

Exploring the Concerns of First-Time Buyers of Sexual Services

by Abbe Horswill

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Ronald Weitzer
Professor of Sociology

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ABSTRACT

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In order to contribute to the growing body of research on the demand for commercial sexual services, this study explores the following questions: What are the most frequent concerns or issues for prospective, first-time buyers of sexual services, also called “newbies”? And what kind of advice do other individuals offer, in online discussion forums, to individuals who raise such concerns and issues? Using data collected over a four-month period and coded from the “FAQ for Newbies” section of a popular discussion board, this study identified a set of central concerns among newbies. Many of these issues are inter-connected and, as such, can pose formidable challenges that newbie learn to navigate as they begin to purchase sexual services.

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INTRODUCTION

For centuries, people have purchased sexual services. How have new generations of buyers of sexual services been cultivated? A growing body of research has examined their motives and experiences. Some researchers have addressed this question by looking at the commercial sex industry from an economic perspective. Using the theory of supply and demand, they suggest that the demand for sexual services creates a market for commercial sex that compels people, mainly women, to work as providers. As history illustrates, this demand has remained relatively consistent over time. Yet, even with this widely understood economic argument, research far more frequently addresses female sex workers and rarely looks at their clients. Client-focused research often presents the clients from the viewpoints of the providers, focusing on appearance, ethnicity, age, and indicators of trustworthiness (Sanders, 2008; Kong, 2006; Pettinger, 2011).

With global attention turned towards sex trafficking over the past two decades, there has been some increase in research on the demand aspect of the commercial sex industry. A 2009 review of the literature on demand for prostitution found that the majority of these studies focused on male clients of female street prostitutes or explored strategies to tackle the demand for prostitution. Efforts to reduce demand have included: road management schemes to reduce street prostitution; "naming and shaming" tactics; arrests of clients; educational approaches, such as "john schools;" and criminalization of demand akin to the Swedish model. These demand-reduction efforts appear to have had mixed results, and, moreover, the evidence documenting these results remains weak and inconclusive (Wilcox, Christmann, Rogerson, & Birch, 2009).

Even with the increased interest in demand, it remains a challenging topic to study because it is difficult to identify and access clients. In many countries, it is illegal to purchase sexual services. In countries where it is not illegal it may still be

considered deviant by a substantial percentage of the population and thus be hidden and/or highly stigmatized. Thus, it is extremely difficult to estimate the number of people who purchase sex. In the United Kingdom, 5–7% of men reported that they had paid for sex at some point in their lives and 1–6% reported that they had done so within the past year (Wilcox, Christmann, Rogerson, & Birch, 2009). In the United States, data from the General Social Survey shows that, depending on the year, 15–18% of men have purchased sex and 2–4% have done so within the past year. However, these estimates are likely lower than the true figures because they rely on self-reporting of stigmatized behavior. Calculative methods, based on a series of calculations using the number of prostitutes and the average number of clients they see, produce much higher estimates (Wilcox, Christmann, Rogerson, & Birch, 2009).

Many studies on demand have also sought to understand the drivers and motivations for procuring sex. Research has indicated that there is no one central motive, and men’s motives for buying sex from women have remained fairly consistent despite their diverse social and cultural contexts (Milrod & Monto, 2016; Milrod & Monto, 2012; Månsson, 2008; Sanders, 2008; Monto, 1999). Some of these suggested motivations include: desiring sexual variety; dissatisfaction with existing relationships; sexual gratification; loneliness, shyness, or incapacities (mental and physical); having no other sexual outlet; being separated from a partner by travel; and curiosity, risk, or excitement; and to exercise control (Wilcox, Christmann, Rogerson, & Birch, 2009). Other suggested motivations include: difficulty finding a partner for a conventional relationship; bolstering masculinity; seeking to abuse others; fulfilling a fantasy; looking for someone with a desired physical appearance, cultural background, ethnicity, or sexual orientation; risk, thrill, or sport; avoiding obligation or emotional complications involved in a conventional relationship; and seeking a limited romantic or emotional connection in addition to or instead of a purely physical experience (Milrod & Weitzer, 2012). One study added the

opportunity-related motivations of working away from home and recent arrival in the area (Cameron & Collins, 2003; Wilcox, Christmann, Rogerson, & Birch, 2009).

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Much of this information has been derived from survey-based methods and in-depth interviews. However, increasingly, researchers are accessing clients by collecting data and analyzing content from web-based client forums. These online client forums, like The Erotic Review, exist around the world and bring clients and providers together in an online community and virtual subculture with distinctive norms, values, beliefs, and language (Blevins & Holt, 2009). In these forums,

providers advertise, clients review providers, and providers and clients share information and engage in open discussions on a variety of topics related to sexual services. Much of this information is considered public and is accessible to any Internet user. This access has revealed aspects of sexual behavior, namely the private and individual communication between clients and providers, that were previously hidden and clandestine (Sanders, 2008).

Scholarly recognition of this research potential has resulted in a number of studies using online client forums and bulletin boards (Williams, Lyons, & Ford, 2008). These studies have sought to explore the preferences, attitudes, behaviors, experiences, and judgments of clients who solicit providers online as well as examine the relationships between clients and providers and how they have evolved in the context of the Internet (Milrod & Monto, 2016). For example, a study of the British client forum PunterNet found clients care most about how providers look, dress, perform sexual services, and appear to enjoy the sexual services (Millward, 2011). Another study of The Erotic Review found that men seek mutuality and excitement in a provider who is willing to replicate some aspects of a conventional romantic relationship (Milrod & Monto, 2012). This emotional intimacy and affectionate behavior, often referred to as "the girlfriend experience," is highly sought after, as been shown in multiple studies (Bernstein, 2007; Huff, 2011; Pettinger, 2011; Milrod & Monto, 2012; Milrod & Weitzer, 2012). These studies show the undeniable value in using this type of data and the rich commentary on the sex industry it can offer.

Despite the availability of this data from online client forums, *first-time buyers* of sexual services have not yet been studied. It has been suggested that first-time sex buyers may act on impulse due to opportunity or outright solicitation in outdoor or public venues compared to habitual buyers who often plan their encounters in advance to fulfill certain desires (Milrod & Weitzer, 2012). However, the proliferation of computer-facilitated communications about sexual services,

through the use of client forums and review sites, have blurred these lines as new buyers no longer need traditional gateways into the sex industry and can use these tools to also plan their first encounters in advance (Blevins & Holt, 2010). This study aims to fill this gap in research on new buyers of sexual services; seeks to identify and analyze the most frequent concerns or issues for first-time buyers of sexual services; and hopes to understand how for sexual services and new generations of buyers have been continually cultivated.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study is based on data from The Erotic Review (TER). TER describes itself as, "The most comprehensive database featuring providers and escorts from all over the world" and is accessible at <https://www.theeroticreview.com/main.asp>. As of May 2016, TER had over 1,297,000 reviews of providers in the following countries: Australia, Canada, China, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and United States. The Erotic Review offers two types of membership: basic membership, which is free and allows users partial access to reviews and to read and post on public discussion boards; and VIP membership, which is paid and allows users full access to all of TER's features, including complete reviews, chatrooms, private messaging, and a search function. Regardless of membership, TER considers public any information disclosed either in the review section or on the message boards.

Data was collected from the "FAQ for Newbies" discussion board, which is accessible at https://www.theeroticreview.com/discussion_boards/messageList.asp?boardID =33. TER acknowledges that new users may be overwhelmed and encourages them to use the discussion board to look for answers and ask questions. TER also asks that "more seasoned members" try to assist newbies by posting responses on this discussion board. As of May 2016, the discussion board had over 18,700 threads with multiple posts within each thread. All threads during a four-month period (1/1/2015 - 4/30/2015) were examined. These threads were preliminarily reviewed and determined to be irrelevant or relevant. Threads were deemed irrelevant if the discussion was initiated by a provider or the discussion pertained to a technical issue related to TER. All other threads were considered relevant. 172 threads were determined to be irrelevant, and 283 threads were determined to be relevant. Below are examples of the initial questions posed in irrelevant threads:

How do I submit a review if I am not a VIP Member?

So I'm somewhat of a newbie. I had one review from several years ago, but no longer have access to that email to connect it to my current account. So I'm review-less. No big deal I figured, I'll just start taking new clients. It seems like an impossible task. I've advertised in several locations, posted ads via TER... but nothing. I'm not sure what I'm doing that may be scary for hobbyist... but it's a no go. I've been trying for 3 weeks now. Do I need to be patient? or is it time to go for an agency? and if so, how do I find an agency worth it?

I inadvertently set a user to be ignored in the boards. How do I undo that? how do I attach my reviews to my profile here?

I've been away on a break for a long time. Looking to get my swing back but I can't remember my password or the email I used to sign up years back. Anyone got advice?

How does a new provider get guys interested in meeting with her? So that she can get enough reviews for other men to feel comfortable seeing her?

I just made an account for the "providers" How do you know if you have 2 reviews, that way you can switch to VIP? I've seen a couple men that use TER.

Entries from newbies within relevant threads were coded using the following categories, which were developed after an initial review of the postings: communication and language; health and sexually transmitted diseases; law enforcement; location; money; privacy and secrecy; scams and safety; scheduling; screening, verification, and references; and sex and attraction. The text of the initial question posed and the text from any subsequent statements made by the original poster were coded.

Comments from those who responded to newbies' questions were considered more broadly. Many of the same users tended to respond to posts, and these users appear to know each other in some capacity. There is one user that is the official Board Monitor, and he refers to the other users that frequently respond to posts as his "highly unpaid assistants." These users frequently advise newbies to consult TER's Self-Help Guide. According to TER's description, the manual lists links through which users can "find answers to the majority of questions that have been raised

regarding the hobby and TER." Thus, when discussing the advice that responders offer, information is provided from both this group of users and the Self-Help Guide.

In the following section, each of the categories mentioned above is discussed in detail. These discussions begin with an explanation of the main findings regarding the key themes identified. These findings illuminate newbies' recurrent understandings, questions, and concerns. This analysis is followed by a series of quotations that were selected from the discussion board threads coded within the respective category that serve to illustrate the key points discussed. These quotations were not edited for spelling, grammar, or clarity in an effort to maintain authenticity to the original postings. Lastly, these quotations are followed by a summary of the comments from responders and the broader advice they provided with regard to that particular topic.

Terminology

For the purposes of this study, individuals who sell commercial sexual services are referred to as "providers" and those who purchase these services are referred to as "clients." In the context of TER discussion boards, clients are referred to either as "newbies," when they initiated a thread on the FAQ for Newbies discussion board and/or self-identified as newbies in their posts, or "responders," when they responded to newbies' posts. This study occasionally refers to providers using female pronouns and clients using male pronouns, but it acknowledges that female as well as male and transgender providers exist as do male as well as female and transgender clients, and in many cases it is impossible to discern the gender of the client from the postings. This study avoids terms such as "prostitute" and "john," in an attempt to maintain neutrality. Because this study uses data from 13 countries, prostitution may be legal, decriminalized, or illegal depending on the locations in which the providers and clients are operating. In many cases, it is impossible to

discern from what countries and thus in context with regard to prostitution TER users wrote.

FINDINGS

Communication and Language

Communication was addressed in 103 threads. Effective and appropriate communication appeared to be extremely important to newbies. They appeared to understand that there is certain etiquette in communicating with providers. They also appeared to understand that they should not explicitly discuss sexual acts with providers. However, newbies nonetheless asked how to do so for practical reasons. For example, they raised how to ask questions about sexual services and how to request specific services or indicate their preferences. Likewise, newbies appeared to understand that they should never discuss money with providers, but again asked how to do so to determine what services are included in providers' rates. In the same vein, they appeared to appreciate that certain language and terminology should be used, which in some cases, offers a workaround for these fundamental rules. In many cases, newbies requested definitions of frequently used terms and acronyms, such as GFE¹, mature gentlemen, open-minded, PSE², YMMV³.

Newbies inquired about both initial and ongoing contact with providers. In terms of initial contact, they asked whether they should contact a provider for the first time by email, phone, or text message and what to say in this initial communication. They also asked logistical questions about contacting providers and procuring burner, or pre-paid, phones, new email addresses, or other applications, like Skype. In terms of ongoing contact, newbies asked how to interpret certain

¹ GFE is an acronym for "girlfriend experience." This term suggests that a provider will offer an experience similar to a conventional romantic relationship, such as cuddling, kissing, performing fellatio without a condom, and providing a general sense of intimacy.

² PSE is an acronym for "porn star experience." This term suggests that a provider will offer an experience in which she exhibits certain pornography-like characteristics, such as talking dirty, allowing her partner(s) to ejaculate in her mouth, and displaying a willingness to please her partner(s).

³ YMMV is an acronym for "your mileage may vary." This term suggests that one buyer's experience with a particular provider may be different from another buyer's experience with the same provider and that the opinion of one buyer may not be shared by everyone.

actions on the part of providers, such as referring a client to another provider or giving a client alternate contact information. The most significant concern appeared to be a lack of response from providers. Newbies often asked why providers did not respond to them or stopped communicating with them and how many attempts they should make to reach nonresponsive providers. Below are examples of posts addressing communication issues:

When do you discuss donation rates with a provider? Of course, I understand that rates based on time can be on a provider's site or talked about at pretty much any point, but what if you want to do something extra that costs more, when do the details of that get hashed out?

I am quite young and new to this. I went last week to my first agency escort and things went great I believe. She ended up giving me her personal number and email. What does this mean?

What does YMMV mean? Maybe I'm stupid.

I've read here that you should go with the provider's preference, but what if there's just an email and a phone number. What's your go to? Call? Text? Email? And when contacting, do you stay vague? e.g. "I wanted to check your availability for Friday," or can you get into the specifics - "I would like to part those butt cheeks like the red sea and take you to the holy land" should i keep it vague on a voice mail, or am i simply over thinking things.

I'm sure lots of guys and gals have burner phones for obvious reasons, anyone try this app called Burner App? It supposedly will let you create fake numbers on your personal cell phone so you don't have to buy burner phones, but I think they may be a cost involved, I haven't downloaded it yet.

I haven't done anything remotely suspicious or said anything wrong or inappropriate. This one provider I'm trying to contact, an agency, I have contacted her 3 times over the course of the entire day and no response. She asked for me info, I gave it to her, and now nothing back. Is this a common practice? Agency/provider suddenly doesn't want your service? Or am I missing something?

Responders seemed generally understanding of the challenges associated with communicating with providers. Responders told newbies that they should never ask providers about rates or sexual services; they advised that asking would either prompt providers to cut off communication or put the newbie in a precarious situation if the provider is undercover law enforcement. Instead, responders suggested that newbies consult advertisements, providers' websites, or TER reviews

for this information, and if they were unable to find it, to “take one for the team,” meaning see a provider without this information, or select another provider for whom this information is available. They also told newbies to use providers’ advertisements, websites, or TER reviews to determine a providers’ preferences regarding communication methods and to follow the instructions exactly. They acknowledged that sometimes providers do not respond and urged newbies to move on to other providers when this non-responsiveness occurs. Regarding specific terms or acronyms, responders urged newbies to consult the “Definitions, Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Terms” section of the TER Self-Help Guide.

Health and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Health concerns, namely regarding sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), were raised in 13 threads. Newbies posed questions about the risk of contracting STDs from particular sexual activities, namely kissing, cunnilingus, and unprotected fellatio. Herpes simplex virus appeared to be of a particular concern as most of the specific activities discussed involve oral contact. Overwhelmingly, newbies expressed concern about contracting STDs from providers as opposed to transmitting STDs to providers. Several newbies asked questions about how providers protect themselves from STDs and how providers respond if they have or may have been exposed to STDs. Several also appeared to consider STDs a safety issue, referring to the need to stay safe from STDs. Below are examples of the concerns that were raised:

I'm trying to find hard data on how many people worldwide have contracted herpes through bbbj⁴ by year. I'm trying to get a meaningful assessment of the risk (1 in a billion, 1 in a 1000...) without all the moral spin and vague answers that seems to be the only answer on google searches. I've heard that catching H⁵ from bbbj is rare but i want to know how rare. Am i more likely to win the lottery 5 times before being infected this way? Any sources would be appreciated. Cheers

⁴ BBBJ is an acronym for “bare back blow job.” This term suggests fellatio without use of a condom.

⁵ H is an abbreviation for herpes simplex virus or herpes.

I'm new to this hobby and am concerned about contracting STDs from a provider. Have any of you contracted a STD from a provider (when using protection). Is this a real risk?

I have read the DFK⁶ and eating at the y are low risk. Just looking for some affirmations to that effect and also what the flip side is. I am thinking STDs in general not AIDS.

I read a lot of reviews with the guy performing DATY⁷. My question is do you really feel comfortable doing it with a provider? How safe is it? I would like to daty but I don't because I'm not sure how safe it is.

Providers, if diagnosed with an STD, do you take a leave of absence until it goes away? And do you let people who have visited you know they have been exposed, potentially? And if you do not take a leave of absence, do you provide a disclaimer that you are recovering from an STD so that a gentleman can make an informed decision?

I'm a newbie to TER and the hobby. I have searched the reviews and found several terrific gals who have been frequently and very highly reviewed. My question is, how do they protect themselves (and those they entertain) from contracting STDs, especially if they have a high volume of reviews and hence, clients? I know there is always a risk, but how does it get minimized?

Responders appeared somewhat dismissive of these concerns, acknowledging that all sexual activities pose a risk for contracting STDs. Responders encouraged newbies to conduct further research, such as consulting the Center for Disease Control, to more accurately determine the risks of contracting STDs from particular sexual activities. The TER Self-Help Guide provided links to articles from the Coalition for Positive Sexuality and the Sexually Transmitted Disease Forum, hosted by Med Help International. Responders suggested that newbies determine their own comfort levels with respect to these risks. They also suggested that newbies explore ways to minimize these risks, such as using condoms or dental dams, and avoiding sexual activities associated with higher risks, such as kissing and unprotected oral sex.

⁶ DFK is an acronym for "deep French kissing." This term suggests kissing in which participants' tongues extend to touch other participants' lips or tongues.

⁷ DATY is an acronym for "dining at the 'Y.'" This term suggests cunnilingus.

Law Enforcement

Concerns about law enforcement were raised in 34 threads. Newbies expressed a general, pervasive fear of law enforcement. In some cases, they acknowledged that purchasing commercial sex is illegal in their countries. In these cases, they seemed concerned about being seen engaging in an illegal act and suffering the consequences. While many of the perceived consequences appeared to be “getting caught” and an abstract sense of punishment, some of the more specific perceived consequences included incarceration as well as public exposure and its repercussions. However, in other cases, newbies argued that it should not be illegal to purchase commercial sex in their countries and sought to identify loopholes so they would not be engaging in an illegal act. Some of the proposed guises included filming pornography, hiring a provider for a massage or modeling session, meeting a provider for a non-sexual encounter, and engaging in sexual relations between two consenting adults.

Newbies seemed to be particularly concerned that providers may be law enforcement officers or agents. They appeared to consider these concerns when researching potential providers, communicating with providers, undergoing the screening and verification process, and meeting with a provider for the first time. They expressed interest in strategies to avoid these situations, such as using burner phones and avoiding providing personal information. Many newbies asked about strategies to ensure that providers are not law enforcement before they contact them, such as researching phone numbers and photographs, as well as reviewing TER reviews. Several newbies asked about the effectiveness of “LE checks,” which are tests that allow providers and clients to prove to each other that they are not law enforcement agents.⁸ Below are examples of the concerns that were raised:

⁸ Law enforcement checks can be conducted by a provider to ensure that a client is not an undercover law enforcement agent and by a client to ensure a provider is not an undercover law enforcement agent.

How precarious is it to see a provider considering the illegality and punishment by law enforcement if caught? Is this something that I have to really worry about or is it just hype? If so, what are the best ways to avoid any problems. I was even considering flying down to Costa Rica or the Dominican Republic as an alternative as prostitution is legal in both of those places and police don't get involved.

Hello everyone, I been a member for a while and I finally found a provider that I'm "willing" to take a chance on... Anyway I'm scared as shit because I never did this before and I don't want to go to jail..lol.. Starting to shake just talking about it.

From what I heard, paying someone to suck your dink and fuck you, while you record them, is not illegal. is this true? Wouldn't everyone just bring their cellphone to record the encounter and escape LEO?

In my state, hiring an escort to do massage or modeling in your private residence is legal. If I am attempting to determine if a provider is legitimate, and not LE, would it be reasonable to contact the provider, hire them to do such modeling etc in my home as an way of getting to know them first? How about meeting them first over a cup of coffee?

We all know that a provider can be a cop undercover. To avoid being busted, how should you interact with a first time provider? What are you suppose to do or not to do before diving into her pussy?

So--is 3 reviews (from seemingly legit reviewers) good enough to pass the LE "do your homework" check, in your opinion?

Responders acknowledged the risk of law enforcement action in countries where purchasing sexual services is illegal. However, they urged newbies to take steps to minimize this risk. First, responders advised them to see only well-reviewed providers to ensure that providers are not undercover law enforcement agents. Second, responders urged newbies to use well-known verification services, such as P411,⁹ to safeguard their personal information from potential undercover law enforcement agents. Third, they encouraged newbies to use common sense to determine the types of situations that could feasibly be infiltrated by law

Some examples include a client exposing himself, a client touching a provider's breasts, and a provider touching a client's genitals.

⁹ P411 is an abbreviation for Preferred411.com. Preferred411.com is a website that serves as a screening service for people involved in the sex industry and offers a private network to members. Client members must be verified through references or employment verification. Provider members must also be verified to be legitimate, over the age of 18, and with a good reputation in the community. Providers are asked to provide prompt feedback on any clients with whom they have contact.

enforcement or be law enforcement stings. For example, responders suggested that outcall appointments are less risky because the clients are in control of the environment as opposed to law enforcement. However, responders stated that the “LE check” is completely ineffective and that if clients end up in a situation with an undercover law enforcement officer, they cannot escape the repercussions.

Location

The locations of providers and appointments were addressed in 41 threads. Many newbies shared their current locations seemingly to give context to their questions and comments. This information-sharing suggests that newbies acknowledge that the sex industry varies from area to area and that location may affect their experiences. In some threads, newbies lamented that few providers are available in their areas. In these cases, they primarily expressed concerns about seeing providers that were not reviewed on TER. In other threads, they mentioned traveling, for both business and personal reasons, and wanting to schedule appointments with providers during those trips or considering traveling for the purposes of seeking sexual services. In these cases, newbies primarily expressed concerns about logistics and the verification process.

In addition, newbies discussed the options of incalls, when a client goes to a provider’s location, and outcalls, when a provider goes to the location of the client. Few newbies asked about incall situations, and those that did described uncomfortable or unusual experiences at providers’ incall locations, namely apartments. Several newbies mentioned they had already had incall experiences and wanted to arrange outcall appointments, and most asked about outcall situations. Primarily, they asked how nice the hotel should be where they arrange the outcall appointment. Secondly, they asked logistical questions about having providers at their hotels and being discrete while doing so, such as whether to book a hotel room

for one or two people. Additionally, several newbies asked about their homes as a possible outcall location. Below are examples of the main issues addressed:

Okay. Here's the deal. I live sort of in the boondocks. The local providers available really only advertise on bp¹⁰. Sometimes their ads are usually only up for a day or two. TER does not have any information on them when I input phone numbers etc. The only well reviewed providers I have searched are two hours away in nearby large cities. Quite a drive. So I am trying to find a way to determine a safe and decent provider who is not well reviewed.

I'm heading to Vegas next month for my birthday and wanted to treat myself but all the ladies I've looked at and have been interested in require references from other encounters.

I am new to the scene and new to this board. Last night, I had a very weird experience. I arrived at a provider's in-call apartment, and from the first moment things were just a little "off."

I'm new to the hobby and up until now I've only done incalls. I travel a lot, but not for work or anything usually it's to just visit friends or family. A few of the places I'll be visit has some providers that I want to see that only do outcalls. I was curious how nice of a hotel do you use typical use for outcalls? If any providers read this what's the typical hotel you do outcalls at? Are we talking your typical standard room at like a Hampton inn or is it usually like hotel suites?

If I make an outcall appointment with a provider for a weekend (two days), is it better to book a room for two people or just one person? I'm just wondering because we might be going in and out of the room and around the hotel. What is normally the best approach?

Anyone ever have provider over your home? Seems all reviews happen in hotel or incall.

Responders agreed that the sex industry varies by location and often advised newbies to consult their regional boards for more nuanced information. They provided advice about hotels that could be applied to both incall and outcall appointments. They advised newbies to procure a room or see a provider in an upscale motel or three-star or higher rated hotel. They suggested that lower-end motels often have outdoor hallways, which make the doors to the rooms visible and allow anyone to see who enters and exits the room, and attract law enforcement sting operations, particularly as many of the doors are visible from the parking lots.

¹⁰ BP refers to Backpage, a classified advertising website that contains a section for an Adult section, which includes listings for escorts, body rubs, and strip clubs. Many providers advertise on Backpage.

Conversely, they also suggested that some higher-end hotels have open atriums, which pose the same issue with visibility of the doors to the rooms, and require keycards to access elevators and other parts of the hotel. Responders suggested that once newbies gain experience and build confidence, they could host or see providers in higher-end hotels as long as they act as if they belong and blend in with the hotel clientele. However, they cautioned newbies against seeing providers in their homes unless they do not have a significant other and have seen a particular provider several times, establishing a necessary level of trust.

Money

Money was mentioned in 69 threads. Newbies appear to understand that they should never discuss money with providers. However, closely related to the issue of communication, newbies wrestled with ways to evade this cardinal rule. For example, they asked how to determine providers' rates if they are not listed on providers' websites, advertisements, TER, or another review forum. They also asked how to discuss rates and the corresponding services, particularly if they wanted to know if a certain service is included or request a particular service for an upcharge (and determine how much that upcharge is). Similarly, some newbies asked about negotiating rates or the services included in a given rate. Some also tried to understand the providers' reasoning for certain rates, such as the different rates for incall and outcall appointments and the non-incremental rates for incremental amounts of time. Several newbies also questioned why providers do not offer different rates for activities other than providing sexual services, such as dining with a client.

Newbies also asked numerous logistical questions about money. They inquired about providers that require deposits and down payments, particularly concerned that these deposits may be scams. They also asked about other scams,

such as upselling,¹¹ withdrawing services, or taking money without providing services, and asked how to handle them. In addition, they discussed how to give providers the envelope that contains money and what denominations of money providers prefer. In this vein, newbies also expressed concern about withdrawing cash from banks or bank accounts, seemingly wanting to ensure that neither banks nor family members that share their bank accounts notice the withdrawals. Newbies inquired about other payment methods, particularly for verification services and TER membership, such as gift cards, credit cards, money orders, and online payment services, clearly wanting to be as discrete as possible.

The most frequently raised question about money pertained to tipping: if providers should be tipped, how much to tip, when to tip, and if and how providers should be notified that the client wished to tip or previously tipped. Similarly, newbies asked if they should bring gifts for providers and what types of gifts they should bring. More specifically, several asked about providers' Amazon.com wish lists; the most common questions appeared to be whether the items are removed from the list once they are purchased and how to discretely pay for the items. Below are examples of the questions regarding money that were posed:

I've seen a few forum posts that talk about how folks are able to negotiate rates with the providers. I thought most providers say no negotiations (on their websites). Also, how would you do it since you can't really talk about money via email/text/etc. or even in person (for fear of LE). Any suggestions, ideas, etc.? Or is this just a pipe dream for most people and only regulars can get lower prices?

When looking at potential providers, I always get puzzled how they come up with their rates. Not between providers but within the same provider. I get extra cost for outcall, extra services, and so forth. I don't get the upcharge for longer sessions. For example, 1 hour is \$300, 2 hour is \$600 but 90 min is not \$450 but \$500. What is that "extra" \$50 to compensate for? Just a curiosity and if anyone has an perspective, I would love to understand. For

¹¹ Upselling is a tactic sometimes used by providers in which they require additional payment beyond their hourly rate for particular services. Some upselling may be legitimate; for example, many providers require an upcharge for sodomy. However, upselling may also be an unscrupulous attempt to solicit more money from clients.

those that also see this, does to make you decide either 1 hour or 2 hour and avoid the 90 min session?

Sort of new around here but are the ads for \$25 deposit before meeting all scams. I've had a number and never bit but tested one tonight. Are they all scams or what?

Money - how do you do it? That's the most complicated thing right now. I have no separate bank account, no separation of finances, I make 100% of the money so it's impossible to hide. I'll get cash now and then and am storing it away, but then I worry, will I have enough for a provider.

I'm sure this varies lady to lady, but in general - ladies, do you prefer larger bills (50-100) or smaller (20s) in the envelope? On the one hand, I suspect larger bills are easier to conceal / transport. On the other hand, maybe they're harder to put back into circulation.

What is proper tipping etiquette? Guys, do you always tip your provider or only if the service was off the charts if so how much? Lady's, how often do clients tip and how much?

Responders strongly advised newbies not to discuss rates with providers or attempt to negotiate them. They advised that the only time rates can be discussed is after newbies have seen a provider and established themselves as legitimate. Responders indicated that deposits are most likely scams, unless clients are scheduling overnight and multi-hour appointments or appointments that require providers to travel. They suggested that researching providers and seeing only well-reviewed providers will diminish the likelihood that newbies fall victim to a monetary scam, such as a deposit rip-off or unexpected upsell. Finally, they repeatedly stated that tips are not expected but can be offered for exceptional service. They suggested that the best tips are offering gifts, such as candles, bottles of wine, or items from providers' wish lists, and booking another appointment with that provider.

Privacy and Secrecy

Concerns about privacy were raised in 43 threads. Discussions about privacy appeared to center around two interrelated issues: newbies' concerns about protecting their true identities from providers and verification services, such as P411 and DateCheck, and their concerns about keeping their appointments with providers

secret from spouses, colleagues, and the general public. Many newbies asked questions about the verification process in terms of what providers and verification services do with the information. The most significant reservations appeared to be sharing full names and work information. The underlying apprehension in sharing this information seemed to be ensuring confidentiality and protecting their identities from being made public in any way. However, some newbies specifically noted that they had no qualms about sharing this information with providers or verification services, namely because they are single and/or the provider already knows this information.

Many newbies brought up their significant others with the implication that they needed to hide their activities from this person. Few raised the issue of cheating and those that did indicated that they did not feel guilty about this emotional aspect of seeing providers. Instead, the newbies appeared more concerned with the financial aspects of seeing providers, asking how to hide the money they need to compensate providers from their spouses when they have shared finances. However, some newbies specifically noted that they had no concerns in this regard because they are single and do not have significant others. Likewise, many newbies brought up their employment, also with the implication that they needed to hide their activities from any people with whom they work. In these cases, they appeared most concerned with potential damage to their reputation if work associates knew they were buying sexual services. Again, however, some specifically noted that they had no concerns in this regard because they are unconcerned about their colleagues knowing they buy sexual services.

In addition, many newbies asked about alternate email addresses, phone numbers, and payment methods. These questions appeared to be in the interest of ensuring both privacy from providers and verification services as well as secrecy from family and colleagues. Newbies mentioned creating new email addresses for the

exclusive purpose of communicating with providers. They also inquired about purchasing prepaid or “burner” phones and using phone applications, such as Burner and Hushed, as an alternative to purchasing and possessing a second phone. In more specific discussions of alternate phone numbers, they asked about the costs associated with these phones or applications, the ease of changing phone numbers should the phone number be compromised, and excuses to make if a spouse asks about the phone or phone number. Finally, newbies solicited advice on using prepaid credit cards, gift cards, money orders, online payment systems, and virtual payment applications, such as Google Wallet. Below are examples of the issues that were addressed:

Trying to get verified and I don't mind using p411, but I'd like to know what info is shown. I'd like to not have my full name and employment out there to more than p411.

How does verifying work info help you determine someone is who they say they are? Also why do they need my name? Why can't i give an alias. I'm kinda nervous my work will know what's going on and reputation is gonna be ruined. What does a provider do when they get your work info?

I have nothing to hide as I am single and am willing to provide some personal info with known, reviewed providers so that they can be confident that I'm cool...any suggestions?

Are any of you, who are visiting providers, married? If so, how do you keep the money from the spouse?

It seems somewhat common for providers to ask for one's name, age, and cell number to get verified. I understand the need for safety but I have a hard time giving out my cell number as it is both personal, work, and effectively my home number. As we all do, I have a private life and don't want to risk my two lives intersecting. To that end, I have an app on my phone that I share. I assume that they are doing a reverse phone look-up on me? Am I being too paranoid? Looking for guidance from those in the know – both providers and hobbyists.

I would like to remain as anonymous and discreet as possible. Can I buy a prepaid Visa/MC/Amex gift card from a store and use that to pay for a 1 year membership? Will CCBill or Segpay accept any of those cards? How do I handle the name and address info with these gift cards?

Responders agreed that privacy is a somewhat legitimate concern, but they assured newbies that the reason providers request personal information or require

the use of verification services is not to expose their clients but rather to ensure their own safety and minimize risks, particularly of encountering law enforcement. Responders advised newbies to provide their information to one verification service as opposed to multiple providers and dismissed suggestions that verification services may be insecure. They also suggested that they explore options, explaining that if newbies do not wish to provide a particular piece of information, such as their employment, they may be able to provide another piece of information instead. By contrast, responders agreed that secrecy is a very pressing concern and advised newbies to take all necessary precautions to ensure their significant others and professional associates do not find out about their appointments with providers. They strongly recommended newbies procure alternate cell phones and email addresses specifically for contacting providers. They also strongly urged them to be discrete with finances but recognized that the best ways to do so will vary from person to person. Again, they encouraged newbies to explore options in this regard.

Safety and Scams

Scams and safety were explored in 46 threads. When newbies discussed safety, they seemed predominantly concerned with their own safety and not the safety of providers. While they most often discussed safety in a general sense, the idea of safety appeared closely connected to evading law enforcement as well as avoiding potentially dangerous situations, avoiding scams, and having satisfactory experiences with providers. Dangerous situations appeared to include being robbed or beaten. Satisfactory experiences with providers appeared to include providers' rates, services, and physical appearances matching with the providers' advertisements and the newbies' expectations.

Closely related to a general sense of safety, newbies expressed concerns about scams and a fear of getting "ripped off." In some cases, newbies discussed

specific scam tactics, such as the “bait and switch,” where providers use photos in their advertisements that are outdated or not their own, and the deposit rip-off, where providers request deposits but do not follow through with appointments. In other cases, they described suspicious situations, where something seemed abnormal, and asked if they were likely to be scams. Furthermore, newbies inquired about techniques to avoid scams, such as phone number searches, reverse image searches, and reading reviews. While some asked how to use these tools, others sought opinions about the results of their searches and whether they indicated a possible scam. Below are examples of questions about safety and scams:

Question: in terms of safety, if you see a provider, and then they are later picked up for some reason by law enforcement, is it possible for LE to get texts off their cell phone and later come after you?

I had a couple of provider meetings scheduled over a multi-day trip to Las Vegas recently. As soon as I checked into my hotel, I emailed the providers I had scheduled and told them my room number and hotel. Did this compromise my safety in any way? Was it dumb for me to email a provider my room number on Monday, when my scheduled meeting with her wasn't until Friday?

I couldn't tell if her pics were fake, I've had good experiences with non-reviewed providers, and I've had bad experiences with well-reviewed providers (just as they were going downhill apparently), but none as bad as this. This was supreme rip-off artist that said I should have negotiated before giving her the money. Is there any other sites I can check for ratings/reviews besides TER? It just doesn't seem good enough.

I see an awful lot of this in my area. That is, a phone number that has a shit load of different girls and locations listed. Are these always scams, or are these agencies or what?

I'm completely new to the scene, and contacted an agency recently, and it's been...sketchy. The girls who are available don't match the website and communication with what seems to be just one guy has been unreliable. Is this a common experience?

I like to reverse image search some of the girls, some of them have ads in totally different states. Okay maybe they could be traveling, but still it's a bit fishy... so it's like how do you even know if someone is fake or not anymore?

Responders acknowledged that scammers exist and that some of these scams may compromise newbies' safety. Again, responders suggested that researching

providers and seeing only well-reviewed providers will diminish the likelihood that newbies fall victim to scams. They urged newbies to use phone number and image search tools and carefully review the information provided in TER reviews. In the cases where newbies described situations that seemed suspicious or abnormal, responders largely indicated that newbies could dismiss their concerns provided that they had done their research and the providers appeared legitimate based on this research. However, in cases where their research indicated that a provider may not be legitimate or the provider was not reviewed, they urged the newbies to see other providers.

Scheduling

Issues related to scheduling appointments were raised in 23 threads. Discussions about scheduling appeared to take two distinct shapes: newbies scheduling appointments and providers keeping scheduled appointments. In the discussions of newbies scheduling appointments, newbies seemed primarily concerned with using appropriate etiquette in scheduling appointments with providers. They asked how to inquire about a provider's availability, how far in advance to book appointments, how long to schedule appointments, and how to cancel appointments due to unforeseen circumstances and whether the provider should be compensated. In the case of booking appointments in advance, they asked about both scheduling with advanced notice (i.e. five to six weeks) and short notice (i.e. same-day); most of these inquiries appeared to pertain to newbies traveling and wanting to schedule appointments with providers during those trips.

In the discussions of providers keeping appointments, newbies expressed three main concerns: providers limited availability and the difficulty of scheduling appointments with busy providers; providers initiating the screening process and/or scheduling an appointment but not following up to confirm the appointment or

responding to further communication; and providers rescheduling or cancelling appointments and the excuses they make in doing so. In all three of these instances, newbies overwhelmingly wanted to know whether the provider not making or keeping the appointment was legitimate and whether the newbie did anything to directly cause this. They also often asked if they should continue to contact the provider and attempt to reschedule in these situations. Below are examples of the issues that were raised:

I'm heading to Vegas in five weeks. I know every provider is different, but on average how far should I try and get something set up?

I'm thinking I should set up an hour appointment for my first time just because I will be nervous and that would give me extra time to get relaxed. On the other hand, an hour can be a long time especially if things don't click. In witch case it would be nice to have that extra dough to see another provider. Any advice?

Had an amazing connection on my first visit with a new girl for me. How long should I wait to book a 2nd appt with the same girl? Don't want to come on too strong or wait too long either.

So I heard about bp thru a coworker of mine but when I went on the site I can't seem to tell if this chick is real kinda nervous but I want to see her I called her she. Always seems busy kinda weird. I can't find her on here either help need suggestions I'm new thanks ,

I emailed a provider a few days in advanced of the day I had some time available, and when she asked for references I gave the 2 that I have (remember I'm new). But since then she has not responded to my email. I have only sent one additional email asking what time she would prefer. Still no response. My question is, should I never contact her again? Was there something wrong with one of my references? Or did something maybe come up and she might be available sometime in the future?

I set a date and was screened a few weeks ago for tonight. About 2:00 I get an email asking to move the date up an hour or two. I say ok to moving up an hour. Then less than 2 hours before the new date time she emails to say her stomach isn't feeling great and wants to reschedule for tomorrow. I reply that I am checking out of my hotel and going home to another state in the morning. She replies that she is taking meds but it feels like it's something she ate. All these emails are an hour before date time. Since then, nothing. I emailed a couple times to check on her but no replies and we are at 90 minutes past date time. Does this sound legit or a blow off?

Responders indicated that newbies tend to overthink the scheduling issues

they face and suggested that scheduling should generally be simple and easy. They

instructed newbies to following providers' instructions on their advertisements and websites when inquiring about their availability and to book an hour-long appointment for their first session. Responders varied in their suggested length of time for advanced scheduling from three to four days to two to three weeks and indicated that anything within these ranges should be acceptable. They acknowledged that schedule changes and cancellations, on the part of both providers and clients, are a reality and suggested that though they are unfortunate, newbies should not feel too badly about them and move on to other providers. In the cases that scheduling with a particular provider was not simply and easy, they again suggested that newbies move on to other providers.

Screening, References, and Verification

Issues related to screening were raised in 90 threads. Most newbies seemed to accept the need to be screened prior to an appointment with a provider, and they recognized that the verification process can be time-consuming and difficult for numerous reasons. They expressed concern when there was a lack of communication during the verification process or a lack of response when they inquired about the status of the verification process. They also expressed alarm if there seemed to be a *lack* of screening; this alarm appeared to occur if providers did not explicitly state that they screen, did not request references, or screened too quickly.

Newbies asked many questions about verification services, namely P411, RS2K, and Date-Check, and which of them is preferred. Closely related to the theme of privacy and secrecy, they asked about the type of information that verification services require, what verification services and providers do with that information, and how confidentiality is maintained. Again, the most significant reservations appeared to be sharing full names, work information, and photos. Work information appeared to be of particular concern as newbies expressed reservations about

verification services contacting them at work by email or phone. Logistically, they asked how to provide the required work information if they are out of town and cannot be contacted at work or unemployed. In addition, newbies again asked how to discretely pay for these services. Lastly, they asked if law enforcement can infiltrate these verification services either by posing as providers or accessing information provided to them.

Newbies also asked many questions about provider references. Again, they acknowledged that they often need references as part of the screening process, but they struggled with the conundrum that as newbies they have seen no or only a few providers and thus cannot provide references. In the cases when newbies had only few references, they lamented that those references were nonresponsive to communication. They asked questions about building provider references, such as what kind of providers are appropriate references, how to ask a provider to serve as a reference, how many times to see a provider before asking her to serve as a reference, and how long after seeing a provider can she be asked to be a reference. Similarly, newbies asked about the meaning and processes of being "white listed" on TER and receiving "okays" on P411. While these are not traditional references, they function as de facto references as providers are essentially approving clients through TER and P411, respectively. Newbies raised many of the same questions about building white listings and "okays."

Lastly, newbies raised several related issues about the screening and verification process. First, they asked about identifying "newbie-friendly" providers, meaning providers that are willing to see newbies despite their lack of references. Second, they asked about requesting pre-screening or open-ending screening, meaning they request a provider screen them without a scheduled appointment. This seemed to be important to newbies that travel with little advanced notice, and they appeared most worried about proper etiquette in asking for this and providers'

willingness to do so. Lastly, they worried about failing screening processes and being “blacklisted.” These worries seemed most pronounced in instances when newbies sought to enter closed provider networks, such as K-girls,¹² and when their references were unreachable. While blacklisting seemed to be a rare occurrence, it seemed to occur often due to miscommunication. Below are some of the postings regarding screening, verification, and references:

I'm going on a business trip and in it have arranged to see a phenomenal woman. She has great reviews on here, a legit-looking website and pages on p411 and sugar nights. All good. My one qualm is that she didn't ask for any references - not that I have a problem in principle with this, but I just don't want to get robbed/beaten in my hotel room. Any thoughts on this?

So it is not normal not at least get an email stating that I am being screened?

The one additional question I have is with regards to P411 or Date-Check. I see these both used, but many more providers seem to use P411. Would P411 be my best choice? Is either even needed? Neither?

I don't have a problem providing my information about work and stuff I think. But what is the process of verifying this? I'm just saying because if it's something where they will go to an online service and verify identity that's fine, but if they're actually going to call my workplace and say "hey, I'm an escort and employee xxx (no pun intended) wants to bang me, is he a good guy for your company?".... I know that would not happen (extreme example) but you get the point.... Gotta handle this with care.

I want to build up some references to start with so I can use certain providers who require them. If I saw two escorts in the same agency, is that considered two references (the provider) or one (the agency)? Is it assumed by providers that they may be used as references or do I need to ask to make sure?

I am new to the hobby. I was wondering if anyone knew any escorts that are newbie friendly. That type of status is not listed on this site.

Responders acknowledged that references and the verification process are absolutely necessary but pose a challenge for all newbies. They overwhelmingly advised newbies to use P411 or a similar verification service. They explained that although this is not a substitute for provider references, some providers may be

¹² K-Girls are generally younger, attractive, female Korean escorts who work through agencies or booking agents. The K-Girl network is notoriously difficult to access as agencies and booking agents do not accept references or verification from outside of the network, making it very difficult for new clients to penetrate.

willing to accept a reference from a verification site en lieu of traditional references and verification sites will work with newbies to overcome any issues with verifying their identities, such as unemployment. They told newbies to see newbie-friendly providers, meaning providers that are willing to see them without provider references, whom they can identify as such through P411 or in TER reviews until they are able to build up enough references. In the cases of nonresponsive providers or providers who cease communication during the verification process, responders advised newbies to wait several days, send one polite follow-up inquiry, and move on if there is no response. They broadly encouraged newbies to be patient and indicated that the verification process will be easier as they see more providers and build more experience.

Sex and Attraction

Sex and sex acts were discussed in 67 threads. As seen in the analyses of communication and money, newbies appeared to understand that they should not expressly discuss sexual acts and money with providers. However, newbies asked how to inquire about the sexual services providers offer. More specifically, they asked how to determine if certain services are included within a provider's "menu" and what additional charges may be associated with services that are not included within the standard menu. This seemed of particular concern for newbies who articulated specific fetishes, such as foot fetishes and role play. They asked how to find providers that may be willing to accommodate these preferences and how to make those requests.

In addition to specific sex acts, newbies appeared concerned with the broader ideas of attraction and emotional connections. This appeared to be a concern working in both directions as newbies indicated the importance of being attracted to their providers and wanting to ensure that their providers are attracted to them.

They talked about searching for providers that are their “type” and finding providers attractive. They also talked about the importance of feeling a connection to and intimacy with the provider, even though they sometimes acknowledged that it may be artificial. This supports the argument that more seasoned, habitual clients seek out particular providers or preferences, particularly the girlfriend experience (Milrod & Monto, 2016; Milrod & Weitzer 2012).

Conversely, newbies expressed intent to avoid certain known turnoffs for providers, such as poor hygiene or rudeness. They also asked about other issues and whether they may be turnoffs for providers, such as being shorter than the provider, ejaculating prematurely, or discussing spouses.

Lastly, newbies discussed several miscellaneous topics with regard to sex. First, a few mentioned planning to lose their virginity to providers. They asked if and how they should tell providers. Second, many newbies asked questions about condoms. They asked a variety of questions, such as whether they should bring their own condoms, what types of condoms other clients recommend, how to indicate their own preferences to use or not to use condoms, and how they can gauge if a provider does or does not require condoms for certain acts. They also asked generally about female condoms, namely if providers used them, if they could request that providers use them, and how they impact the experience. Below are some of the questions made regarding sex and attraction:

Let’s say I’m trying to set up an appointment with a provider I’ve never seen before and I want to know if they are okay with Greek and dato¹³ how would I go about asking them? Up until now I usually wait until I’ve seen them before, but sometimes there are things I want to know if they are okay with before I even see them. Do I just come up and ask or is it best to do what I’ve been doing and wait until I’ve seen them before?

Okay so even I find this a bit weird but recently, I’m not exactly sure what to call it but I would go with obsession but that is a bit exaggerated so maybe fantasy I guess? So recently I have this fantasy of Wonder Woman, I’m not

¹³ DATO is an acronym for “dining at the ‘O.’” This term suggests oral stimulation of the anus.

even sure why or where it came from but I was wondering if it's weird to ask a provider to dress up as Wonder Woman for a session during this time of year?

So, I went to see this gal. And I am just NOT at all attracted to her. What to do? If I bolt, do I get flamed on P411? Blackballed? Can I give her half the money and leave like a gentleman? How do you guys handle a situation like this?

Hello in society you don't really see many couples dating where the man is the short one and the woman is the tall one, so I'm wondering in this type of business does height matter much? I'm around 5'6 and I found a couple of providers that fit my taste but are 5'10. Now let's say they wear 5 inch heels that makes them around 6'3 or 4. Now would that be awkward for the provider? And another thing I want to add I don't know if this is true but I'm assuming providers that are tall usually get clients that around the same height and their packages most likely fit their proportions. So does height matter?

I am trying to find the perfect condom. I understand about personal preferences so I have been trying different brands. The best feeling condom I've found so far is the Sagami Original .01, it is by far the thinnest but the ring is so tight it is very difficult to put on. I've tried the Okamoto .02 EX but I have the same problem with it being too tight. I haven't been able to find a larger size but I really like how thin these brands are and how they let you feel the heat of your partner better than any of the US brands I've tried. As a 50 something year old my sensitivity is not what it used to be so I often finish with a BBBJ for best results but I miss finishing while inside my partner.

The provider only seems to answer by a phone call, how would I mention to her that I'm a virgin? Should I wait until we meet up, if not how should I tell her on the phone?

Responders acknowledged that sexual acts, intimacy, and attraction are likely the reasons newbies are arranging appointments with providers and thus are of critical importance. However, responders urged newbies not to explicitly discuss specific sexual services with providers. Responders, instead, encouraged newbies to consult advertisements, providers' websites, or TER reviews to determine what services providers offer and to articulate any preferences or requests from the providers' menus during the session. They suggested that newbies should discuss fetishes or requests beyond the providers' menus after repeat appointments and rapport has been established. In both cases, responders advised newbies not to be overly controlling of the session and to simply relax and enjoy the experience.

Likewise, they advised newbies not to look for the “perfect” provider, meaning a provider with the exact physical features and services newbies seek, but rather see providers with good reviews to whom they were generally attracted; responders indicated that these providers are experienced, nonjudgmental, and will likely offer newbies great experiences.

CONCLUSION

Based on the number of threads in which the issues were raised, the following are the most significant concerns, starting with the issue that was raised most frequently: communication and language; screening, verification, and references; money; sex and attraction; safety and scams; privacy and secrecy; location; law enforcement; scheduling; and health and STDs. Many of these issues are interconnected and together shape bigger themes that newbies contemplate as they begin to purchase sexual services. Namely, newbies confront the conundrum of not communicating with providers about rates or sexual services. They also wrestle with ways to protect their privacy, ensure their safety, and avoid detection by law enforcement, family, or colleagues, while giving providers or verification services personal information. These recurring themes are complex and often leave newbies feeling apprehensive, confused, uncomfortable, disappointed, and frustrated as they grapple with them.

Responders indicated that there are certain rules and etiquette in the world of commercial sexual services, which can be challenging for newbies to learn and initially navigate and may leave them with unsettled feelings. Indeed, both prior studies and the current one indicate that there is a unique *subculture* of clients of providers characterized by interconnected norms that generate justifications for behavior, affect attitudes towards commercial sex, and structure identity within the subculture (Blevins & Holt, 2010). Responders overwhelmingly suggested that the best way to overcome these challenges is for newbies to research, utilize available resources, like TER, and learn as much as possible before delving into this complex world. They implied that these efforts will help newbies identify options they may not know existed and select options that minimize risks, increase comfort levels, and enhance their overall experiences. Responders articulated that these challenges decrease with time and experience and that newbies will ultimately enjoy this hobby,

even if they encounter some difficult or uncomfortable situations. Newbies seemed generally accepting and appreciative of the advice responders offered, even as they sometimes remained nervous about or frustrated.

Future studies may address not only the concerns of first-time and new buyers of sexual services but also their motivations for doing so, especially the question as to *why* novices choose to purchase sexual services despite the numerous concerns explored in this study. This question may be impossible to answer from client online discussion boards alone, and may need to be addressed via surveys or in-depth interviews. However, because clients are difficult to locate and access, these difficulties would likely be heightened with new clients because they tend to be nervous and also remain “new” for only a limited period of time. Nevertheless, an understanding of the motivations of first-time buyers of sexual services would be an important contribution to the understanding of clients and the ongoing demand for commercial sexual services.

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