



October 3rd, 2017

Safe Space Submission
Strip Clubs and London By-Laws

Dear City Councilors,

Coordinators and Members of Safe Space, a drop-in peer driven space for sex workers in London, wish to submit to City Council the following statements from 3 different women engaged in stripping at local strip clubs. Safe Space seeks to amplify the voices of women currently engaged in the sex trade, to support, help increase safety and empower sex workers. For reasons of safety and confidentiality, these comments are submitted anonymously. Safe Space coordinators engaged in a dialogue through a messaging system online, and what is written below was taken verbatim from the workers' writings:

-Sounds like a bunch of men trying to make rules for how women should treat their bodies ; Honestly I think it would be cool if we didn't have to take our panties off but I definitely don't mind being touched. This is silly; it should be up to us. We are independent contractors; it should be up to us. Not the city or the management. I think because it is expected, customers wouldn't be too happy about it. But it is a standard they would still go. They still do in the States.

-Clientele will go down if they enforce it because who really wants to pay 20 for something you can see on the internet. I think the physical connection is what makes it.

-It will drive things more underground more and make it riskier. By going after the clubs, this is delegitimizing workers. We would feel safer if the work was done in open areas. I mean, the club I work at is great and there are panic buttons. I'd feel less safe without them. And at clubs in London I feel safe period. That being said I only went to beef once. I don't think I felt safe there. It is what it is

-It is a better suggestion to focus on clubs having strategically placed panic buttons and more worker autonomy about clothing removal. There should be signs stating to respect your dancer. No touching unless she says it is ok; tipping is mandatory; all violations will have you kicked out immediately.

-I had a strong meditation and yoga practice long before dancing. Dancing only made it stronger. Being in a club environment and holding my intentions clearly in a grounded way was one of the best challenges I could have put myself through. To have the ability to hold



intimate and loving space for people that needed to feel love and affection was some of the most honourable work I've done. I'm hoping within those dynamics I have been able to help heal wounds in people that have [felt] unworthy or ashamed by just being my authentic self-Maybe by helping people's self esteem and [diminishing their] insecurities. ... having the space to explain [to some customers] how some ways of being/actions [may] stem from trauma or [were] learned in the world of materialism and capitalism and explaining they are hurtful and harmful to [both] themselves and others, how it is not ethical-it [dancing] has been very rewarding for me.

I have planted seeds of revolution and change in people's minds through the sacred act of sensuality-a vulnerable and primal level-where if the right things are said, could be a transformative moment for both involved.

Being a person/spirit of revolution, and also being and empath (very sensitive to others and empathetic) and believing in rehabilitation I have been able, through dancing, to bring an ethical perspective rooted in revolutionary thought that they [customers] may not have been exposed to before. Authentically being me, has allowed people to feel safe and see the light that is within their own hearts.

Safespace cares about sex worker's rights. Including the right to choose or refuse sex work. This means consent is paramount to us and listening to the voices of workers about their work. Our position makes room for having critiques or suggestions for improvements to sex work environments and/or industries while also supporting those who's livelihoods are at stake. Overwhelming concern among those we have spoken to is that the ban on touching in adult entertainment clubs will actually cause more harm to worker safety and workers abilities to support themselves. We ask that you take in to account the lived experience and knowledge of women currently engaged in the sex trade, looking to support them and enhance the safety of their choices, as they are citizens of London.

Sincerely,

Safe Space Coordinators