



# SEX WORK, ONLINE ACTIVISM & SELF CARE

**Defending your choices & chosen occupation against anti-sex work folk can be draining. Here are some self-care strategies that might be useful. Pick & choose what works for you.**

- *Take time out.*

Reading hate speech can be overwhelming, so you might like to get out in nature and have a walk, run, swim or just sit in a park to focus on positives. Daylight in particular can really help your mood.

- *Don't take anti-sex work or other comments personally.*

It's not about you, it's about their ignorance or stereotypes.

- *You don't have to fight fire with fire.*

You can fight back in different ways. If people dive onto your hashtag, it means you made an impact! Keep doing what you were doing that made them pounce. Every time they post a negative image, share a positive one – fight by showing healthy, happy sex workers in their everyday lives, making dinner, jogging, at the gym - flood that hashtag with normality.

- *Limit the time you spend on this.*

Some sex workers like to limit the time they spend dealing with negativity to ten minutes a day, so it doesn't take too great a personal toll. Those tweets will still be there tomorrow.

- *Focus on people you can change.*

Pushing against a brick wall of anti-sex work sentiment can be exhausting, so concentrate on people who you might be able to sway. Post for people that 'sit on the fence', instead of posting in opposition to anti-sex work campaigners.

- *Be self-protective and strategic in 'taking a stance'.*

Have realistic expectations about social change, and the pace of it.

- *Check in with yourself.*

Reading hate speech is hard on the psyche. If you're not okay, take time out to debrief. You might chat in a sex-worker group or e-list with your peers, or with a peer on SWOP Connect, or if things get bigger, our counsellor might help. SWOP's services are available free to all NSW sex workers.

- *Pick your battle days.*

If you're already tired or overwhelmed by other stuff, leave the online abuse for another day. You don't go and 'try on' lingerie when you are having a bad body image day, so don't read reviews, or 'try on' hate on the kind of day where it would be better to avoid confronting situations.

- *Connect, connect, connect...*

Take some time to connect with like-minded people and fellow supporters. Have coffee, talk, laugh, and re-energise to fight another day.

- *Never underestimate the power of pets & baby animals.*

Watch a baby animal video. We don't know why it helps, but it does.