report, we look at how many participants report bad dates.

### **Question Thirteen: How would you define a bad date?**

The youth were asked this question. We were interested in capturing some thoughts on how they define bad dates. For statistical purposes, it is important to note that each participant gave more than one response to this question. For example, a respondent who chose number 1 may have also chosen number 5 and another respondent may have chosen numbers 2, 4 & 5.

1. 36% stated that yelling/shouting, kicking/punching, and refusing to pay were bad dates.
2. 11% gave name calling as a response.
3. 20% stated abandon/leave you stranded, and throw from vehicle as responses to bad dates.
4. 14% said that forcing sex on a worker was a bad date.
5. 18% stated that talking down to you and swearing at you were bad dates.
6. 1% chose the 'other' box and gave anal, choking and pushing as examples of other possibilities for bad dates.

When looking at these statistics it is really surprising and questioning to see that only fourteen percent of participants said forcing sex on a worker was a bad date. We assume that maybe the question was misunderstood by a portion of the participants or that maybe it was so obvious that they did not 'check' the box. Also, many of the women and girls come from backgrounds of violence that this kind of behaviour acted out on them becomes normalized. It also might have been as simple as us changing the sentence structure to: forcing sex when a sex worker has said **no** and/or not agreed to the terms of the date. We say this because most sex workers, especially street level sex work including sexual exploitation, do not actually "want" to engage in sex for money or gifts so they see it as forcing sex on them. It is normalized and just becomes a 'way of

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<sup>10</sup> This might want to be looked at more closely in the future with youth consultation to see how it may or may not differ.

*living and surviving*'. The same could be said of why only eleven percent chose name calling as an example of a bad date.

#### **Question Fourteen: What do you think contributes to women having bad dates?**

**Interview Participant:** "I was sick once so I took the guys money and left...um, it scares me so I don't like to do that...but I was sick."

Participants from focus groups and interviews were asked this question. We asked this question to generalize why they thought men chose to refuse to pay and/or abuse them. Our purpose was not to put blame on the participants who may have experienced a bad date. We

also wanted to see how many participants would make reference to it not mattering what or why this happens, but that no woman deserves to be on the receiving end of a bad date. Participants may have had more than one response. These responses were not given to the participants as choices, but came freely from their own thoughts.

**Interview Participant:** "Nothing, none of the girls deserve to have bad dates. It just happens."

These were their responses:

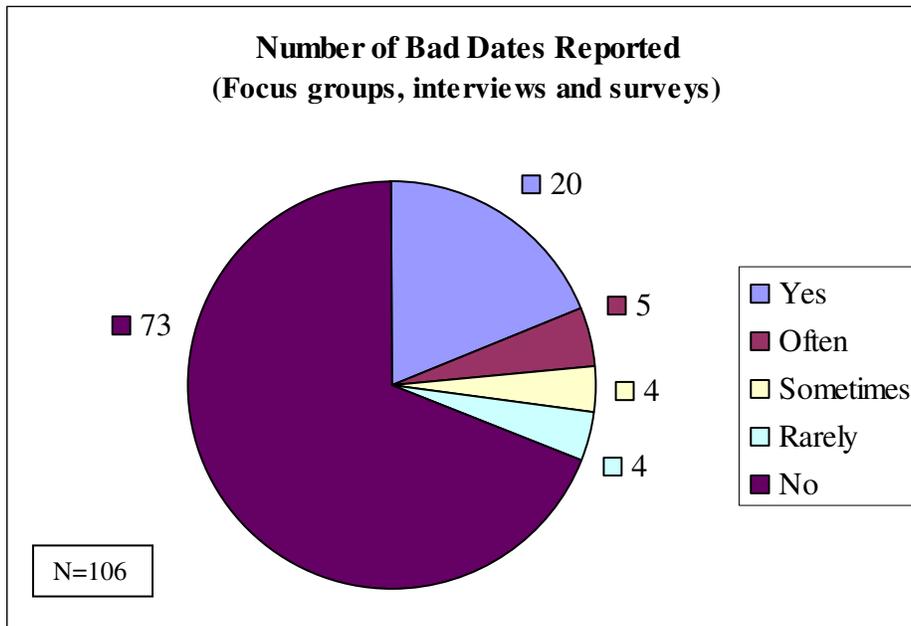
- 🌸 3% or 3 participants stated that being on dope simply contributed to having a bad date. Some women and youth involved in sex work will do nearly anything to get high; unfortunately, this may cloud their judgement when choosing which vehicles to get into.
- 🌸 26% or 22 participants stated that drugs contributed to having a bad date. More specifically the participants commented on being under the influence while working.
- 🌸 9% or 8 participants stated that being desperate contributed to having a bad date. When you are working for survival, your choice is taken away.
- 🌸 14% or 12 participants stated that being at the wrong place at the wrong time contributes to having bad dates.
- 🌸 24% or 21 participants stated that ripping men off contributed to having a bad date.
- 🌸 19% or 16 participants stated that not being careful contributed to having bad dates.
- 🌸 5% or 4 participants stated that they did not know what contributed to having a bad date.

## **Reporting**

#### **Question Fifteen: Do you/would you report your bad dates?**

This question was asked during all three methods of research: focus groups, interviews and surveys. Many of the youth, who were consulted in the surveys and had experienced a bad date,

stated that they would not report them; furthermore, the youth who had not experienced bad dates stated that if they had experienced one, they still would probably not report it. It is difficult to engage with youth around sex work issues. This could be because of the stigma and discrimination behind sex work or it could be due to the fact that there are a lot more restrictions for youth because of legislation around child sex tourism and sexual exploitation of children.



**Graph 10: Bad Date Reporting**

These numbers around reporting are alarming because if the sex worker or sexually exploited youth do not report bad dates then the perpetrator gets away with it to possibly do it again to someone else. Most of the participants said that after reporting a couple of bad dates and having bad experiences reporting with nothing done about it, it then prevented them from reporting the bad dates that they may have now.

Of the 20 participants who said yes to reporting bad dates:

- 🌸 5 said they would report to service providers,
- 🌸 5 said they would report to the RCMP,
- 🌸 3 said they would report to friends, and
- 🌸 1 was not really sure if she would report.

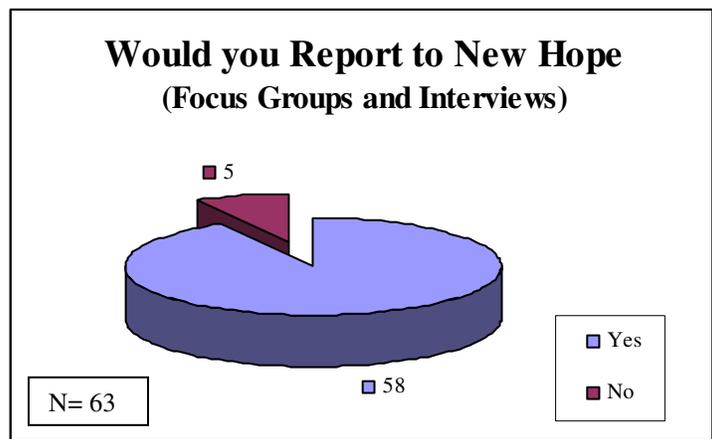
**Participant Comments:**

- 🌸 “Cops don’t care!”
- 🌸 “Nothing gets done about it.”
- 🌸 “I just want to forget about it.”
- 🌸 “It’s more of a hassle to go to the police because what I do is illegal.”

- 🌸 “They give me a hard time when I come forward.”
- 🌸 “It takes too much time and it’s just too hard!”
- 🌸 “I just forget about it and hope for the best.”
- 🌸 “They weren’t that bad, I take beatings all the time, you just get used to it and move on.”
- 🌸 “I can’t trust the cops!”
- 🌸 “I believe in my own justice but I would report it anonymously to New Hope.”
- 🌸 “They just see me as a drug addict and a hooker.”
- 🌸 (So much anger from past traumatic events with law enforcement)—“Because those pigs would never believe a drug addicted whore!”
- 🌸 “It was a family member and my mom wouldn’t believe me...”
- 🌸 “No because they tell me it is my fault!”
- 🌸 I did for a while...um, until I realized that they were not going to do anything about them.

**Interview Participant:** “It’s not fair that I have to be out there risking my life and when I get hurt, they say that it is my fault or that I shouldn’t be out there working then. I’ve been doing it for years! It’s all I know how to do...pay for my schooling and treatment and maybe we’ll get somewhere!”

**Question Sixteen: Would you be willing to report your bad dates to New Hope?**



**Graph 11: Reporting to New Hope**

Almost all of the women who have had bad dates said they would be willing to report them anonymously to New Hope. The five who said no may have issues around trust, fear and/or isolation; furthermore, they may not be very familiar with the organization or staff.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> We did not ask this question in the surveys because we had not yet engaged with many of the young girls on the street. From this research, only 16 of 43 youth respondents accessed services from new Hope at the time the surveys were conducted (refer to Graph 41).

## Chapter Five: The Working Environment

### Atmosphere

#### Question Seventeen: What does the atmosphere look like?

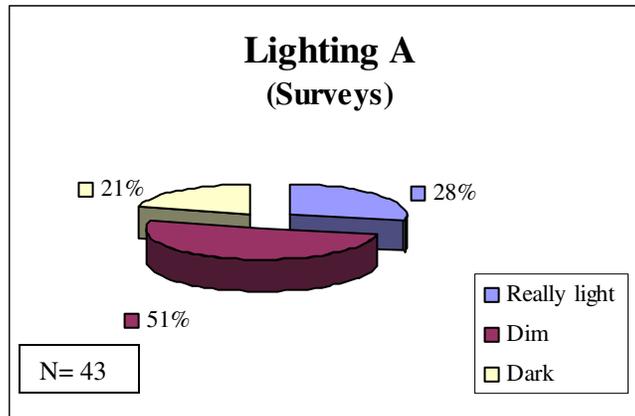
This question was asked of focus group and interview participants. Some of the participants had more than one response to the question. Many of the participants first response was “What do you mean?” The interviewers explained it by stating the atmosphere referred to their observations of their surroundings.

- 🌸 33% or 39 participants stated that the atmosphere is dark/dim.
- 🌸 12% or 14 participants stated that there were not a lot of people out.
- 🌸 10% or 12 participants stated that there is nothing open after certain times.
- 🌸 21% or 25 participants stated that it is cold.
- 🌸 10% or 12 participants stated that there are drivers that yell at them.
- 🌸 8% or 9 participants stated that there are drivers that throw things.
- 🌸 6% or 7 participants stated that it is alright.

**Interview Participant:** “On the weekend there are all of the yahoo’s out. There’s been a couple of times where I’ve been shot at with BB guns and paint guns...I had to run and hide behind dumpsters.”

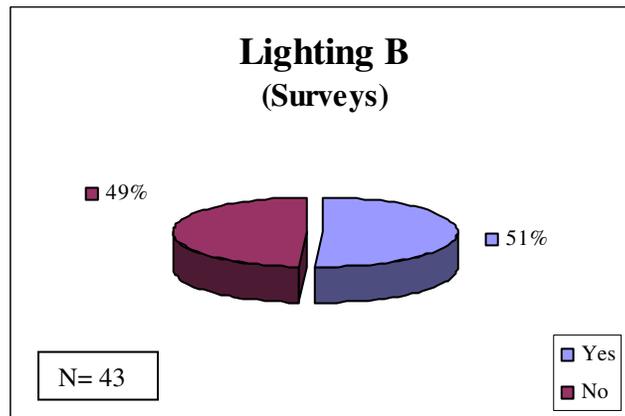
#### Question Eighteen (a): What is the lighting like?

We further explored the issue of atmosphere in depth through the surveys with youth. Many areas in Prince George are dimly lit and/or there may not be adequate lighting to ensure the safety of the women and youth who are working. This can put them at further risk of violence. Not all the girls work in the same areas. Working in the downtown core compared to working in a residential area will look different because the lighting is much dimmer in the residential areas. In general, the atmosphere in various locations can be extreme in contrast. There are two parts to this question. The survey was more quantitative in nature and the participants’ responses were:



Graph 12: Lighting (a)

**Question Eighteen (b): Do they always work?**



Graph 13: Lighting (b)

**Interview Participant:** “It was dark where I used to work because I didn’t want anyone to recognize me....”

**Elements**

The following two questions around the elements were posed to focus groups and interview participants (a total of 63 participants). We did not ask the youth who took the surveys; however, looking back on it we realize that asking it may have shown better consistency. It was difficult because the surveys were already longer than we anticipated. Some of the respondents had more than one answer. Responses would most likely change if the participants are high at work and/or sick. When survival is added into the equation, choice becomes limited or extinct. For example, at the time of consultation the participants may not be answering from a place of need. We know

that at New Hope it may tend to be slower when it is sunny and warm out. In contrast, when it is really cold out and/or raining we can get really busy at the Centre. In speaking with some of the women, often we hear that if it is cold, they “just want to quickly make money and go somewhere warm” (Interview Participant).

#### **Question Nineteen (a): What do you do when it rains or snows?**

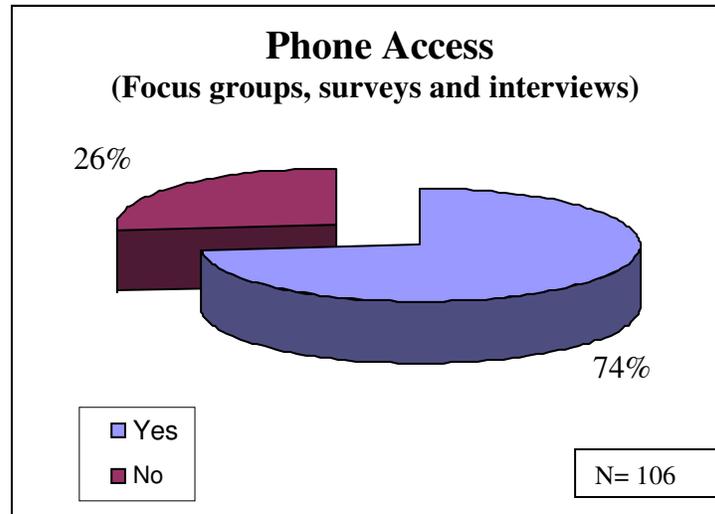
- 🌸 10% or 8 participants stated that they stand in bus shelters to work and/or wait till it stops raining/snowing.
- 🌸 27% or 22 participants stated that they stand under awnings to work and/or wait till it stops raining/snowing.
- 🌸 27% or 23 participants stated that they stand in doorways to work and/or wait till it stops raining/snowing.
- 🌸 9% or 7 participants stated that they stand under a tree to work and/or wait till it stops raining/snowing.
- 🌸 9% or 7 participants stated that they use umbrellas when it is raining/snowing.
- 🌸 18% or 15 participants stated that they will sleep for a couple of days if it is raining/snowing.

#### **Question Nineteen (b): Where do you go when it rains or snows?**

- 🌸 15% or 13 participants stated that they may go to AWAC. AWAC, also known as Advocating for Women and Children, is a local shelter for women. Refer to page 85 for more information on this organization.
- 🌸 14% or 12 participants stated that they may go to a crack shack.
- 🌸 8% or 7 participants stated that they may go home.
- 🌸 10% or 9 participants stated that it would depend on how hard or how much it is raining/snowing.
- 🌸 15% or 13 participants stated that they would go anywhere.
- 🌸 38% or 33 participants stated that they would just work.

## **Phones**

#### **Question Twenty: Do you have access to phones?**



**Graph 14: Phone Access**

Though 74% or 78 women and girls stated yes to this question, the answer did not reflect many of the responses that were made in reference to this question. All the women were asked to comment on the use and availability of phones. Other comments the participants stated during the research process:

- 🌸 23% or 30 participants stated that the phones don't always work and/or that they were often broken.
- 🌸 22% or 28 participants stated that the stores do not let them use the phones.
- 🌸 6% or 8 participants stated that they use their cellular phones
- 🌸 8% or 10 participants stated that they use their clients' phones
- 🌸 17% or 21 participants stated that you need calling cards or credit cards to use the phones.
- 🌸 12% or 15 participants said they use the phones at service providers they access when possible.
- 🌸 12% or 15 participants stated that they use the phones in pubs and/or bars.

**Interview Participant:**

“They don't work; when I worked in Kamloops they have phones everywhere.”

These comments show that though many of the women stated that they do have access to phones, that access is often limited and/or unreliable. It is important to mention that the phones in Prince George are not strategically placed on behalf of the women and youth who are street involved. According to a local

service provider, “Their safety is put at risk in lieu of minimizing drug transactions.” This is an important concern for service providers who work with this population as we see much violence and the effects of violence that could be prevented and/or minimized if there were more phones (even emergency phones) available to women and youth on the streets.

**Survey Participant:** “If you have a cell phone you have to keep your eye on it cuz of the other girls.” ~the participant was guided through her survey by an interviewer.

Some of the participants talked about An Association Advocating for Women and Children (AWAC), which is a local organization that provides shelter and services for all women at street level (See Appendix D for more details). They often will use the phones from the agency if they are working in the downtown area. If they do not work downtown, they would not normally have this access to phones. This makes it more dangerous for the women and girls who are working in more high risk areas such as Victoria/Strathcona. These areas are residential with high levels of gang and drug activity.

Other comments from interview participants:

- 🌸 “It sucks if you have a bad date because there are no phones around if you need help and want confidentiality.”
- 🌸 “I usually go to the bar, the rest of the payphones are broken by the drunks.”
- 🌸 “The phones are broken. They used to work but they don’t anymore. The one on 5<sup>th</sup> and George is completely broken. The one on 3<sup>rd</sup> and George they took it out completely. The only phone we have now is in one of the pubs and in one of the hotels, but after the pub closes, they lock the doors and don’t let anyone in.”
- 🌸 “They think we use the phones for um ordering our dope um lets face it...most of us go to the dealer’s house. Give us our damn phones back! That’s discrimination.”

### **Question Twenty-One: Where are the phones located?**

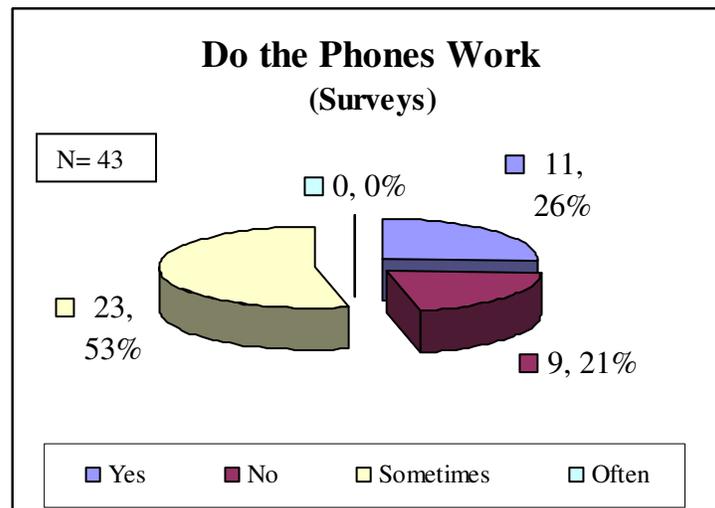
This question was asked of the forty-three youth participants during surveys to get a sense of where the youth were accessing phones because of the possible restrictions of access due to their age. Many of the youth gave more than one answer to this question. Twenty-one youth out of forty-three stated that phones were located in the pubs/bars.

Phone locations include:

- 🌸 Twenty-seven girls said they go to stores to use the phones; although, more and more stores are taking them out or denying access to them.
- 🌸 Twelve girls accessed phones from restaurants.
- 🌸 Twenty-three girls used phones somewhere outside, though they did not specify any particular location.
- 🌸 Fifteen girls used phones in crack shacks.
- 🌸 Sixteen girls used phones at service providers. Most of these phones were not available 24 hours a day.
- 🌸 Three respondents stated other locations for phones. These locations included a house where she baby sits the children, an unspecified house, and a cell phone.

### Question Twenty-Two: Do the phones work?

This question was asked of the forty-three youth participants who completed the surveys. Many of the youth in Prince George work in less noticeable areas; therefore, we wanted to get a sense of the safety of their environments. For safety purposes and emergency situations, it is important that phones in the community are in good working condition.



Graph 15: Do the Phones Work

### Question Twenty-Three (a): Are they card service phones?

To expand on the previous question, we asked (the same group of participants) this question to find out more about the phones that they access. Twenty-eight girls said that the phones were card service while fifteen girls said they were not. Card service phones mean that the people who are trying to access them have to have credit cards or calling cards. Many of these phones do not take quarters to make a phone call. This is not an option for most street level sex workers. In Prince George, many of them are struggling with addictions issues and live in poverty. They have no access to credit cards.

### Question Twenty-Three (b): How many of them are card service phones?

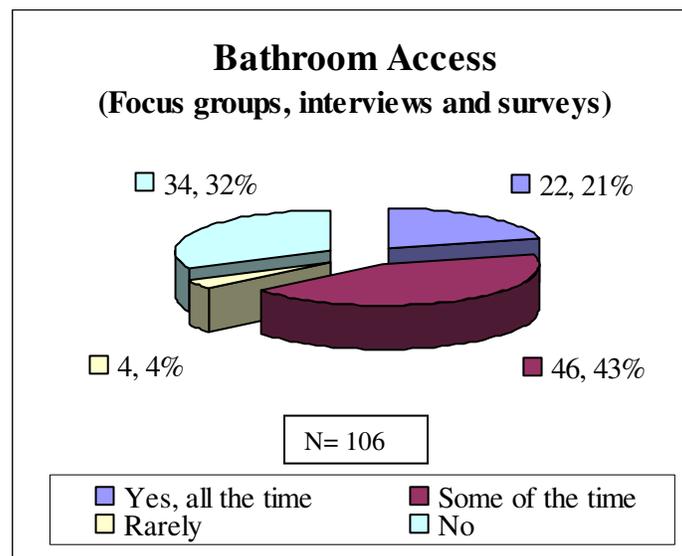
We asked this question to the same twenty-eight girls that stated there were card service phones. The purpose was to find out exactly how many of the phones were card service phones. We want to make sure that this community is being supportive of women and girls involved in sex work. If there are unsafe practices taking place, then they need to be addressed. Nineteen of twenty-eight girls stated that *some* of the phones were card service. Six of twenty-eight girls said that *most* of them were card service. Three respondents did not comment.

## Bathrooms

This section asks the participants about their experiences accessing bathrooms in the community. It was an awkward and uncomfortable question, but we felt that it was important to ask. The interviewers, at times, felt rushed through this section. Street level sex work requires the women and girls who are involved to be on their feet and outside working. There would most likely be more access to bathrooms during the day than at night. This may or may not be true. The purpose of these questions is to gain a better understanding of the stigma and discrimination that sex workers face because of the nature of their work and all of the negative connotations that are attached to it. Why should it be more difficult for someone to gain access to a bathroom when they are on the streets? It should not matter. Does it become a human rights issue when one person is allowed to use the facilities at a business, yet someone else is not? Are there not precautionary measures that businesses are able to take when they have on-site substance abuse concerns? How many people actually cause problems in public washrooms? These are some of the questions to think about while reading through this section.

### Question Twenty-Four: Do you have access to bathrooms?

All 106 women were asked this question. Only 21% or 22 participants said they had access to bathrooms all of the time.



Graph 16: Bathroom Access

**Interview Participant:** “Most stores wouldn’t let you use the bathrooms. They would say they were out of order. You could see people coming out of them; they just hated drug addicts and hookers...”

### Question Twenty-Five: Where do you go to the bathroom?

This question was posed to 63 interview and focus group participants. It was an open ended question and the participants were not led into their answers. We did not ask the youth this question. One of the responses (from 7 participants) was 'home'; however, this is not always possible for all sex workers.

Other responses include:

- 👤 36% or 35 participants stated that they have gone to the bathroom outside. This meant that more than half the participants from the two groups gave this answer. We believe that had we specifically asked the women if they ever went to the bathroom outside, more of them may have given the affirmative.
- 👤 14% or 14 participants stated that they have gone to the bathroom at a client's house.
- 👤 26% or 25 participants stated that they have gone to the bathroom at bars, stores and shelters.
- 👤 10% or 10 participants said that they have gone to the bathroom at a friend's house. They may consider dealers and clients to be friends.
- 👤 7% or 7 participants stated that they have gone to the bathroom in crack shacks.

### Question Twenty-Six: How often do you have to go to the bathroom outside?

We started the surveys nearly nine months after we had started the other research methods. Instead of asking the previous question in the surveys, we made the assumption that they had already gone to the bathroom outside. So, in light of this, we asked them how often they actually went to the bathroom outside. The choices to choose from were once, often, sometimes, rarely and never. Forty-three youth responded to this question. Only two youth said that they had never gone to the bathroom outside. Other responses were as follows:

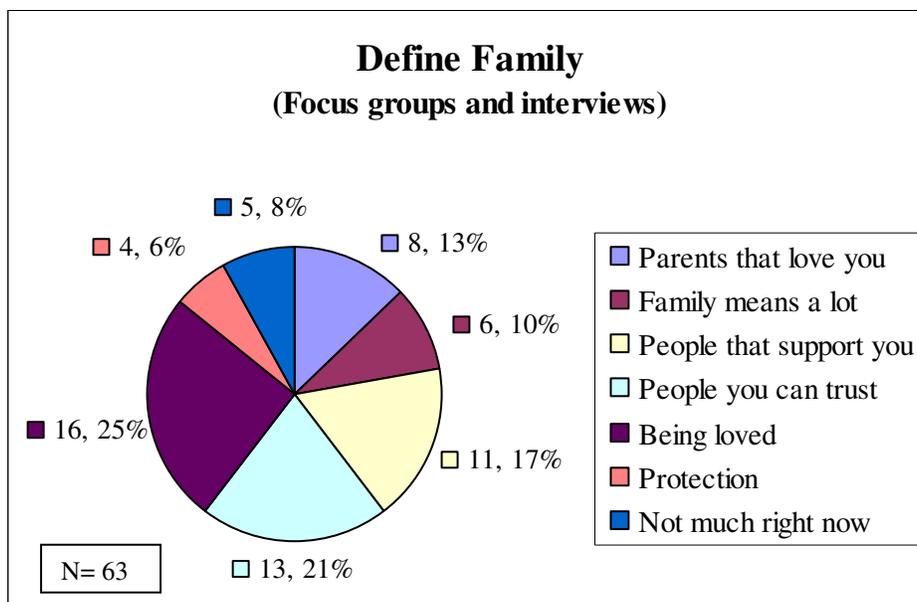
- 👤 **Once:** 27% or 12 participants chose this response.
- 👤 **Often:** 23% or 10 participants chose this response.
- 👤 **Sometimes:** 34% or 15 participants chose this response.
- 👤 **Rarely:** 11% or 5 participants chose this response.

## Chapter Six: Family

This Chapter is focused on questions around family. Many sex workers and sexually exploited youth have unhealthy family relationships. Often they come from a background of emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Not all sex workers and sexually exploited youth come from families living in poverty, but many of the women who come to New Hope do. Many street level sex workers and sexually exploited youth in Prince George come from an Aboriginal background; furthermore, some of them grew up in a community where they lived on the margins of society and faced discrimination and poverty. As we have found out in this report and will continue to explore, many of the participants in this study have at least one family member that is involved in sex work. The purpose of these questions was to help you understand where these women and girls come from and the types of relationships they have with other family members.

### Question Twenty-Seven: What does family mean to you?

As this question was qualitative in nature, we decided to ask participants from focus groups and interviews what *family* meant to them.



Graph 17: Define family

Here are some of the comments from participants who were asked this question. *What does family mean to you?*

- 👤 “I don’t have family...I wish they would rot in hell!”
- 👤 “One that cares for you and is willing to help you when you are in a bad spot in your life.”
- 👤 Having them believe you and love you no matter what
- 👤 “Family is parents that love each other and put food in their kid’s mouths and a roof over their head and protect them.”

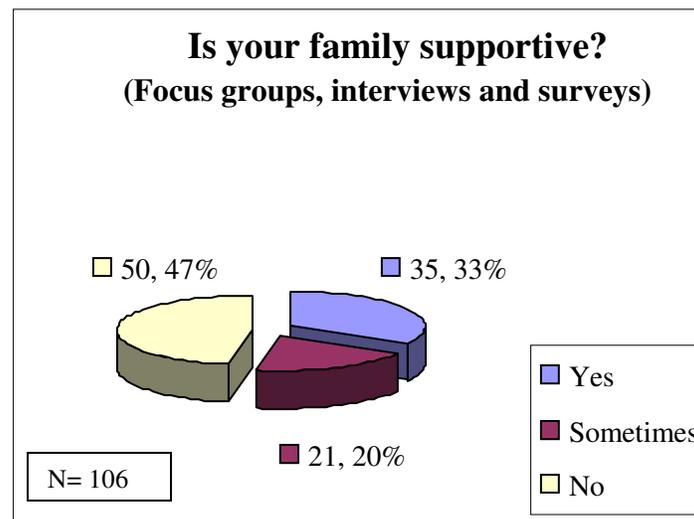
- 👤 “Family is loving, caring and sharing.”
- 👤 “Strong bonds, always being there for each other, giving and taking.”
- 👤 “People that look after you and make sure you are okay.”
- 👤 “I am a huge disappointment to my family.”

*Note:* These comments may or may not necessarily reflect their personal experiences with family.

### Question Twenty-Eight: Is your family supportive?

This question was posed to interview, focus group and survey participants. It is important to note that many women and girls that are involved in street level sex work have very toxic relationships with their families<sup>12</sup>; furthermore, they often go through stages where their relationships are good then bad and so on.

**Interview Participant:** “My sister is (supportive) but the rest of them don’t understand why I did dope and worked on the streets. Now that I have HIV, they uh totally treat me like an outsider. I can’t even um hold my brother’s kids because they think that uh I will give it to them.”



**Graph 18: Family Support**

<sup>12</sup> We have found this out through discussions with sex workers accessing services through New Hope. Some women do not talk to their families, others face(d) violence from family members, and some come from families where other members are involved in drugs/alcohol and/or sex work. There are such vast arrays of issues that many sex workers face with their families.

### Question Twenty-Nine: Who in your family “is” supportive?

We asked this question to the youth participants because we wanted to find out what kind of family supports were available to them. Most participants chose more than one family member as supportive. It is really important that they have stable family supports because adolescence can be tumultuous for many youth<sup>13</sup>, especially youth who are high risk. We found that the most supportive family members were parental figures and siblings; however, their answers were very spread out among several family members.

- 👩 25% or 22 participants stated that they have supportive relationships with their mothers.
- 👩 9% or 8 participants stated that they have supportive relationships with their stepmothers.
- 👨 8% or 7 participants stated that they have supportive relationships with their fathers.
- 👨 3% or 3 participants stated that they have supportive relationships with their stepfathers.
- 👦 5% or 5 participants stated that they have supportive relationships with their brothers.
- 👧 11% or 10 participants stated that they have supportive relationships with their sisters.
- 👵 7% or 6 participants stated that they have supportive relationships with their grandmothers.
- 👴 2% or 2 participants stated that they have supportive relationships with their grandfathers.
- 👩 8% or 7 participants stated that they have supportive relationships with their aunts.
- 👨 5% or 5 participants stated that they have supportive relationships with their uncles.
- 👦 5% or 5 participants stated that they have supportive relationships with their cousins.
- 👤 12% or 11 participants stated that they do not have supportive relationships with anyone in their family.

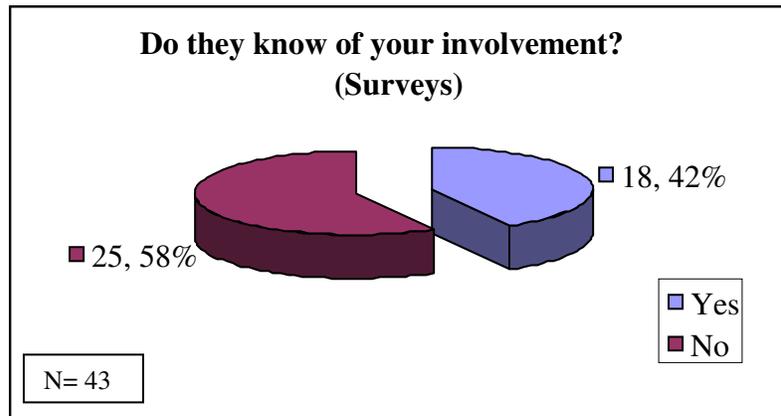
### Question Thirty: Do they know you are/were involved in sex work?

Many of the women who have been working for a period of time have strained relationships with their families or particular family members for many different reasons. After talking with many sex workers and building positive relationships with them, we understand that one of the reasons is because their families may know of their involvement in sex work and do not support it. Other reasons include violence and substance abuse issues. Some of these women voiced that they grew up in really toxic homes so they never really had an opportunity to experience love and belonging. We asked this question in the surveys because we truly wanted to discover how many of the youths’ families knew of their involvement in sex work or that they had been sexually exploited. When you provide services to someone it is good to know as much as possible about

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<sup>13</sup> Dr. Tom Hollenstein from Queens University, <http://psyc.queensu.ca/~hollenst/projects.htm>

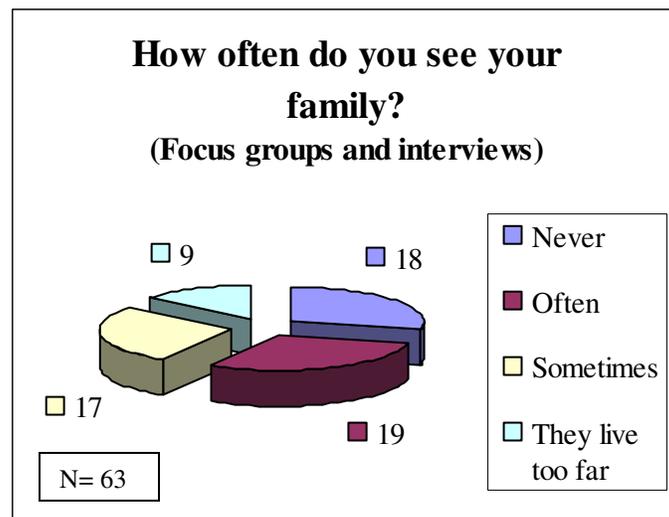
their family history and family supports as this will help you to create an effective plan around supporting the person. Out of forty-three youth here are their answers:



**Graph 19: Disclosure**

**Question Thirty-One: How often do you see your family?**

We presented this question to participants in focus groups and interviews. Some of the women who participated in the research mentioned that they never saw their families and others more specifically answered that they did not see their families because they live too far away. Often we see women, both adult and youth, coming in from different communities in the north. After being in Prince George for awhile, they appear to become enmeshed in the life of the streets and do not go back to their communities for various reasons.



**Graph 20: How often do you see your Family**

**Question Thirty-Two: Where are they (your family) from?**

All of the participants (106) in the study were asked this question. These numbers are rounded to the nearest approximate percentage.

- 🍷 31% or 33 of the women interviewed had families from Prince George.
- 🍷 49% or 52 of the women interviewed had families within the Northern Health Authority region.
- 🍷 15% or 16 of the women interviewed had families in the lower mainland in BC.
- 🍷 5% or 5 of the women interviewed had families from other parts of Canada.

Of all the youth surveys, 53% of the girls had family members currently living in Prince George. Many of the women who access services from the Prince George New Hope Society come from outside of Prince George; furthermore, they often do not have adequate services, support or resources in their own communities. Though some communities do what they can, there are some who lack the capacity or knowledge to respond to these issues. In connecting with other community services in the north we have heard comments that range from “We don’t have that problem here” to “How do we [at New Hope] address the issue if we can’t visibly see it” to “Yes, we do occasionally work with women in those circumstances. This is what we do....” These issues exist and it is important to realize that no matter the size of the community, there are still women and girls who face exploitation on a continual basis.

### **Question Thirty-Three (a): Is anyone else in your family involved in sex work or survival sex work?**

All of the participants were asked this question. These numbers are rounded to the nearest approximate value.

- 🍷 25.4% said no (27). Only 7 youth stated that they had no family members involved in sex work.
- 🍷 59.4% said yes (63). 30 youth in the surveys responded to this question
- 🍷 15% said yes, but that they no longer worked (16). 6 youth in the surveys responded to this question.

These percentages reflect that a total of 74.5% of the women had at least one family member that experienced sex work or survival sex.

### **Question Thirty-Three (b): If they are currently involved in sex work, how long have they been involved?**

This question was asked to youth participants (36) who answered the previous question in the surveys. Many of the youth had one or more family members working so the following numbers reflect more than one answer.

<b>Family Involvement</b>	
<b>Years of Involvement</b>	<b>Participants who Responded</b>
Under 1	6 % or 3
2 to 5	13% or 7
6 to 10	21% or 11
11 to 15	27% or 14
16 to 20	23% or 12
Over 20	10% or 5

**Graph 21: Family Involvement**

### **Question Thirty-Four: Do you have any children?**

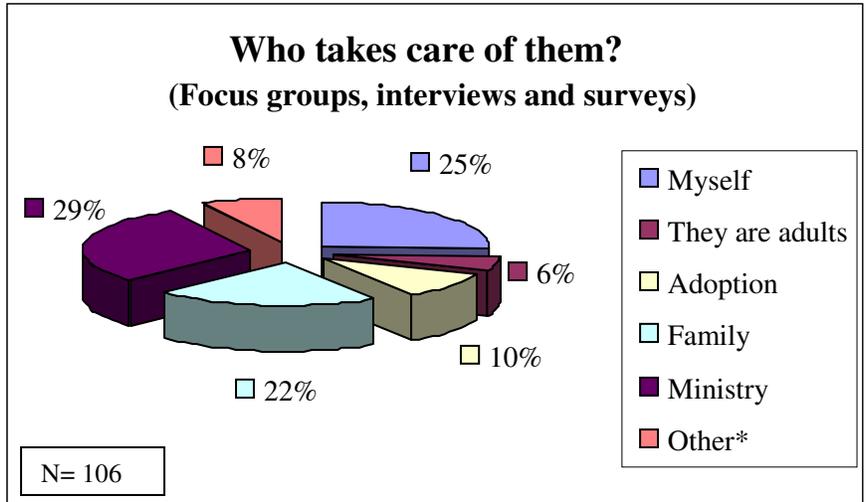
We asked this question to participants of all three methods of research: focus groups, interviews and surveys. Just because someone is involved in sex work does not mean that they are not mothers. We wanted to get a sense of how many of the women have children. The results were that 64 or 60% of the participants had at least one child.

**Interview Participant:** “My youngest is actually, um she’s up for adoption. She...I decided that I didn’t want to drag her into my life because it wasn’t good. I don’t know if she’s ever going to think I’m a bad mother or whatever, but I mean, I wanted something better for her.”

### **Question Thirty-Five (a): Are they in your care?**

We asked all of the participants (sixty-four) who said they did have children to answer the following two questions. Most of the participants’ children were not in their care: fifty-one participants stated no for their answer. Twenty-percent of the women and girls stated yes, their children were in their care.

### **Question Thirty-Five (b): Who takes care of them?**



**Graph 22: Who takes care of the Children**

\*Other includes father, ex-husband, friends and grandparents.

## Chapter Seven: Health

In this Chapter, we posed *most* of the questions around health to participants from interviews and surveys. We did not always include the participants from focus groups because we felt that these were more personal questions and wanted truthful answers and active participation. This may not have happened during the focus groups due to reasons around confidentiality. There were up to 106 women and girls who participated in the consultations for this Chapter.

### HIV/AIDS and HCV (Hepatitis C) Infection in the North

On Monday, May 9, 2005 the first results of the CEDAR Project, a major study involving 600 at-risk Aboriginal youth in Prince George and Vancouver were released.<sup>14</sup> This study is one of the first to look at the Aboriginal experience of HIV/AIDS and HCV and compares demographic characteristics, drug-use patterns and sexual practices of the participants.

Since September 2003 the researchers have found that HCV levels are as high in Prince George youth participants as in Vancouver (62.4% v. 57.1%). Also the injection of cocaine by participants was more frequent in Prince George than in Vancouver. HCV among people who inject drugs is a forerunner of HIV infection, and frequent injection of cocaine increases vulnerability to HIV infection, for which there is no cure.

The CEDAR data also indicated Aboriginal youth in Prince George had greater difficulty getting clean needles and less access to harm-reducing treatments such as methadone, than did their counterparts in Vancouver. Despite this, the incidence of HIV infection was lower in Prince George (7.9%) than in Vancouver (17.0%).

In the Northern Health Authority, which consists of the northern 2/3 of British Columbia, in 2005 there were 28 people newly diagnosed with HIV infection. In 2005 there were 185 people newly diagnosed with HCV. That went up to 214 people infected with HCV in 2006. From January to April 2007 there have been 74 people newly diagnosed with HCV, compared to 68 in the same period in 2006.<sup>15</sup> From January 1, 2007 to March 31, 2007 there have been seven people newly diagnosed with HIV in the Northern Health Authority.<sup>16</sup>

### The Lived HIV Experience

In northern BC, Aboriginal people make up approximately 5% of the population yet between 60 and 70% of newly diagnosed HIV infections are in people who identify as Aboriginal. The article from the CEDAR project contained warnings to public officials about the pending HIV

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<sup>14</sup> British Columbia Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS press release “Simmering epidemic threatens vulnerable Aboriginal youth in Prince George”

<sup>15</sup> Epidemiology, BC Centre for Disease Control

<sup>16</sup> NHA statistics not yet published.

epidemic. A link between poverty and risk for HIV infection has been established and we know many Aboriginal people live in poverty.<sup>17</sup>

In June 2005, after the CEDAR Project press release, the Northern BC Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Task Force was created partly to assess the needs of Aboriginal people with regard to HIV prevention. It is clear that many people need education about HIV/AIDS and HCV. Some reservations in the north are so isolated that information concerning transmission and protection has not been disseminated. Another factor is that there are only two AIDS service organizations in the whole Northern Health Authority, in Smithers and Prince George.

In Prince George the needle exchange hours were increased. Then in May 2007 a needle exchange van began operating on the streets late at night. Both these additions were made to increase accessibility to clean needles.

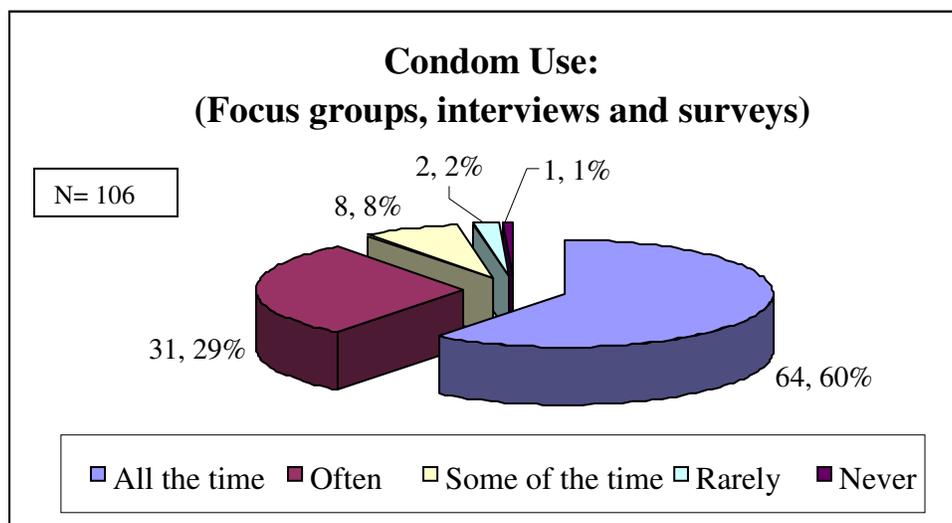
A migration pattern of people moving between the reserve, Prince George, Vancouver and the correctional system has been observed. One may ask if HCV and HIV infection move in a similar way.

HCV and HIV infections are totally preventable yet people are still getting infected. As a society we need to address the underlying issues of poverty, addictions, lack of education and for Aboriginal people the generational effects of colonization in order to effectively manage these two epidemics. Questions 43, 44, 51 and 52 refer to the HIV/AIDS/HCV epidemic in the north.

## Contraceptives

### Question Thirty-Six: Do you use condoms with your dates?

Participants (106) from all methods of research were asked this question.



Graph 23: Condom Use

<sup>17</sup> CMAJ January 7, 2003

**Interview Participant:** “No, and if any girl says yes they are full of shit! If they are hurting enough and buddy doesn’t want to use a condom, then you don’t because you want the money!”

Even though 60% of the women and girls stated that they always used condoms, the interviewers often felt a level of discomfort from the participants when answering this question. It is scary to think that 29% of the participants do not always use condoms and that 8 participants said they sometimes used them.

### **Question Thirty-Seven: Have you ever been offered more money from dates to NOT use a condom?**

This question was asked to survey participants. Forty three youth responded to this question. 74% or 32 participants said yes, while 26% or 11 said they had not been offered more money to *not* use a condom.

### **Question Thirty-Eight: Do you use condoms in your personal relationships?**

We asked 63 participants from focus groups and interviews this question. Only a few youth within those methods were asked this question. Of all the participants asked nobody specifically said yes to this question. Here are their responses:

-  16% or 10 participants chose not to answer this question.
-  35% or 22 participants stated that they did *not always* use condoms with their partners.
-  49% or 31 participants stated that they did *not* use condoms with their partners.

### **Question Thirty-Nine: Why do you use condoms?**

Sixty-three participants from interviews and focus groups responded to this question. They may have given more than one answer to this question. Though they answered this question, it may not necessarily mean that they choose to use condoms all the time but rather that when they did use condoms, it was because of the following beliefs. Their responses were:

-  **Prevent STI’s:** 40% or 34 participants had this response.
-  **Prevent pregnancy:** 19% or 16 participants had this response.
-  **To be safe:** 41% or 36 participants had this response.

**Interview Participant:** “I use condoms because we need to look out for the dates.”

**Question Forty: Have you heard of the morning after pill (ECP)?**

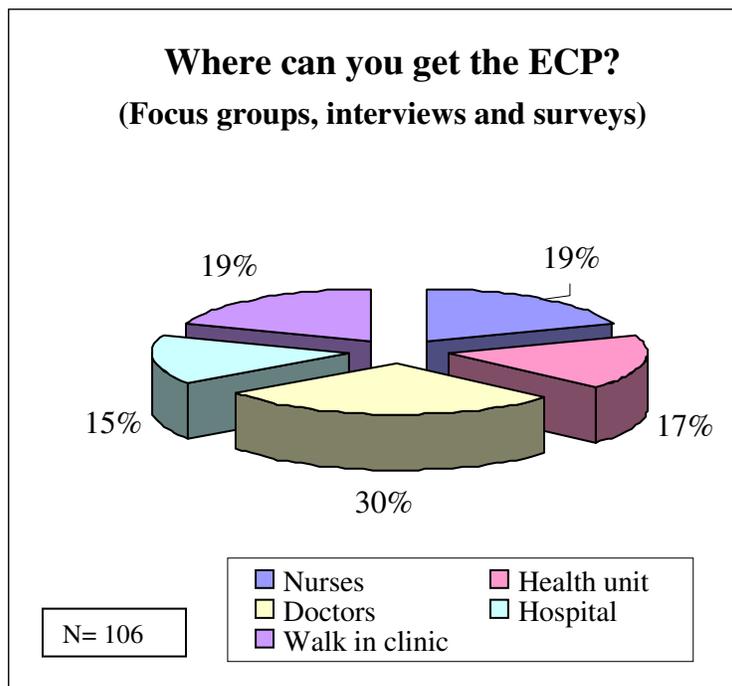
We asked this question to all of the participants in the study. 77% of them said yes they had heard of it, 22% said no they had not, and 1% of them were not really sure.

**Question Forty-One: Have you ever taken the morning after pill?**

We chose not to ask the focus group participants this question because it was personal and they were not truly in a confidential setting due to other participants being present in the room. Out of the 86 participants who were asked this question, 63 stated they had used it and 23 stated that they did not use the Emergency Contraceptive Pill.

**Question Forty-Two: Where can you get the morning after pill?**

We asked this question to all of the participants in the study.



**Graph 24: Where can I get the Emergency Contraceptive Pill**

**Hepatitis**

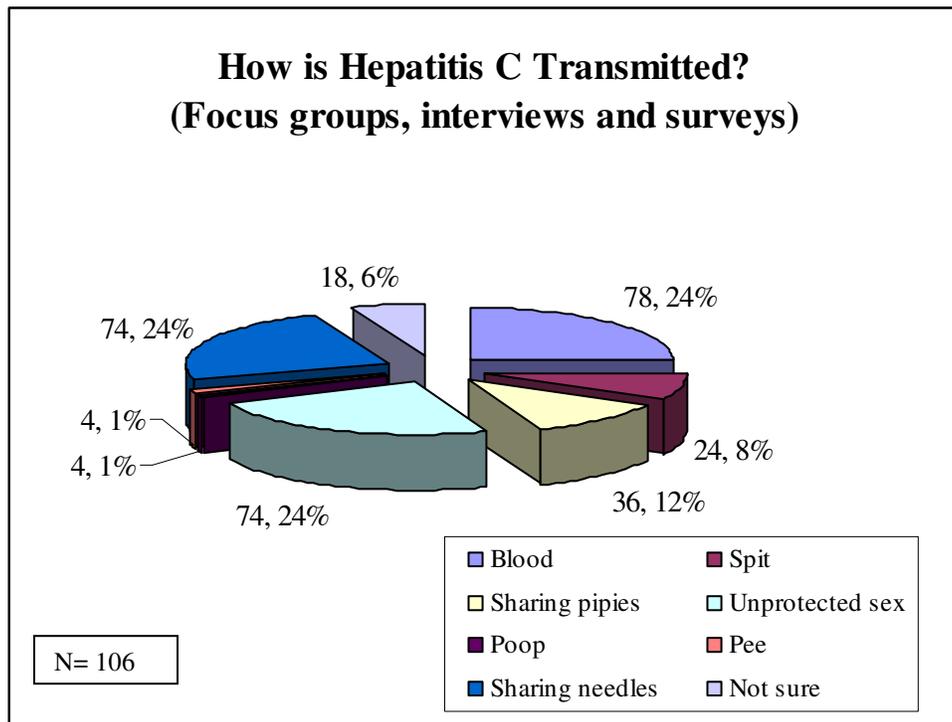
**Question Forty-Three: Do you know about Hepatitis C?**

Youth who completed surveys (43) answered this question. 79% or 34 youth stated that they knew about Hepatitis C. 21% or 9 youth stated they did not know about Hepatitis C.

### Question Forty-Four: How is Hepatitis C transmitted?

Hepatitis C is transmitted through<sup>18</sup>: sharing used needles or syringes or other drug using equipment, and other situations that involve piercing of the skin; specific types of sexual activity when blood may be exchanged; receiving transfusions of infected blood or blood products or transplanted organs (in Canada all donated blood and organs are screened for HCV); mother-to-child transmission, in the uterus, during childbirth; or, through breast feeding when nipples are bleeding. In addition to this, the blood must enter the body through an opening or break in the skin.

All participants were asked this question.



Graph 25: Hep C Transmission

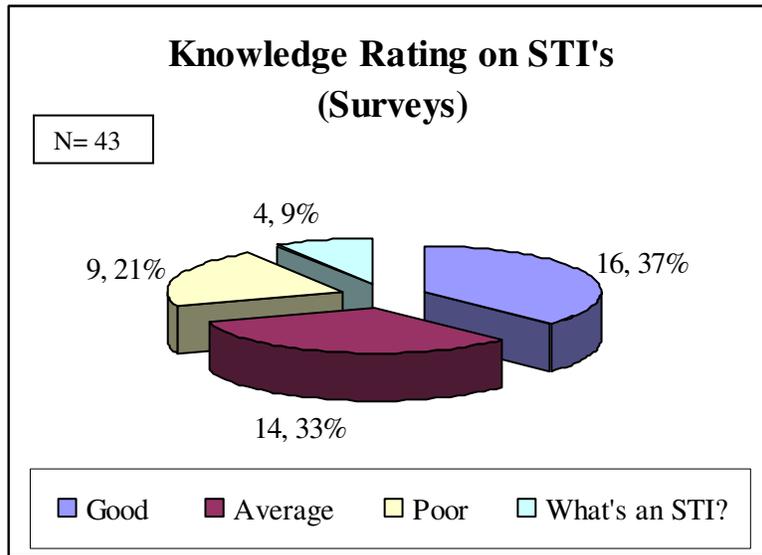
### Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's)

#### Question Forty-Five: Do you know about STI's?

All of the 43 interview participants knew about Sexually Transmitted Infections. We had to clarify with some because many of them referred to it as Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD's).

<sup>18</sup> Canadian AIDS Society. 2004. HIV Transmission: Guidelines for Assessing Risk. Ottawa: Health Canada. [http://www.cdnaids.ca/web/repguide.nsf/pages/45A115EBBCBA2586852570210054FC3E/\\$file/HIV%20TRANSMISSION%20Guidelines%20for%20assessing%20risk.pdf](http://www.cdnaids.ca/web/repguide.nsf/pages/45A115EBBCBA2586852570210054FC3E/$file/HIV%20TRANSMISSION%20Guidelines%20for%20assessing%20risk.pdf)

**Question Forty-Six: What would you rate your knowledge around STI's (Sexually Transmitted Infections)?**



**Graph 26: Knowledge Rating of STI's**

**Question Forty-Seven: Have you ever had an STI?**

Participants from interviews and surveys answered this question. Again, because of confidentiality we did not pose this to focus groups. Of all the participants consulted:

- 👤 66% or 57 participants stated that they have had a Sexually Transmitted Infection.
- 👤 34% or 29 participants stated that they have not had a Sexually Transmitted Infection.

**Question Forty-Eight: Did you get treatment for it?**

Participants from interviews and surveys answered this question. There were 57 participants. 95% stated that they accessed treatment and 5% did not access treatment.

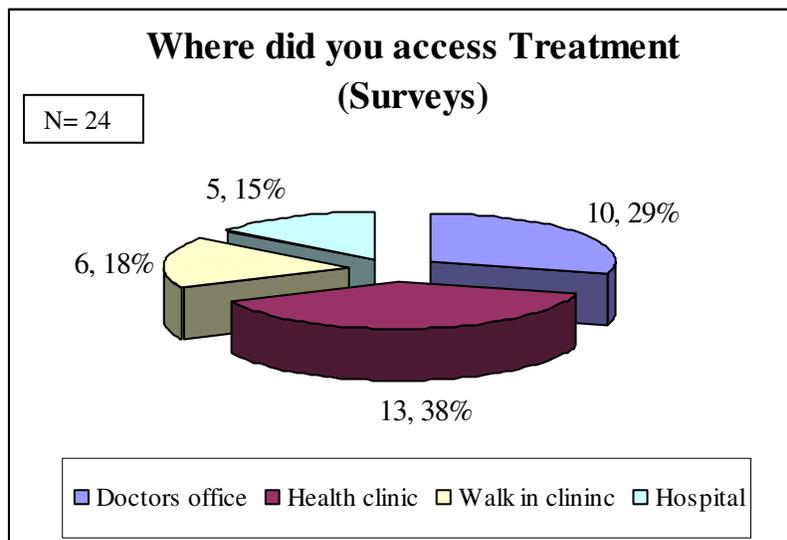
**Question Forty-Nine: Did you finish/complete your treatment?**

Of the 24 youth who accessed treatment for STI's, we wanted to find out if they completed their treatment.

- 👤 20 participants out of 24 completed treatment.
- 👤 3 participants out of 24 did not complete treatment.
- 👤 1 Participant did not answer the question.

**Question Fifty: Where did you access treatment for it?**

Of the 24 youth who accessed treatment for STI's, we wanted to find out where they accessed treatment. Some of the youth gave more than one answer to this question.



**Graph 27: Where did you access treatment for STI's**

## HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a sexually transmitted infection; however we decided to place it in an independent category for easier reference and because it is an epidemic and needs to be looked at differently than other STI's. HIV is transmitted through<sup>19</sup>: sexual activity; sharing used, uncleaned needles or syringes, and other situations that involve piercing of the skin; mother-to-child transmission, in the uterus, during childbirth or through breast feeding; and, receiving transfusions of infected blood or blood products, transplanted organs, or donated sperm (In Canada all donated blood, organs and semen are now screened for HIV antibodies). In addition to this, the fluid [blood, semen, vaginal fluid, breast milk] must enter the body through an opening or break in the skin.

### Question Fifty-One: Do you know about HIV/AIDS?

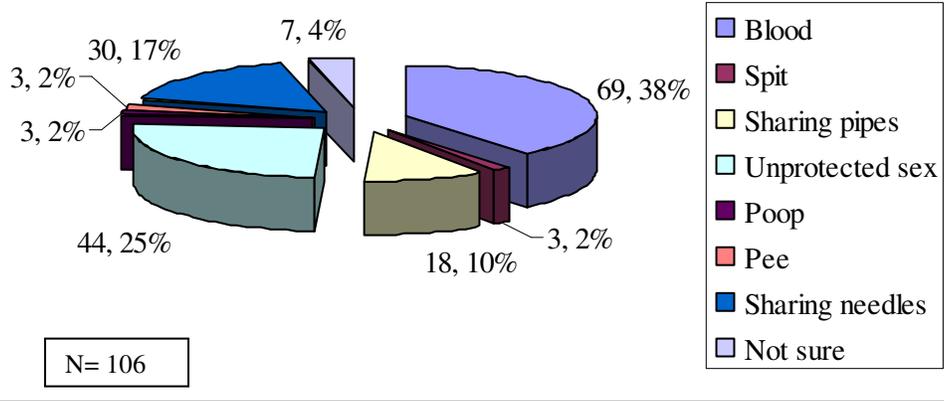
Youth who completed surveys (43) answered this question. 77% or 33 youth stated that they knew about HIV/AIDS. 23% or 10 youth stated they did **not** know about HIV/AIDS.

### Question Fifty-Two: How is HIV/AIDS transmitted?

Participants from all three methods of research were asked this question.

<sup>19</sup> Canadian AIDS Society. 2004. HIV Transmission: Guidelines for Assessing Risk. Ottawa: Health Canada. [http://www.cdnaids.ca/web/repguide.nsf/pages/45A115EBBCBA2586852570210054FC3E/\\$file/HIV%20TRANSMISSION%20Guidelines%20for%20assessing%20risk.pdf](http://www.cdnaids.ca/web/repguide.nsf/pages/45A115EBBCBA2586852570210054FC3E/$file/HIV%20TRANSMISSION%20Guidelines%20for%20assessing%20risk.pdf)

### How is HIV Transmitted (Focus groups, Interviews and Surveys)



Graph 28: HIV/AIDS Transmission

## Chapter Eight: Sex Work and the Law

Prostitution is legal in Canada; however, there are sections of the Criminal Code in Canada that make the activities around prostitution illegal. This decreases the health and safety of sex workers across Canada and puts them at risk for being targeted for violence. There are groups that have been formed to fight for the legalization and decriminalization of sex work in Canada. Many Canadians lack the education around the terminology of prostitution. This perpetuates the stigmatization and discrimination of sex workers across the nation. When looking at street-based sex work, often women do not have a choice in regards to participating in these sexual activities. The Criminal Code alienates sex workers from the protective service of police by institutionalizing an adversarial relationship between sex workers and police. This also affects the number of women who are likely to report violence that occurs while they are working. The women who are subject to criminal charges are put at even greater risk because if pimps or abusive partners manage them, they face more violence because of missed work.

### ***Canada: Criminal Code - Prostitution***

Canadian *Criminal Code* Provisions pertaining to prostitution (1985)

#### **Bawdy-house**

**210.** (1) Every one who keeps a common bawdy-house is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.

(2) Every one who

- (a) is an inmate of a common bawdy-house,
- (b) is found, without lawful excuse, in a common bawdy-house, or
- (c) as owner, landlord, lessor, tenant, occupier, agent or otherwise having charge or control of any place, knowingly permits the place or any part thereof to be let or used for the purposes of a common bawdy-house, is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

**211.** Every one who knowingly takes, transports, directs, or offers to take, transport or direct, any other person to a common bawdy-house is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

#### **Procuring**

**212.** (1) Every one who

- (a) procures, attempts to procure or solicits a person to have illicit sexual intercourse with another person, whether in or out of Canada,
- (b) inveigles or entices a person who is not a prostitute to a common bawdy-house for the purpose of illicit sexual intercourse or prostitution,
- (c) knowingly conceals a person in a common bawdy-house,
- (d) procures or attempts to procure a person to become, whether in or out of Canada, a prostitute,

(e) procures or attempts to procure a person to leave the usual place of abode of that person in Canada, if that place is not a common bawdy-house, with intent that the person may become an inmate or frequenter of a common bawdy-house, whether in or out of Canada,

(f) on the arrival of a person in Canada, directs or causes that person to be directed or takes or causes that person to be taken, to a common bawdy-house,

(g) procures a person to enter or leave Canada, for the purpose of prostitution,

(h) for the purposes of gain, exercises control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in such manner as to show that he is aiding, abetting or compelling that person to engage in or carry on prostitution with any person or generally,

(i) applies or administers to a person or causes that person to take any drug, intoxicating liquor, matter or thing with intent to stupefy or overpower that person in order thereby to enable any person to have illicit sexual intercourse with that person, or

(j) lives wholly or in part on the avails of prostitution of another person, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(j), every person who lives wholly or in part on the avails of prostitution of another person who is under the age of eighteen years is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years.

(2.1) Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(j) and subsection (2), every person who lives wholly or in part on the avails of prostitution of another person under the age of eighteen years, and who

(a) for the purposes of profit, aids, abets, counsels or compels the person under that age to engage in or carry on prostitution with any person or generally, and

(b) uses, threatens to use or attempts to use violence, intimidation or coercion in relation to the person under that age, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years but not less than five years.

(4) Every person who, in any place, obtains for consideration, or communicates with anyone for the purpose of obtaining for consideration, the sexual services of a person who is under the age of eighteen years is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.

## **Offence in Relation to Prostitution**

### **Section 213:**

“Every person who in a public place or place open to public view

(a) stops or attempts to stop any motor vehicle,

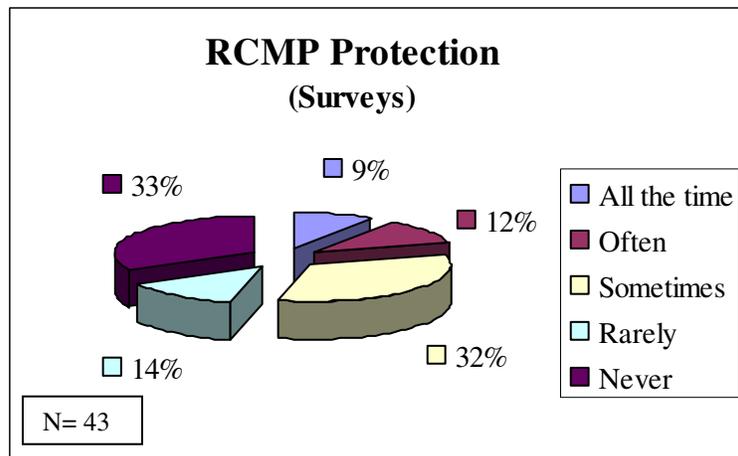
(b) impedes the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic or ingress to or egress from premises adjacent to that place, or

(c) stops or attempts to stop any person or in any manner communicates or attempts to communicate with any person for the purpose of engaging in prostitution or of obtaining the sexual services of a prostitute is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

## Youth-Only Questions

This part of Chapter eight deals with consultations with youth who completed surveys. Again, some of the youth filled out the surveys on their own while others chose to sit down with an interviewer to fill them out.

### Question Fifty-Three: Do you feel protected by the RCMP?



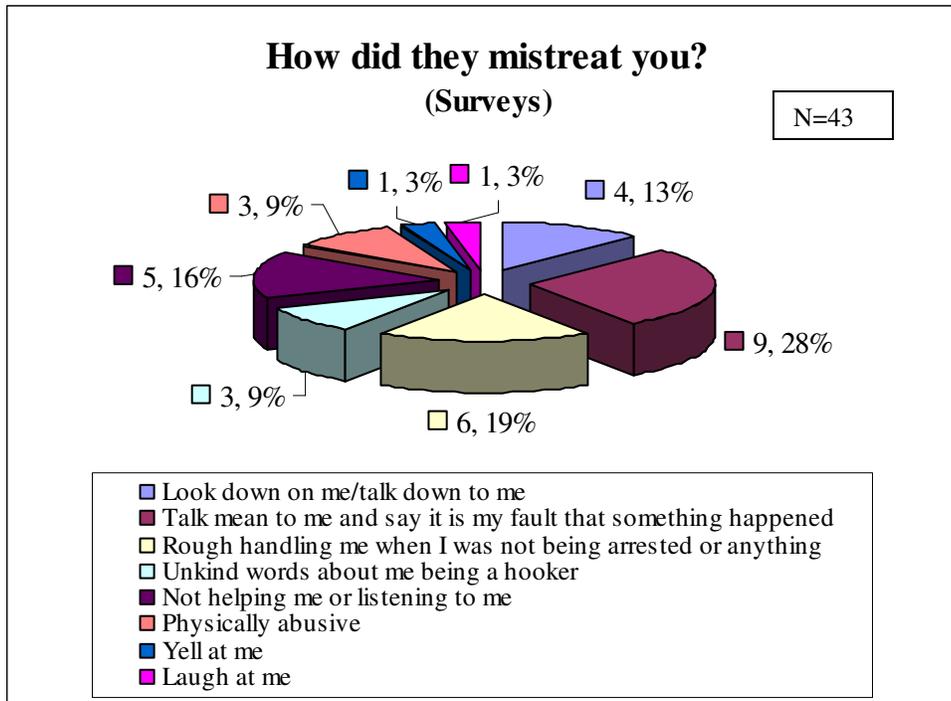
Graph 29: Do you feel Protected by the RCMP

### Question Fifty-Four: Have you ever been mistreated by the RCMP?

Of the 43 youth who answered this question, 44% or 19 participants stated that they had been mistreated by the RCMP while 56% or 24 said they had not been mistreated by the RCMP. Had we been thorough with this question, we would have asked all of the youth participants to explain 'mistreatment'. This way we could have analyzed the percentage of youth who had not experienced mistreatment from RCMP officers.

### Question Fifty-Five: How did they mistreat you?

Of the 44% or 19 participants who stated that they had been mistreated by the RCMP, we asked them how they were mistreated. The following graph explains their experiences.



**Graph 30: How did they mistreat you**

## Focus Group, Interview and Survey Questions

### Question Fifty-Six: Has a member of the RCMP ever asked you for sex?

To get an accurate representation of exploitation through members of the RCMP, we asked this question to all participants in this study. They view some of their experiences with RCMP as good and others are not so good. Some girls have seen an RCMP officer more than once and for others it was just the one time. 24% or 25 participants answered yes to this question and 76% or 81 participants answered no. This means that nearly 1 out of every 4 to 5 participants have experienced an RCMP officer asking them for sex. Some of the participants were mildly agitated when asked this question and others did not want to discuss it at all. These statistics in no way represent the entire RCMP. We also understand that there are some RCMP officers that wish to bridge the gap in relationships with sex workers in Prince George. It is important to have open dialogue with the RCMP as to educate them and sensitize them to the issues of survival sex and sexual exploitation.

**Interview Participant:** On why an RCMP officer asked her for sex: “It was because I had a warrant and he said he would make it go away, just for the night.”

**Interview Participant:** “A police officer hasn’t asked me for sex, but he asked me how I feel when all those filthy men have their hands all over me! It really pissed me off that he said that to me!”

**Question Fifty-Seven: Have you ever been charged with solicitation?**

All participants were asked if they had ever been charged with solicitation at any point in their lives. Some of the participants had been charged in Prince George while others had been charged in other cities. 36% or 38 participants stated that they had been charged with solicitation while 64% or 68 participants said they had not been charged with solicitation.

**Question Fifty-Eight: Do you have any related charges to prostitution?**

All participants were asked if they had any prostitution related charges. 39% or 41 participants stated yes they had related charges while 61% or 65 participants said they had no related charges.

**Question Fifty-Nine: Have you ever been to jail?**

We asked all the participants this question. Of 106 women and girls, 58% or 62 participants stated that they had spent time in jail while 42% or 44 participants stated that they had not spent any time in jail. When we asked this question, we clarified that we were not taking about spending a day or two in city cells, but rather talking about time spent in a correctional institution.

## Chapter Nine: Exiting Sex Work

For the purpose of this report, when we talk about exiting sex work we are talking about survival sex work. At New Hope we hope that women come to a place in their lives where they feel ready to exit. Although exiting is not in our mandate, what we do is support women and girls and help to empower them in making healthier choices; therefore, one of our programs is a 'transitional' exiting program. The purpose is to move women and girls to a place where they would be able to consider the possibility of exiting as a reality. We just want to help them until they reach a place where they are able to make a choice around exiting. There are many barriers to exiting survival sex work such as treatment, employment, education and more. This prevents many women and girls from exiting. Strong supports and resources are required during the exiting process. At New Hope, we believe that the women should be a part of creating programs that work for them as individuals. In this chapter we will look at some of the needs of sex workers around exiting.

### Question Sixty: Have you ever thought about exiting sex work?

We asked all the participants this question. Of 106 women and girls,

- 👩 67% or 71 participants stated that they had thought about exiting sex work.
- 👩 31% or 33 participants stated that they had *not* thought about exiting sex work.
- 👩 2% or 2 participants did not give an answer to this question.

Some of their comments:

- 👩 I love the attention that I get from the guys and I love crack!
- 👩 For one, I'm not ready and welfare needs to give me more money...for diapers and milk. After I pay rent and buy groceries there is nothing left...formula is expensive.
- 👩 I need to survive
- 👩 I have no way to get money. There needs to be more services for women to help them get job skills.

**Interview Participant:** "I don't like it at all. I like the money but I don't like the um vicious circle. I like being normal, being able to sleep at night and not having to worry about the next day and where I am going to get my next fix and how sick I am going to be and who I am going to rip off and shit like that...."

### Question Sixty-One: What could be in place to help you to exit?

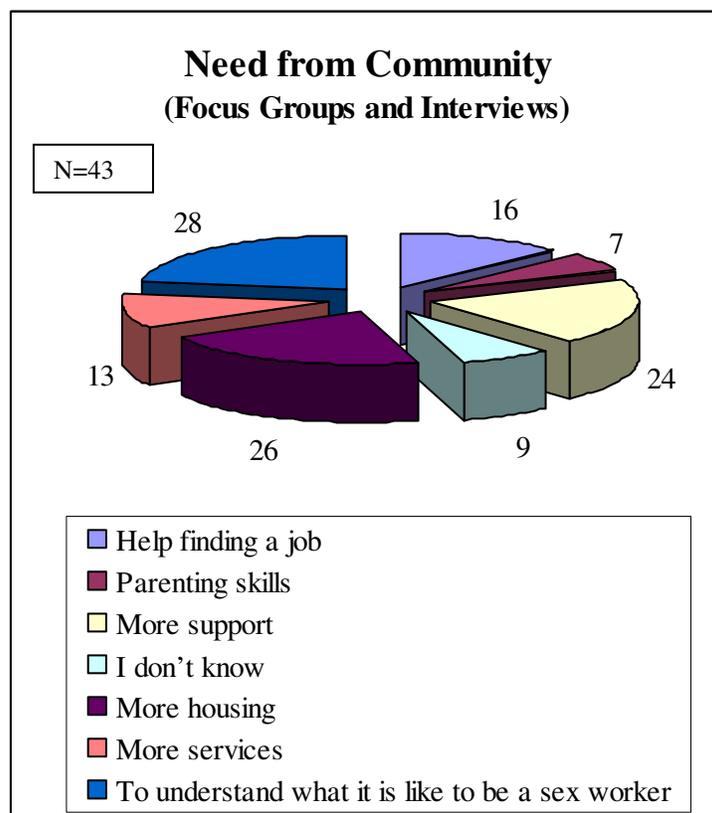
All participants were asked this question and some of them gave more than one answer. The participants were not led into answers, instead they answered freely based on their own needs. The information was collated based on the many similar responses. Out of 104 participants,

- 👤 9% or 25 participants stated that they needed more treatment options. Some of the participants noted that the treatment programs that they had taken did not work for them because they were not gender specific.
- 👤 10% or 26 participants stated that they needed bigger treatment facilities. The waitlists can be quite long and many addicts live in the moment and need services based on that.
- 👤 12% or 31 participants stated that they need more support. Some of the participants stated that while they are in recovery, they have limited supports to help them through that transition.
- 👤 4% or 10 participants stated that they needed more peer groups. It was not enough that there were NA/AA/CA programs, but they also needed recreational peer groups.
- 👤 4% or 11 participants stated that they needed more supportive programs that they could access in the community.
- 👤 8% or 20 participants stated that they needed people that they could trust in their lives.
- 👤 14% or 39 participants stated that they needed more access to education. Furthermore, some participants needed more support around finishing their education.
- 👤 13% or 35 participants stated that they needed jobs. For some of the participants who, at one point, made it far enough in their recovery, they had a difficult time with job transitions due to low pay and lack of supports. Furthermore, some participants stated that it was too difficult to transition out of a lifestyle that they had been living for years.
- 👤 3% or 9 participants stated that when they are ready, they will exit.
- 👤 4% or 10 participants stated that they needed more training, including life skills.
- 👤 3% or 7 participants stated that in order to exit, they needed to move to a different town or city.
- 👤 5% or 13 participants stated that they needed their families to help them exit. Some of the participants said they needed more support from their families.
- 👤 11% or 29 participants stated that they needed ore services in the community that could help them to exit. As an organization, we see that many service providers in Prince George have large client-bases and minimal staff.

**Focus Group Participant:** “Um, when I do drugs and get all freaked out and you think everyone is out to get you and um...listening to other people’s stories makes me want to quit but I can’t because I am a drug addict.”

### Question Sixty-Two: What do you need from the community?

This question was posed to interview and focus group participants. Out of 63 participants, this is what they had to say:



**Graph 31: Community Needs**

Their Voices:

- 👤 “We need supportive recovery. There has to be something after detox because people just come and go when there are no supports for them after.”
- 👤 “More education needs to be done to educate people around sex work issues. They need to know that we are mothers, sisters and daughters!”
- 👤 “As we speak, I got a twenty dollar crisis grant from welfare. My worker knows that I was in detox and cleaning up. I was staying at a shelter where I have always been able to stay clean. That is all they were willing to do for me. They told me that the place where I room and board is not safe and to get some of the room and board back. Everyone knows that you have to give thirty days notice so I am screwed really till welfare day! I don't know what I am going to do because every time I work the streets it eventually leads me back to the dope!”

**Question Sixty-Three: What do you like to do for fun?**

We asked interview and focus group participants this question. Some of them had more than one answer. Out of 63 participants this is what they had to say:

- 👤 24 participants stated that watching movies was fun.
- 👤 11 participants stated that hanging out with friends was fun.

- 👤 4 participants stated that dancing was fun.
- 👤 3 participants stated that doing crafts was fun.
- 👤 8 participants stated that going to the park was fun.
- 👤 14 participants stated that going shopping was fun.
- 👤 4 participants stated that swimming was fun.
- 👤 1 participant stated that the skate park was fun.
- 👤 1 participant stated that bowling was fun.
- 👤 1 participant stated that travelling was fun.
- 👤 8 participants stated that walking was fun.
- 👤 6 participants stated that writing poems was fun.
- 👤 1 participant stated that playing games was fun.
- 👤 1 participant stated that going drinking at the bars was fun.
- 👤 1 participant stated that playing sports was fun
- 👤 3 participants stated that getting high was fun.
- 👤 5 participants stated that reading was fun.
- 👤 15 participants stated that spending time with my kids was fun.
- 👤 7 participants stated that going camping was fun.
- 👤 2 participants stated that driving was fun.
- 👤 2 participants stated that skiing was fun.
- 👤 5 participants stated that drawing was fun.

**Interview participant:** “I love travelling and swimming with my baby!”

**Focus Group Participant:** “Going to the park with my daughter and shopping.”

#### **Question Sixty-Four: Have you ever heard of New Hope?**

All of the participants were asked this question. Out of 106 participants, 67% or 71 participants had heard of New Hope while 33% or 35 participants had not heard of New Hope. Most of the participants who had not heard of New Hope were youth participants.

#### **Question Sixty-Five: Have you ever been to New Hope?**

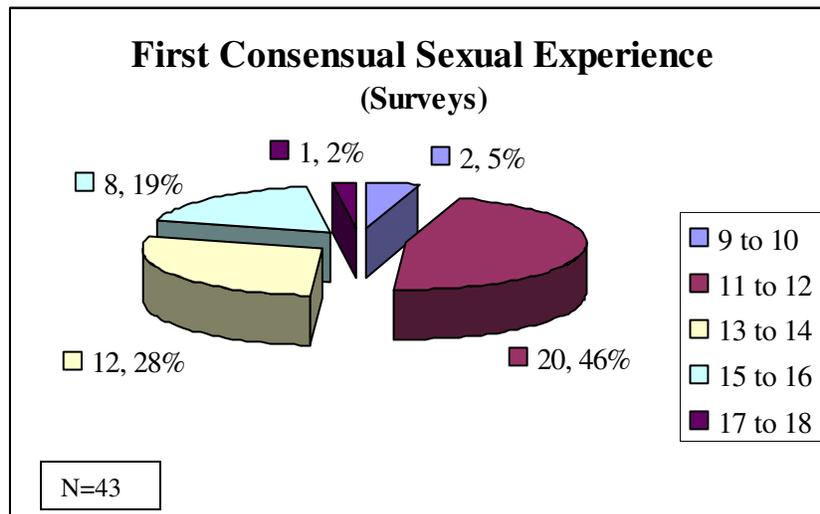
The same 106 participants were asked if they had ever been to New Hope. 63% or 67 participants stated that they had been to New Hope before while 37% or 39 participants had *not* been to New Hope at all. Most of the participants who had not been to New Hope were youth participants.

## Chapter Ten: Youth at Risk

It is difficult to reach sexually exploited youth because they are not necessarily at street level. What we have found is that many youth do not want to identify with being a sex worker or involved in sex work or survival sex. There is much stigma and discrimination attached to sex work. The youngest youth that we have provided service to was fourteen years old. All the questions in this Chapter were posed to youth participants through surveys. There were 43 participants in total.

### Question Sixty-Six: How old were you when you had your first consensual sexual experience?

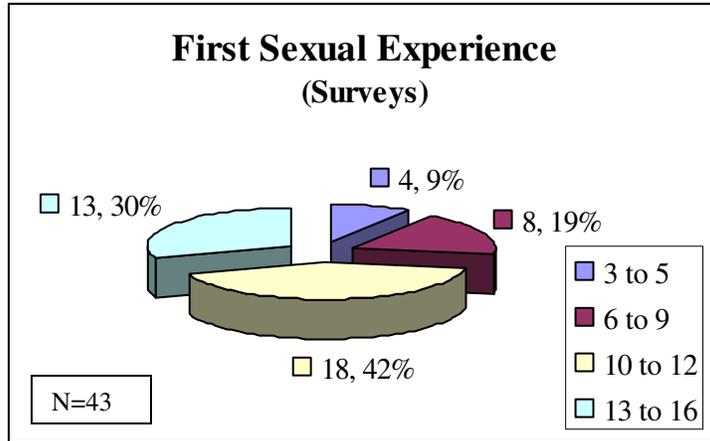
In this question we clarified with the girls that it meant they **agreed** to have sex or sex acts. It is alarming to see that the majority of the 43 girls were between the ages of 11 to 12 years old. This question does not necessarily reflect the views of our organization or people within it. Consensual can be a debatable term.



Graph 32: Consensual Sex

### Question Sixty-Seven (a): How old were you when you had your first sexual experience?

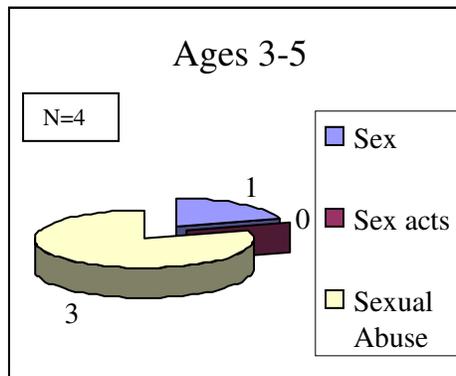
This question is similar to the last question but this question leaves out consent. We did not specifically ask the participants to include sexual abuse. Some chose to include it while others may or may not have included it in their response.



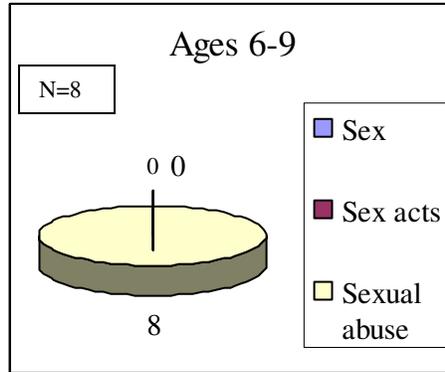
Graph 33: First Sexual Experience

Question Sixty-Seven (b): Was it  Sex  
 Sex acts  
 Sexual abuse

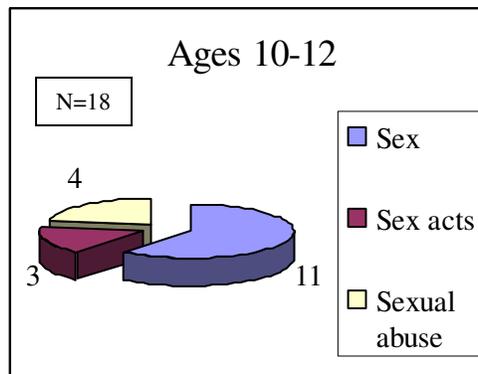
The following graphs depict the definition of each girl's experience of her first sexual act. These are how they interpreted their experience. Again, not everyone interpreted it as abuse. The older the age of sexual experience, the more it was seen as sex/sex acts and not sexual abuse.



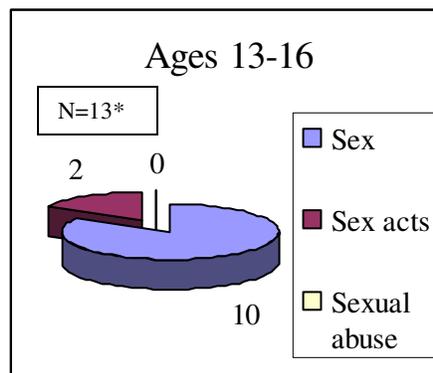
Graph 34: Ages 3-5 Sex Acts



Graph 35: Ages 6-9 Sex Acts



Graph 36: Ages 10-12 Sex Acts



Graph 37: Ages 13-16 Sex Acts

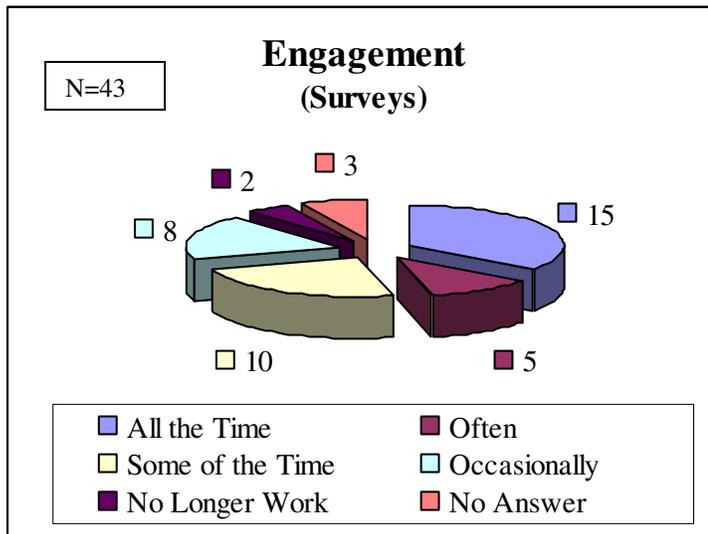
\*One girl did not answer this question

**Question Sixty-Eight: What is different about sex work in Prince George compared to other areas?**

- No difference, never tried anywhere else
- I don't know
- You won't die

- More safe cuz you know more people
- No difference except easier making money there
- Prices better here, easier here
- More money
- Not sure, haven't been to other places
- More competition there
- It's more busy at all hours in Vancouver
- The highway of tears
- My family isn't here
- Where I'm from I have to hitchhike to get a date
- It's colder here in the winter
- Less traffic here
- I can't work in my community
- It's a smaller group of girls
- More girls work inside
- Less places for us to go
- The stores don't like us here
- The police are always on our case

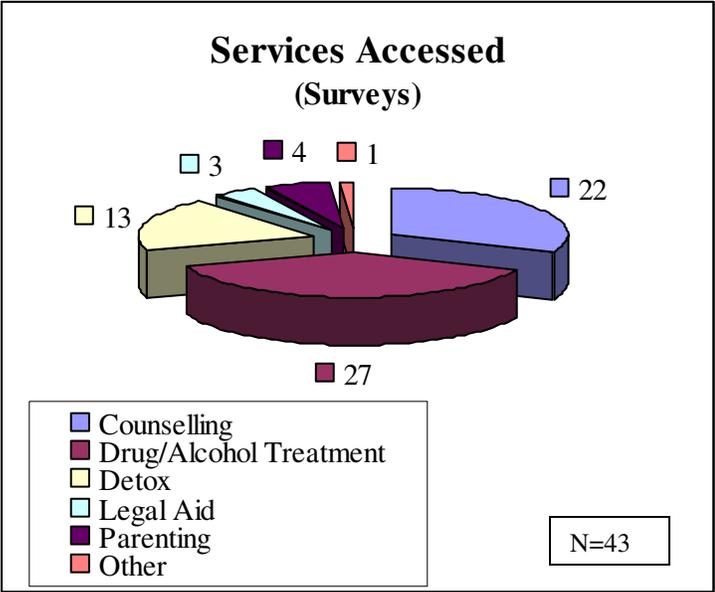
**Question Sixty-Nine: How often do you engage in sex work?**



**Graph 38: Engagement**

**Question Seventy: What kind of services would/did you access?**

More than one answer may have been given.

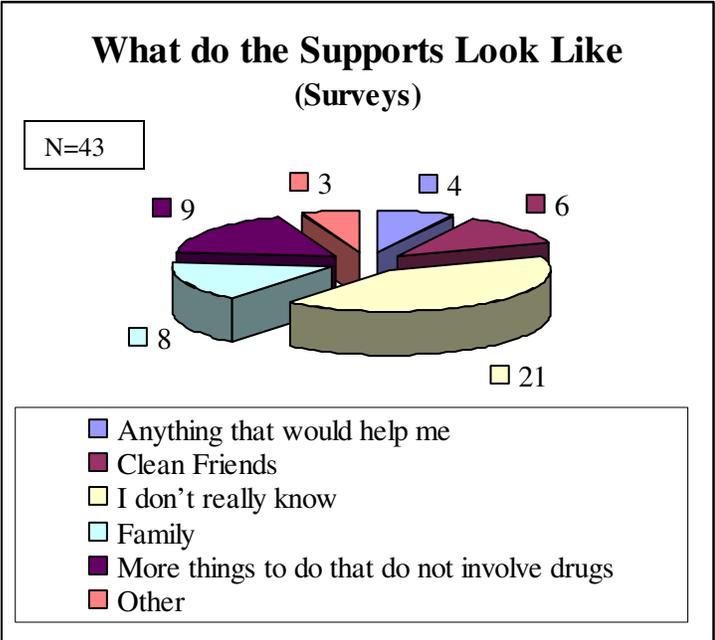


**Graph 39: Services Accessed**

Other includes support services that understand my experiences.

**Question Seventy-One: What would/did your supports look like?**

More than one answer may have been given.

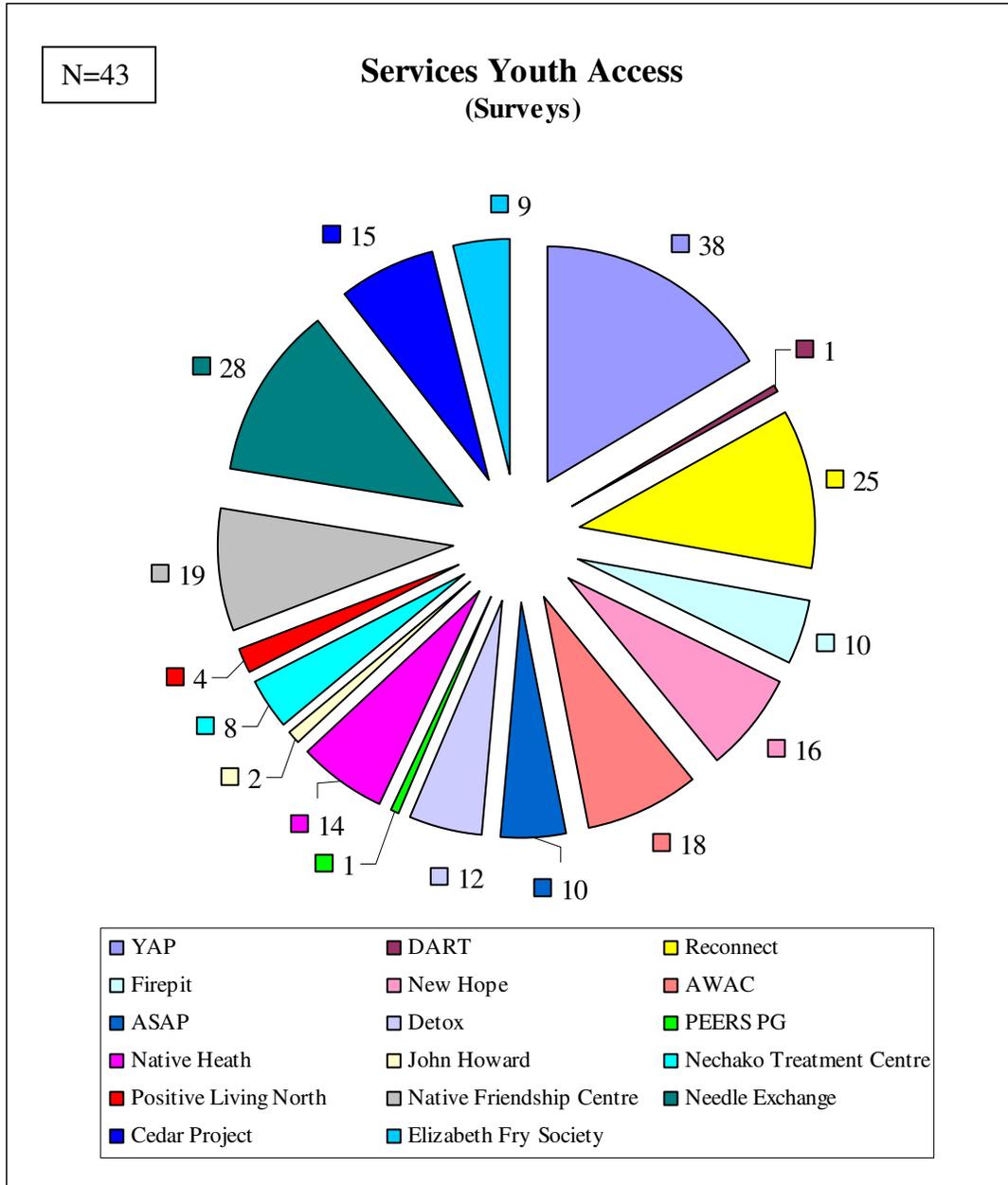


**Graph 40: What do the Supports look like?**

\*Other includes Reconnect (refer to page 89), good supports, and outreach.

**Question Seventy-Three: What services do you access in Prince George?**

More than one answer may have been given. We did not define ‘services’ to the youth participants so *their* interpretation of what services meant to them is not reflected in this graph.



**Graph 41: Services Youth Access**

For more information on the service providers above, see appendix D.

### **Question Seventy-Four: What could New Hope provide for you that would be helpful?**

More than one answer may have been given.

-  3 participants stated that more information should be available.
-  4 participants stated that they needed more support.
-  4 participants stated that job postings and training opportunities should be available.
-  2 participants stated ‘everything’.
-  3 participants stated that they wanted lots of fun things so the girls have other things to do instead of drugs.
-  5 participants stated that they wanted computer use.
-  6 participants stated that they did not know.
-  1 participant stated more one on one.
-  4 participants stated that they wanted cell phones made available for sex workers.
-  7 participants stated they wanted more drop in days and more workers.
-  3 participants stated that New Hope should have food hampers/supplies.
-  2 participants stated that more research should be done so people can learn.
-  3 participants stated that more outreach needed to be available.
-  1 participant stated nothing and that everything they need is at New Hope.
-  7 participants stated that they would like more education.

### **Question Seventy-Five: Final Comments that you think we should be aware of?**

-  “Girls that are still out there out having unsafe sex and being sexually abused they should be looked after and taken in with respect and care.”
-  “There needs to be more supportive services for girls on the streets.”
-  “So far everything you provide is all good.”
-  “If I quit I would like to work there to help others.”
-  “Keep up the good work! This will help a lot of girls who are in this situation.”

## Recommendations

The following recommendations have been created to address some of the findings in this report. Some of our recommendations were adopted from a 2006 report by the BC Coalition of Experiential Women called *From the Curb: Sex Workers Perspectives on Violence and Domestic Trafficking*.

1. There needs to be an increase in public awareness around the issues of survival sex work and sexual exploitation. A public awareness campaign should be initiated by sex workers and allies to bring these issues to the forefront of public attention. In doing this, it will improve sensitivity to the realities of survival sex work.
2. The development of a community strategy to increase safety among sex workers and reduce exploitation from organized crime, pimps, customers and some law enforcement agents.
3. Collaboration among sex workers, law enforcement and other stakeholders to develop solutions to social concerns and to increase the meaningful participation of sex workers in the issues that affect their lives.
4. Increased networking with service providers throughout northern BC for improved sex worker friendly services. This can be done as capacity building, sensitivity training and sexual exploitation prevention workshops. The basis of these initiatives should be done by sex workers and/or with consultation from sex workers.
5. When women and youth want to transition away from street-level sex work, there needs to be adequate services in place including: housing, treatment, re- training opportunities, scholarships, and liveable-wage employment. More collaboration needs to be built to address these issues that continue to oppress and marginalize this group of women and girls. Refer to Chapter 9 for data around exiting sex work.
6. Sex workers should be provided with resources and training including training that that enhances their safety (e.g. self defence and de-escalation training, environmental scanning training that support sex workers in identifying vehicles and individuals.)
7. Planning and implementation around a bad date complaints system that all organizations working with sex workers are connected to. Due to the lack of credibility afforded to sex workers, they tend not to file complaints.
8. More work needs to be done to build relationships between law enforcement and sex workers to address this and other problematic impacts related to the unequal power dynamics between sex workers and law enforcement. In order to increase bad date reporting or work on bad date reporting strategies, there needs to be a congenial relationship between RCMP and sex workers.

# Appendix A

## Interview Questions

1. How old were you when you got involved in sex work?
2. How old are you now?
3. Are you still working?
4. What were the reasons that you started working in survival sex and sex work?
5. How do you get to work?
6. What are your relationships like with other women working in sex work?
7. Do you go to other towns to work?
8. How do you get there?
9. Do you feel safe being involved in sex work?
10. What makes you feel safe?
11. What do you do to keep yourself safe?
12. Have you ever had a bad date?
13. How many have you had?
14. What do you think contributes to women having bad dates?
15. Do you/would you report a bad date?
16. Would you report it to New Hope?
17. What does the atmosphere look like?
18. What do you do when it rains or snows?
19. Where do you go if it rains or snows?
20. Do you have access to phones?
21. Do you have access to bathrooms?

22. Where do you go to the bathroom?
23. What does family mean to you?
24. Is your family supportive?
25. How often do you see your family?
26. Where are they from?
27. Is anyone else in your family involved in sex work?
28. How do you get to work?
29. Do you have any children?
30. Are they in your care?
31. Who takes care of them?
32. Do you use condoms?
33. Do you use condoms in your personal relationships?
34. Why do you use condoms?
35. Do you know about the morning after pill (ECP)?
36. Have you ever used the ECP?
37. Where do you get the ECP?
38. Do you know how Hepatitis C is transmitted?
39. Do you know about STI's?
40. Have you ever had an STI?
41. Did you get treatment?
42. Do you know how HIV/AIDS is transmitted?
43. Has a member of the RCMP ever asked you for sex?
44. Have you ever been charged with solicitation?

45. Do you have any related charges to sex work?
46. Have you ever been to jail?
47. Have you thought about exiting from sex work?
48. What could be in place to help you exit?
49. What do you need from the community?
50. What do you like to do for fun?
51. Have you ever heard of New Hope?
52. Have you ever been to New Hope?

## **Appendix B**

### ***Focus group Questions***

1. How old were you when you got involved in sex work?
2. How old are you now?
3. Why did you start?
4. How do you get to work?
5. What are your relationships like with other sex workers?
6. Do you work anywhere else?
  - a. How do you get there?
7. Do you feel safe being involved in sex work?
  - a. What makes you feel safe?
  - b. What do you do to keep yourself safe?
8. Have you ever had a bad date?
  - a. How many have you had?
  - b. What do you think contributes to women having bad dates?
  - c. Do you/would you report a bad date?
  - d. Would you report it to New Hope?
9. What does the atmosphere look like?
  - b. What do you do when it rains or snows?
  - c. Where do you go?
10. Do you have access to phones?
11. Do you have access to bathrooms?
  - a. Where do you go to the bathroom?
12. What does family mean to you?
  - a. Is your family supportive?
  - b. How often do you see your family?
  - c. Where are they from?
  - d. Is anyone else in your family involved in sex work?
13. How do you get to work?
14. Do you have any children?
  - a. Are they in your care?

- b. Who takes care of them?
15. Do you use condoms?
    - a. Do you use condoms in your personal relationships?
    - b. Why do you use condoms?
  16. Do you know about the morning after pill (ECP)?
    - a. Where do you get the ECP?
  17. Do you know how Hepatitis C is transmitted?
  18. Do you know about STI's?
  19. Do you know how HIV/AIDS is transmitted?
  20. Has a member of the RCMP ever asked you for sex?
  21. Have you ever been charged with solicitation?
    - a. Do you have any related charges to sex work?
  22. Have you ever been to jail?
  23. Have you thought about exiting from sex work?
    - a. What could be in place to help you exit?
  24. What do you need from the community?
  25. What do you like to do for fun?
  26. Have you ever heard of New Hope?
  27. Have you ever been to New Hope?

## Appendix C

### Youth Survey

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ (must be 19 years or under)

It is important that you answer this survey as *honestly* as possible as it will help other women and girls on the street. Please check (✓) **all** that apply.

Note: You may check (✓) **several** boxes for one question.

1. How old were you when you had your first consensual sexual experience? (This means that you agreed to have sex or sex acts)

\_\_\_\_\_

2. How old were you when you had your first sexual experience? Check all that apply.

Age: \_\_\_\_\_  sex  sex acts  sexual abuse

3. How old were you when you got involved in sex work?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Why did you become involved in sex work? (check all that apply)

money  drugs  pimped  other (please explain)

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you or did you feel safe being involved in sex work?

Yes  No  Often  Sometimes If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you **only** ever done sex work in Prince George?

Yes If yes, skip to question 8  No If no, please tell us all the other places

that you worked \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What is different about sex work in Prince George compared to other areas? Please be specific.

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8. How often do you engage in sex work?

- All the time    Often    Some of the time    Occasionally
- I do not work anymore

9. If you're an active sex worker, have you ever thought about exiting sex work?

- Yes    No

10. What would help you to exit? If you have already exited, what helped you to exit? Check all that apply.

- Education/School    Training    Regular work    Moving    Family    Services
- Support    Other, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

11. If you checked "services" in question 10, what kind of services would/did you access? Check all that apply.

- Counselling    Drug/Alcohol treatment    Detox    Legal aid    Parenting    Other, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

12. If you checked "support" in question 10, what would/did that support look like? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. Do you have access to phones where you work?

- Yes    No if no, why not? Then skip to question 17

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14. Where are the phones located? (check all that apply)

- Store    Restaurant    Outside    Crack Shack    Pub/Bar
- Service Provider (shelter, drop-in centres, needle exchange, health clinic, etc)
- Other Please explain \_\_\_\_\_

15. Do the phones work?

- Yes  No  Some of the time  Often

16. Are they 'card service only' phones?

- No  Yes

If YES, check the following box that applies:

- Some of them are card service only  Most of them are card service only

17. Do you have access to washrooms where you work?

- All the time  Some of the time  Rarely  No

18. Have you ever had to go to the bathroom outside?

- Once  Often  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

19. What is the street lighting like where you work the most?

- Really Light  Dim  Dark

20. Do the lights always work?

- Yes  No

21. How do you get to work? (Check all that apply)

- Walk  Taxi  Bus  Hitchhike  Friends that Drive  Other Please

explain \_\_\_\_\_

22. Have you ever had a bad date?

- Yes  No

23. Which of the following do you consider to be a bad date? (check all that apply)

- Yelling/Shouting  Abandon/Leave you stranded  Forcing sex  
 Kicking/Punching  Throw from vehicle  Talk down to you  
 Name Calling  Refuse to pay  Swearing at you

Other Please describe \_\_\_\_\_

24. Do you report your bad dates?

All the time  Often  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

25. Do you feel protected by the RCMP?

All the time  Often  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

26. Have you ever been mistreated by the RCMP?

Yes  No

27. How did they mistreat you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

28. Has a member of the RCMP ever asked you for a sexual favour?

Yes  No

29. Have you ever been charged for solicitation?

Yes  No

30. Have you ever been convicted of a prostitution related offence?

Yes  No

31. Have you ever been to jail?

Yes  No

32. Where are you originally from? \_\_\_\_\_

33. Does your family live in Prince George?

Yes  No

34. Do they know you are/were involved in sex work?

Yes  No

35. Is your family supportive?

Yes  No

36. Who in your family is supportive? (check all that apply)

- Mother    Stepmother    Father    Stepfather    Brothers    Sisters  
 Grandmother    Grandfather    Aunts    Uncles    Cousins  
 Other Please explain \_\_\_\_\_

37. Is anyone in your family involved in sex work?

- Yes    No

38. If they are currently involved in sex work, how long have they been involved?

- over 20 years    15-20 years    10-15 years    5-10 years    2-5 years  
 A year or less

39. Do you have any children?

- Yes    No

40. Who takes care of them?

- You    Family    Ministry    Other, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

41. Do you use condoms with your dates?

- All the time    Often    Some of the time    Rarely    Never

42. Have you ever been offered more money from dates to NOT use a condom?

- Yes    No

43. Have you heard of the morning after pill?

- Yes    No    Not Sure

44. Have you ever taken the morning after pill?

- Yes    No

45. Do you know about Hepatitis C?

- Yes    No

46. How is Hepatitis C transmitted? Check all that apply.

- Blood
- Spit
- Unprotected sex
- Sharing needles
- Poop
- Pee
- Sharing pipes
- Other, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

47. What would you rate your knowledge around STI's (Sexually Transmitted Infections)?

- Good
- Average
- Poor
- what's an STI?

48. Have you ever had an STI?

- Yes
- No

49. Did you get treatment for it?

- Yes
- No

50. Did you finish/complete your treatment?

- Yes
- No, if not, why? \_\_\_\_\_

51. Where did you access treatment for it? Check all that apply.

- Doctor's office
- Health Clinic
- Walk-in Clinic
- Hospital
- Other, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

52. Do you know about HIV/AIDS?

- Yes
- No

53. How is HIV/AIDS transmitted? Check all that apply.

- Blood
- Spit
- Unprotected sex
- Sharing needles
- Poop
- Pee
- Sharing pipes
- Other, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

54. What services do you access in Prince George? Check all that apply.

- YAP
- DART
- Reconnect
- Positive Living North
- Other, please explain \_\_\_\_\_
- Firepit
- New Hope
- Cedar Project
- Elizabeth Fry
- John Howard
- AWAC
- Nechako Treatment
- PEERS PG
- ASAP
- Native Health
- Detox
- Friendship Center
- Needle exchange

55. Are you familiar with New Hope?

Yes  No

New Hope is an organization that was created for sex workers by sex workers. We provide advocacy, referrals, support, harm reduction materials, outreach, workshops, meals, movies, and so much more....It is a safe place that women and girls who are involved in survival sex go for fun, support and rest.

56. Have you ever been to New Hope?

Yes  No, if no go to question 58

57. What could New Hope provide for you that would be helpful? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

58. Final Comments that you think we should be aware of?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix D**

### ***About the Services in Prince George***

#### **Positive Living North: No kheyoh t'sih'en t'sehena Society**

Purpose is to provide culturally appropriate care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS, their families and their communities. Offers information on symptoms and treatment and provides community education.

Contact:

250-562-1172 Office  
250-562-3317 Fax  
1-888-438-2437 Toll Free in BC  
info@positivelivingnorth.ca  
www.positivelivingnorth.ca  
1-1563 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue  
Prince George, BC V2L 3B8

#### **Northern John Howard Society**

The society assists offenders, ex-offenders, their families and victims. They have a variety of programs for all offenders. Some of their programs include choices, inside/outside, PGSTOP, prison visiting and a woodworking shop.

Contact:

250-561-7343  
250-561-0510  
1150 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Prince George, BC V2L 3J3  
george.njhs@shawcable.com  
www.johnhoward.ca

#### **Advocating for Women and Children (AWAC)**

The shelter has two sides: one side is a 14-bed emergency shelter and the other side is a 13-bed short-term shelter. Both shelter sides have the capability of holding more beds for emergencies. They also have long term residences upstairs for women who face multiple barriers and homelessness. AWAC provides support, advocacy and referrals.

Contact:

250-562-6262 Office  
250-562-6216 Fax

awac@telus.net  
144 George Street  
Prince George, BC V2L

### **Elizabeth Fry Society**

They have various programs primarily for women and youth providing information, referrals, advocacy, education and networking. Some of their programs include BRIDGES, court work services, housing, pathways, support groups, transition houses and victim support.

Contact:

250-563-1113 Office  
250-563-8765 Fax  
1575 Fifth Avenue  
Prince George, BC  
info@pgefry.bc.ca  
www.elizabethfry.ca

### **Youth Around Prince George (YAP)**

A resource centre providing a variety of services for high risk youth. Some services include counselling, social workers, public and mental health, advocacy, youth support, drop-in, alternate education, showers, kitchen and laundry. Some of the programs include F.U.B.U., Future Cents, and the Street Spirits Theatre Co.

Contact:

250-565-6271 Office  
250-565-4127 Access  
250-565-4209 Fax  
<http://www.youtharoundprince.com>

### **The Firepit**

A place where Aboriginal people (and their friends) can gather to learn, share and understand culture, health and community. This is a place where you can do some crafts and artwork, have a bowl of soup, join a talking circle, talk to a caring professional and get some information about health and HIV/AIDS.

Contact:

250-562-1172 Office  
250-563-6113 Drop-In  
250-562-3317 Fax  
1-888-438-2437 Toll Free in BC

info@positivelivingnorth.ca  
www.positivelivingnorth.ca  
1120 3rd Avenue  
Prince George, BC V2L 3E5

### **Active Support Against Poverty (ASAP)**

Informs people who are on income assistance of their rights. They provide support, assistance, advocacy, workshops, free clothing, referrals, and access to phone or fax for job searches.

Contact:

250-563-6112 Office  
250-563-1612 Fax  
1-877-563-6112 Toll Free  
asap@princegeorge.com  
1188 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Prince George, BC V2L 3M6

### **Central Interior Native Health Society**

The clinic offers many health services. First Nations healing methods are considered in programs. Some of their services include diabetes information, drug and alcohol counseling, social worker and family planning. Open to everyone.

Contact:

250-564-4422 Office  
250-564-8900 Fax  
1110 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Prince George, BC V2L 3J3

### **Cedar Project**

The Cedar Project is a prospective study of Aboriginal youth living in VCR and PG. Eligibility criteria include age between 14 and 30, and self-reported use of non-injection or injection drugs at least once in the month prior to enrolment. Participants complete a questionnaire administered by a trained interviewer and undergo HIV and HCV antibody testing. Demographic and behavioural data were obtained from the enrolment questionnaire.

Contact:

250-563-0772 Office  
250-563-0719 Fax  
cedarp@telus.net  
#101-1112 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Prince George, BC V2L 3M6

**Drug Awareness and Recovery Team (DART)**

Developed by recovering drug addicts in 1997, DART supports recovering drug addicts and alcoholics who are new in recovery. DART works towards continuous employment and volunteer opportunities, continuous contact by those in recovery, continuous means for networking, and continuous assistance in researching the area of drugs.

Contact:

250-563-6311 Office  
250-563-6332 Fax  
dart123@telus.net  
1122 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Prince George, BC V2L 5G6

**Detox Assessment Unit**

They provide a safe supportive environment for individuals withdrawing from alcohol and/or drugs. Admission is voluntary without costs. Twenty-four hour care is provided under medical supervision.

Contact:

250-565-2175 Office  
250-565-2176  
250-565-2790 Fax  
www.northernhealth.ca  
1308 Alward Street  
Prince George, BC V2M 7B1

**Prince George Native Friendship Centre**

A multi service organization with a variety of programs meant to address the need for education, personal support, emotional and spiritual well being, economic development, employment, vocational needs and social services. Some of their programs include Aboriginal Infant and Family Development program, employment counselling centre, Ketso Yoh, Native Healing Centre and Friendship Home.

Contact:

250-564-3568 Office  
250-563-0924 Fax  
reception@pgnfc.com  
www.pgnfc.com

1600 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Prince George, BC V2L 3G8

**Reconnect**

A program through the PG Native Friendship Centre where workers connect with street youth to encourage them to return to a safer lifestyle. Provides an 8-bed emergency shelter for youth aged 15-18.

Contact:

250-562-2538 Office  
250-563-0924 Fax  
reconnect1@pgnfc.com  
www.pgnfc.com  
171 George Street  
Prince George, BC V2L 1P8

**PEERS PG**

Provide support and services for women who are exiting sex work. They hold weekly support groups, facilitate workshops for sex workers, and accompany women to appointments.

Contact:

250-561-7032 Office  
250-561-7308 Fax  
peerspg@telus.net  
P.O. Box 1042  
Prince George, BC V2L 4V8

**Nechako Treatment Centre**

Provides specialized residential treatment services for persons with drug/alcohol addiction.

Contact:

250-565-2387 Office  
250-565-2524 Fax  
1308 Alward Street  
Prince George, BC V2M 7B1

### **AIDS Prevention Program (Needle Exchange)**

This is a needle exchange program that also provides crack pipes and condoms. There is an outreach van that runs nightly 5 nights a week. They provide nursing services, community workshops, advocacy and referrals.

Contact:

250-564-1727 Office  
www.northernhealth.ca  
1108 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Prince George, BC V2L 3E5