

Appendix E: Project Summary Handout

Purpose and Background

The Principal Investigator, Moshoula Capous Desyllas, a Ph.D. student in the School of Social Work at Portland State University and the co-facilitator, Crystal Tenty, a Master's student in the Conflict Resolution Program at Portland State University, are doing a study on the needs and aspirations of sex workers in Portland, Oregon using the arts-based, qualitative research method of photovoice.

What is an arts-based research?

Arts-based research makes use of the diverse ways of knowing and experiencing in the world. It aims to reach a broad audience, beyond the university. Arts-based research has the potential for offering ways of re-visioning issues that are simply not possible through descriptive language.

Three main goals of arts-based research are:

- (1) Social activism by giving voice to the powerless and silenced
- (2) Making connections between research and lived experience
- (3) Making meaning through multiple senses and medium

What is photovoice?

According to Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris, photovoice is a process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through photography. Photovoice entrusts cameras to the hands of the people to enable them to act as recorders, and potential catalysts for change in their own communities. It uses the immediacy of the visual image and accompanying stories to provide a voice and to promote an effective, participatory means of sharing individuals' experience and expertise.

The use of photovoice in this study is to enable female sex workers in Portland to photograph their life as a way of documenting their perspectives, strengths, and struggles. The goal is to promote critical dialogue about the issues of concern to sex workers through discussions about their photographs, and to reach influential community advocates and the broader public about their concerns and aspirations through an art exhibit of their photographs.