

Working with healthcare workers

Sensitisation and engagement with healthcare workers has been rolled out by Hands Off partners using different strategies. Healthcare workers have been trained by partners and sex workers, relationships with public and private health care centres have been strengthened and materials have been produced for healthcare workers to use. In all countries where healthcare workers had been sensitised or engaged, improvements in their attitudes and behaviour meant that sex workers could more easily access healthcare services. Read below some of the tips partners give on engaging with healthcare workers in programming:

1. Building relationships is one of the first steps: this will help in working together to find solutions for challenges faced, but will also help in setting expectations and building trust between healthcare workers and sex workers.
2. Try to involve healthcare workers in as many activities as possible, for example as facilitators during trainings or walk in sessions.
3. Invite healthcare workers in multi stakeholder platforms and forums, such as crisis response teams.
4. The best experts on the needs of sex workers are the sex workers themselves: it is key to engage sex workers in trainings or interventions with healthcare workers.
5. Work together with healthcare workers and sex workers to develop materials for healthcare workers to use.
6. Healthcare workers often work under difficult circumstances in a challenging context. It is important to acknowledge this and not expect unrealistic changes in for example access to services for sex workers.

