

It is estimated that 88% of survivors of sex trafficking come in contact with healthcare providers every year (*Seattle Against Slavery, 2019*). In the United States, only 6% of healthcare providers thought they had ever cared for a victim of trafficking (*Ross et al, 2015*).

### To learn more:

We have created a toolkit for healthcare providers about providing trauma-informed care for people in the sex trade.

Please visit:  
[iwantrest.com/HCP-toolkit](http://iwantrest.com/HCP-toolkit)



When patients have experienced interpersonal violence, this trauma affects patients' behaviors and worldviews, including how they interact with healthcare.

### Work to create:

- Trust within the healthcare system
- A safe environment where patients are able to share as little or as much as they want to
- A culture that fosters consent for all kinds of care provided
- An experience where the patient feels comfortable returning to when future health care visits are needed

### Other Resources:

REST | Real Escape from the Sex Trade:  
24/7 Hotline: (206) 451-REST  
*Community Advocacy, Drop-in, Integrated Health Clinic, Emergency Receiving Center Shelter, Residential Program*

King County Crisis Hotline  
Call: 1-800-621-4636

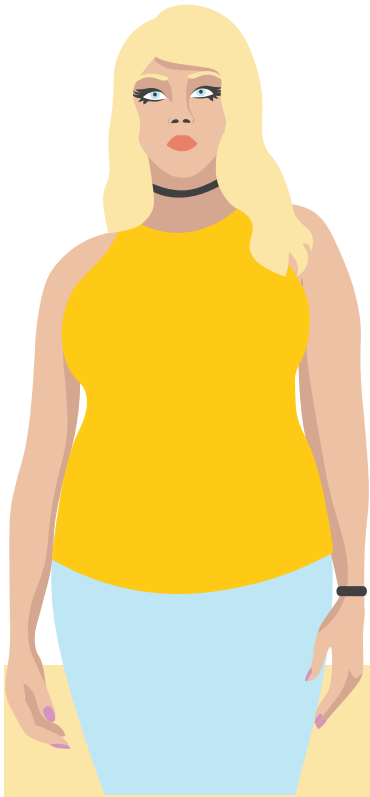
National Human Trafficking Resource Center  
Call: 1-888-373-7888 | Text: 233733

## Why I don't go to the clinic

*How seeing a healthcare provider feels similar to being sold for sex*

REST

REAL ESCAPE FROM THE SEX TRADE



Hi.

My name is Star.

I hate going to the clinic.

Healthcare workers cut me off, judge me, and don't listen. In my work, day in and day out, I go to a room that is not familiar and I exchange sexual services for money. Sometimes this goes well, sometimes it doesn't. I've been raped, robbed, and treated disrespectfully by my customers. I work hard to stay safe, but I have to take chances. I follow someone to a room, they walk in behind me and close the door. They ask me to take off my clothes, tell me to lay down in an uncomfortable position and begin to touch me. Healthcare providers do this too when I go to the clinic! If healthcare workers knew the similarities, maybe things could change for me when I go to the clinic.

## My barriers to accessing healthcare:

- I'm scared that I won't receive care.
- I know that I am considered a criminal.
- Sharing my story could jeopardize my safety or get Child Protective Services involved.
- People that are supposed to help me like healthcare providers, law enforcement, social workers, and more have been my customers—and not always good ones!
- I have even been expected to pay for my health and dental care with sexual services.
- I hate having to wait for appointments. I have a hard time keeping them because I am not in control of my own schedule.
- I fear that I will be judged by the staff when I come to a healthcare clinic.

*This is why it is so hard for me to even come to clinic, much less share my experiences.*

*I don't need you to understand the life I live, I need you to respect me.*

## I want my healthcare provider to:

- Stop and ask if I want a break if you see that I am getting anxious or uncomfortable.
- Ask for permission to touch my body, and when you do touch me, explain what you are doing and why.
- Only ask me to take off the clothes that need to come off for my care. If I have to wear a gown, let me know if I can keep my underwear on.
- Only ask me questions you actually need to know the answers to in order to care for me.
- Not report me without my consent if I am over 18 years old.
- Not assume I need a hero or to be saved—your job is to care for my health.
- Know that my physical health is important, but I also need you to care about my emotions.
- Realize that if you offer me non-judgmental and compassionate services, I am more likely to return to your clinic.
- Respect my gender and sexual identities. Call me by the pronouns I prefer, don't ask my "assigned gender," and don't assume my sexuality.