

Advice from SWANK Members to Partners of Sex Workers

- **Communicate, communicate, communicate!** Good communication is the basis of any successful relationship. Learning how to communicate and create the safe space to have difficult conversations. That means having conversations before they boil over into anger, hurt, or aggression.
- Being the partner of a sex worker is hard and for most people, it is a new experience with unknown challenges. It's ok to not know how to navigate everything all the time. That said, every relationship comes with its own unique challenges and obstacles and this one is no different.
- It can be useful to talk to someone about your feelings. Make sure you have a support system of your own who you can express your feelings to. If it is a social network, make sure you have cleared disclosure of your partner's job with them first.
- Engaging in the sex trade, and even enjoying do it, does not indicate anything about their feelings for you or that they are compensating for something missing in you, or in your relationship.
- Sex work is a job your partner does -- it's not an affair, it's not infidelity. To your partner, it may not even be sex.
- Like other kinds of intimate labor, sex work can be emotionally & physically demanding ... and after a longer session, your partner might not have energy to give. It's important to plan for this and create strategies to make sure everyone's needs are met – yours for affection/attention and theirs for self-care.
- It's up to me to disclose, not for you to share with others that I do sex work
- Please don't push me to talk about my work/sessions/clients
- Scheduling can be tough and erratic. I may be unavailable at the drop of a hat.
- Thank you for understanding when I have to take calls from clients.
- Don't assume that you are part of or entitled to this community just because you are close to me.
- What I do with my clients isn't a reflection of how I feel about you.
- Sex with clients is not the same as sex with you, or even necessarily sex for desire.
- Please don't fetishize me because of what I do.
- Please use language that I prefer. On the same token, just because you hear me and my friends refer to each other as Ho's doesn't mean you should feel comfortable calling us that.
- Please be sensitive to my emotional needs after work. I typically need downtime after work
- Sometimes I want to process with you, and sometimes I want to process alone. Please let me tell you what I need.
- Don't demonize my clients.
- Don't tell me how to do my job, or offer unsolicited advice.
- Please don't worry "for me," or patronize with concern. Trust that I will take care of myself.
- Please don't compare what we do together to my work.
- Please don't compare me to other sex workers
- Don't assume that your experiences with other sex workers is indicative of what your experiences with me will be.
- Don't talk about "having it for free" with me.
- Don't assume that being a sex worker is perpetuating abuse, or is inherently unhealthy
- Thanks for being understanding about me having to leave for work, instead of being resentful about someone else getting my time.