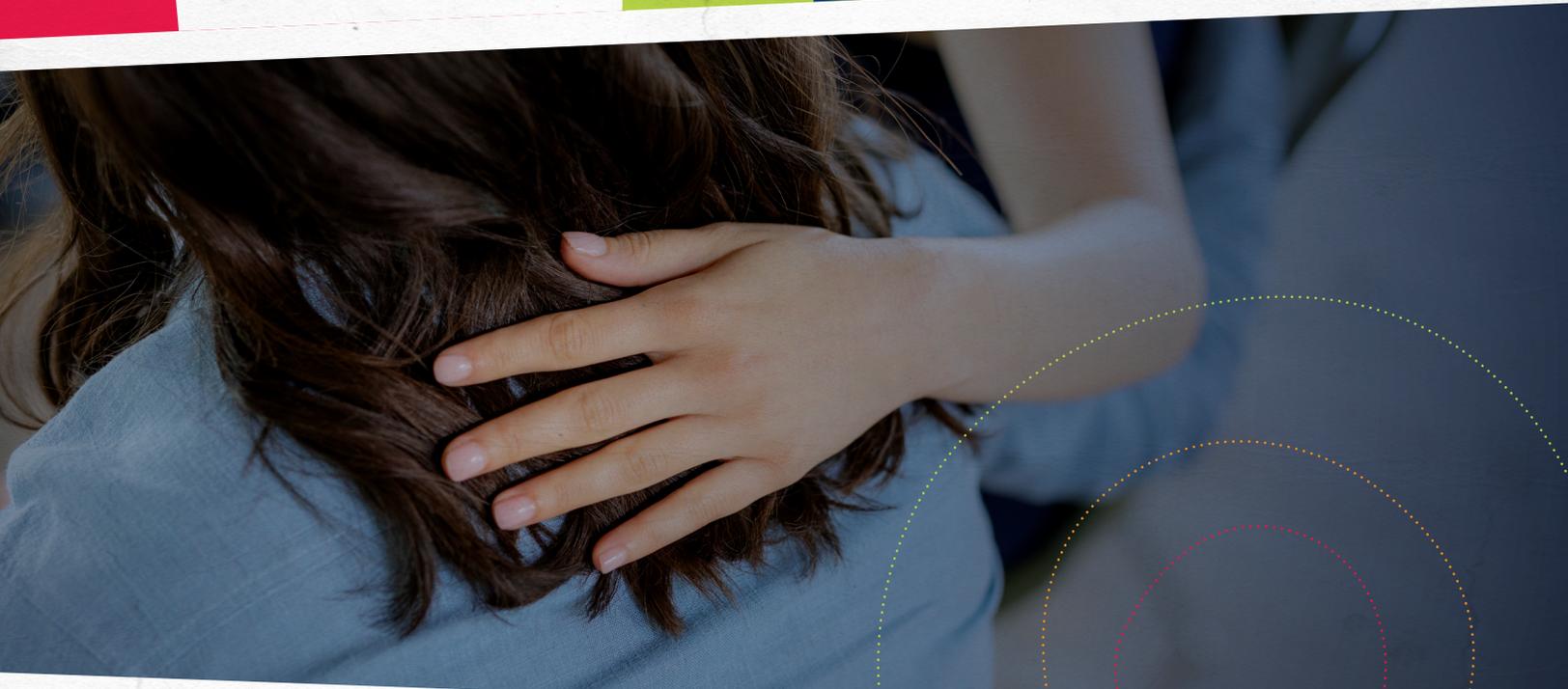




SPHÈRES

PROGRAM

Interagency
intervention
program
for sexually
exploited
persons
aged 12 to 24



Support Guide for the Implementation and Sustainability of the

Sphères Program

FOUNDATIONS, STRUCTURE,
FUNDING, RESEARCH AND ISSUES

COLLECTION
INSTITUT UNIVERSITAIRE
JEUNES EN DIFFICULTÉ

Québec 

Editorial

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C'est-à-dire

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Preamble

Sexual exploitation is one of the many forms of abuse of another person. It involves people who take advantage of the vulnerability of others in order to benefit, often financially. It manifests itself in many ways and involves asymmetrical relationships between its actors, whether they are the exploiters (or pimps), the exploited (or people who sell their sexual services) or the clients (or people who purchase the sexual services of another person).

Breaking the cycle of sexual exploitation is complex, despite the will to do so. The withdrawal¹ from such a situation involves a lot of back and forth. It requires physical healing as well as psychological and social rehabilitation. Services to sexually exploited persons must enable them to regain control over their lives, make choices and exercise their power to act and develop their autonomy. While there is general agreement on the need to protect sexually exploited persons, there is no consensus on how to do so. Anyone who deals with cases of sexual exploitation is faced with numerous conceptual, moral, social, legal and clinical issues when working with people who sell their sexual services. Not only are the services rendered based largely on a given youth worker's intervention philosophy or intuition rather than evidence-based practices, but they are also often provided in a discontinuous, uncoordinated manner that is tailored to the needs of the provider rather than those of the recipient.

The SPHÈRES program was developed to address the lack of services dedicated to sexually exploited persons in the City of Montreal. It relies on the collaboration of the Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (CCSMTL),² the Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (CODIM),³ the City of Montreal's police department (SPVM; Les Survivantes⁴ program), the Marie-Vincent Foundation⁵ and community organizations En Marge 12-17⁶ and L'Anonyme.⁷ In operation since October 2017,⁸ the SPHÈRES program supports sexually exploited individuals aged 12 to 24 in a voluntary and personalized process that focuses on their needs and aspirations.

The SPHÈRES program was originally conceived by Martin Pelletier and René-André Brisebois of the CCSMTL.

Its name was determined from a brainstorming session involving Lynn Dion of the CODIM, Méliandre Gagnon-Lemieux of En Marge 12-17, Shanda Jollette of L'Anonyme, Martin Pelletier of the CCSMTL and Sophie Saint-Louis of the CCSMTL, who are members of the first team of youth workers.

The name of the program brings to mind not only the different spheres of people's lives and their power to influence them, but also the different fields of action of the partner organizations involved with them and the importance of their collaboration. In addition, its logo is a nod to Montreal's emblematic Biosphère.⁹ The colours are those of the partner organizations participating in the program,¹⁰ and the predominant flower on the orb symbolizes hope. Finally, the title of the youth worker notebook, *My Stratosphere*, alludes to all the layers of concerted action required to support sexually exploited persons in all spheres of their lives.



The purpose of this support guide is to document the theoretical, organizational, functional and clinical components and parameters of the SPHÈRES program in order to ensure its sustainability in the Greater Montreal area and its implementation in other regions of Quebec. The creators of the SPHÈRES program share the conviction that the innovative approach proposed merits widespread adoption throughout the province of Quebec in order to lessen the prevalence of sexual exploitation and reduce its harms. The humanistic values advocated by the SPHÈRES program (i.e., empowerment and mobilization as well as respect for the integrity, multitude of experiences, pace and safety of sexually exploited persons) make it a promising participatory and collaborative intervention for cases of sexual exploitation.

1 The use of the term "withdrawal" refers to the process of abandoning the sex trade, terminating the commodification of sexual services or leaving a sexually exploitative situation.

2 <https://ciusss-centresudmtl.gouv.qc.ca/>

3 <https://ciusss-ouestmtl.gouv.qc.ca/en/home/>

4 <https://spvm.qc.ca/en> and <https://spvm.qc.ca/en/Pages/Discover-SPVM/Projects/Les-Survivantes>

5 <https://marie-vincent.org/eh/>

6 <http://www.enmarge1217.ca/>

7 <https://www.anonyme.ca/en/>

8 The initial implementation of the program, funded by the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) of Public Safety Canada as part of the Crime Prevention Action Fund (CPAF), ended in April 2022.

9 The Biosphère is located on Île Sainte-Hélène, southeast of Montreal. Formerly the United States pavilion at the Universal and International Exhibition of 1967 in Montreal, the Biosphère has served as an environmental museum since the early 1990s.

10 ● CCSMTL, ● CODIM, ● SPVM, ● En Marge 12-17, ● L'Anonyme and ● Marie-Vincent Foundation.

The SPHÈRES program contributes to the fight against sexual exploitation. In December 2020, the Government of Quebec declared this fight a national priority, as recommended by the Select Committee on the Sexual Exploitation of Minors (CSESM, recommendation no. 1).¹¹

Sexual exploitation for financial gain

While sexual exploitation for financial gain is certainly a form of sexual abuse, it must be distinguished from sexual abuse because of the particular nature of the process that leads people to sell their sexual services. Such individuals make decisions that allow them to obtain some form of gratification, whether material, financial or emotional. Even if this commodification benefits a third party (e.g., the pimp, the client, etc.), these persons may still derive some benefits. It is precisely this quest for gratification that can help us analyze the commodification of sexual services as a type of addiction. Initially, individuals anticipate the benefits of selling their sexual services without necessarily knowing the consequences. Afterward, they may remain in such a situation for different reasons, such as being forced to stay, staying because they see no other possible solution, or staying because the situation still provides them with benefits. Therefore, it is important to remember that such persons make choices that lead them to exchange sexual services for payment and that despite the risks associated with this activity, it is often the associated benefits that explain the continuation of a sexually exploitative situation.¹²

Vulnerability factors and harms¹³

While the majority of pimps are men and women are more likely to sell sex, men are not immune to being exploited and women may also sexually exploit others. Sexual exploitation does not have a specific gender, sexual identity or sexual orientation.

That said, it is possible to distinguish between two main profiles of people who sell their sexual services¹⁴: those viewed as vulnerable¹⁵ and those viewed as adventurous.¹⁶ While the former are characterized by emotional deficiencies, family difficulties and psychological problems, the latter are characterized by their “voluntary participation,” the trivialization of sexuality and their excessive desire for independence and thrills. In both cases, the lack of family support, neglect, sexual abuse, depression, isolation, drug abuse and running away from home are vulnerability factors that favour entry into and the maintenance of the cycle of sexual exploitation.¹⁷

Experiences involving conflict, violence or neglect during childhood lead to a cascade of negative effects that can harm a child's development. Individuals from difficult family backgrounds are more likely to run away from home, and repeated episodes of running away are associated with sexual exploitation.¹⁸ The same is true for substance abuse, whether it precedes or follows sexual exploitation.¹⁹ In some cases, the commodification of sexual services is used to support their addiction.²⁰

Many other issues are associated with sexual exploitation, including educational difficulties, which, combined with low graduation rates, are a distinct disadvantage when it comes to finding employment, making the commodification of sexual services a

11 Report of the Select Committee on the Sexual Exploitation of Minors (CSESM) tabled on December 3, 2020, in the National Assembly of the Government of Quebec, <http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/travaux-parlementaires/commissions/csesm/mandats/Mandat-41757/index.html>.

12 Taken from Brisebois, R.-A. and Fredette, C. (2021). *Frame of Reference for Sexual Exploitation Interventions*. Montreal: Institut universitaire Jeunes en difficulté of the Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux of the Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal.

13 Taken from Brisebois, R.-A. and Fredette, C. (2021).

14 Inspired by the work of M. Dorais in collaboration with P. Corriveau (2006). *Jeunes filles sous influence: prostitution et gangs de rue*. Quebec, Montréal: VLB Éditeur.

15 To which could be added the “submissive” and “sex slaves” according to the typology proposed by Dorais (2006).

16 To which could be added the “independents” according to the typology proposed by Dorais (2006).

17 Wilson, H.W., and Widom, C.S. (2010). The Role of Youth Problem Behaviors in the Path from Child Abuse and Neglect to Prostitution: A Prospective Examination. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 20(1): 210-236.

18 Tyler, K.A., and Johnson, K.A. (2006). Trading Sex: Voluntary or Coerced? The Experiences of Homeless Youth. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 43: 208-216.

19 Reid, J.A., and Piquero, A.R. (2014). On the Relationships Between Commercial Sexual Exploitation/Prostitution, Substance Dependency, and Delinquency in Youthful Offenders. *Child Maltreatment*, 19(3-4): 247-260.

20 Chen, X., Tyler, K.A., Whitbeck, L.B., and Hoyt, D.R. (2004). Early Sexual Abuse, Street Adversity, and Drug Use Among Female Homeless and Runaway Adolescents in the Midwest. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 34: 1-22.

source of income that is difficult to ignore.²¹ In addition, many sexually exploited persons suffer from anxiety and depression,²² which can be compounded by physical health problems, unwanted pregnancies, symptoms of trauma (including hypervigilance), shame, insecure attachment, relationship difficulties and stigma.²³

Ending the cycle of sexual exploitation

The vulnerabilities that lead to selling one's sexual services and its consequences complicate the process of withdrawal from the cycle of sexual exploitation. Several attempts are usually required to succeed, despite the genuine desire to do so.²⁴ Individuals who wish to end the commodification of their sexual services face many challenges, such as managing symptoms of trauma, dealing with an addiction, redefining their identity and rebuilding their social group, to name just a few. In general, the aftermath is far from promising.

At first glance, it is often difficult to satisfy basic needs, such as finding a job and place to live. Selling sexual services, which was initially an attractive source of income, now contributes to accentuating financial insecurity. With no diploma and jobs that are precarious, menial and poorly paid, the prospects for social integration are bleak. What's more, many exploited persons have to deal with an addiction that affects their overall ability to function and increases the temptation to sell sex again in order to finance their consumption. Symptoms of trauma, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, aggression and somatization can also interfere with the ability to live independently.

Redefining one's identity is also a major consideration, as sexually exploited persons often have low self-esteem, which is exacerbated by the stigma they face. These individuals must also redefine their personal boundaries, learn to make choices and determine the interpersonal boundaries they wish to build or dismantle. Ending the cycle of sexual exploitation also means dismantling a social group in order to build a new one. Those who have been exploited have maintained dependent and coercive social relationships, and most have weakened or broken family ties. Establishing a new social group for these people, who often suffer from insecure attachments, is a real challenge.

The need for an effective intervention

Sexual exploitation is associated with a variety of significant emotional, developmental, psychological and behavioural problems that profoundly affect the course of a person's life. It also appears to uniquely affect the traumatic symptoms of those who sell their sexual services, necessitating different treatments than those typically provided to people who are sexually abused or assaulted.

The health, safety and developmental risks for persons engaged in a cycle of sexual exploitation are therefore significant, raising numerous moral and ethical issues when it comes time for intervention. Anyone who works with people selling sexual services is faced with legal and clinical issues that are often contradictory. The positions adopted by the various community and institutional organizations with regard to the commodification of sexual services are numerous and often incompatible, ranging conceptually from sexual victimization to behavioural disorders and, for interventions, from the repressive approach to harm reduction. In concrete terms, the actions favoured are based more on the intervention philosophy of the organizations and the clinical intuitions of the youth workers rather than promising practices supported by research. Therefore, the targets of the interventions are more a reflection of the way youth workers view the people engaged in a cycle of sexual exploitation than a reflection of their real needs. The deployment of concerted interventions based on recognized practices is necessary in order to act effectively in cases of sexual exploitation.

21 Ricard-Guay, A. (2015). *Exploitation sexuelle d'adolescentes et jeunes femmes au Québec: perceptions et interventions. De l'ambivalence des sujets aux dilemmes d'intervention*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Quebec, Montreal: McGill University.

22 Cole, J., Sprang, G., Lee, R., and Cohen, J. (2016). The Trauma of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth: A Comparison of CSE Victims to Sexual Abuse Victims in a Clinical Sample. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 31(1): 122-146.

23 Lanctôt, N., Couture, S., Couvrette, A., Laurier, C., Parent, G., Paquette, G., and Turcotte, M. (2016). *La face cachée de la prostitution: une étude des conséquences de la prostitution sur le développement et le bien-être des filles et des femmes*. Research report submitted to the Research Fund – Society and culture. Longueuil: Université de Sherbrooke.

24 Szczepaniak, G., Ismé, C., and Boulebsol, C. (2014). *Connaître les besoins des femmes dans l'industrie du sexe pour mieux baliser les services*. Research report of the Concertation des luttes contre l'exploitation sexuelle (CLES). Quebec, Montreal.

The SPHÈRES program favours the consistency of interventions between the different community and institutional organizations working with sexually exploited persons.

The discontinuity of services available to people in sexually exploitative situations also compromises the effectiveness of interventions with this group. Persons who sell their sexual services must often deal with service cancellations due to their transition from adolescence to adulthood or to the complexity of their problems (e.g., addiction, mental health, poverty, legal problems, etc.), which require services from separate agencies. However, it is widely recognized that a comprehensive rather than sectoral intervention, regardless of age, is a better response to the needs of sexually exploited persons.²⁵

The SPHÈRES program promotes the continuity of services and provision of legal support for sexually exploited persons, regardless of age.

Furthermore, an effective intervention addresses not only the needs directly linked to the commodification of sexual services, but also the associated issues that often keep people in the cycle of sexual exploitation. There are many obstacles to the process of withdrawal, including substance use, violence, mental health disorders, trauma, social isolation, stigma and poverty.²⁶

The SPHÈRES program provides services specifically adapted to sexually exploited persons and which are not usually offered to individuals in difficulty.

Finally, sustained, prolonged and personalized interventions based on positive approaches that are focused on strengths and needs and sensitive to trauma are a more promising strategy than traditional programs focused solely on risk factors.²⁷

The SPHÈRES program supports sexually exploited persons in a process of self-realization likely to favour a change of lifestyle while respecting their integrity, pace and power to act.

The complex nature of sexual exploitation requires clinical thinking outside of a linear framework of understanding, which requires youth workers to think and act differently.

The SPHÈRES program

The SPHÈRES program relies on the collaboration of partners who share the same objective: to support the change process of individuals in sexually exploitative situations. It depends on the development of concerted actions to reduce the risks and harms associated with the commodification of sexual services and, ultimately, put an end to the cycle of sexual exploitation.

It also relies on the collaboration of institutional and community partners in order to help those who commodify their sexual services build a positive identity, exercise their power to act and develop their autonomy. More specifically, it aims to do the following:

- Meet the basic needs of these people in ways other than through the commodification of their sexual services.
- Reduce the physical, psychological, relational, social and legal harms associated with the commodification of sexual services.
- Develop life plans aimed at the fulfillment of their personal aspirations and their socio-professional integration.
- Improve their overall personal and social well-being.

²⁵ Vinet-Bonin, A. (2013). *Quand l'appel à l'aide n'est pas entendu: l'expérience de femmes en processus de sortie de la prostitution*. Master's thesis. Quebec, Montreal: Université de Montréal.

²⁶ Lanctôt, N., Couture, S., Couvrette, A., Laurier, C., Parent, G., Paquette, G., and Turcotte, M. (2016).

²⁷ Lanctôt, N., Couture, S., Couvrette, A., Laurier, C., Parent, G., Paquette, G., and Turcotte, M. (2016).

The SPHÈRES program is intended for persons aged 12 to 24 who recognize that they are being or have been sexually exploited or have been engaged in activities related to the sex trade. Men, women and all individuals whose gender identity is “other” (e.g., neutral, androgenous, transgender, etc.) are eligible for the program. However, recognition of the harms associated with the commodification of sexual services is required for admission to the program, even if the persons are not yet committed to changing their situation.

The program is voluntary. At no time should it be imposed or used as a means to coerce sexually exploited persons to receive services or counselling that they do not seek.

“We brought people into the world, maybe we should listen to them.”

SERGE FIORI, Quebec singer-songwriter

The foundations of the program

The SPHÈRES program is based on fundamental principles, all of which are inspired by humanistic and trauma-informed approaches,²⁸ the premises of transtheoretical models of change,²⁹ motivational interviewing,³⁰ harm reduction³¹ and relapse prevention.³² More specifically, the SPHÈRES program:

- relies on a participatory and collaborative approach to establish a positive, reassuring, warm and motivating intervention framework, both for the persons being helped in the program and the persons who support them. It gives a voice and a place to sexually exploited persons and those who work with them;
- structures the intervention in order to promote self-exploration and introspection in the persons being helped rather than encouraging them to behave according to the expectations of youth workers. This requires respecting the pace of the persons being helped. Youth workers trust their ability to change and their power to succeed if they so desire;
- focuses more on the needs of the persons being helped rather than the risks they pose to themselves or others. Without denying or minimizing the existence of these risks, youth workers first recognize the needs expressed by the persons being helped as intrinsically valid;
- values the development of the persons being helped to counterbalance their many experiences with social devaluation (stigmatization, exclusion, etc.). Youth workers help them set goals aimed at self-actualization rather than risk factor management. In this sense, the SPHÈRES program encourages people who sell their sexual services to take action and regain control over their lives to get themselves back on track. Youth workers support them in their power to act in order to bring about and sustain the changes necessary to improve their personal and social well-being;
- encourages hope by enabling the persons being helped to foresee positive prospects for the future. Youth workers rely on their self-efficacy to change the course of their lives and achieve their most cherished aspirations.

The guiding principles for interventions

The SPHÈRES program is based on a theory of change³³ involving two main steps: the co-construction of a common intervention framework for sexual exploitation and the implementation of individualized psychosocial activities aimed at persons who commodify their sexual services.

28 Dodsworth, J. (2012). Pathways Through Sex Work: Childhood Experiences and Adult Identities. *British Journal of Social Work*, 42 (3): 519-536.

29 Prochaska, J.O., and DiClemente, C.C. (1982). Transtheoretical Therapy: Toward A More Integrative Model of Change. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, 19 (3): 276-288.

30 Miller, W.R., and Rollnick, S. (2002). *Motivational Interviewing: Preparing People for Change* (2nd ed.). New York, New York: Guilford Press.

31 Brisson, P. (1997). *L'approche de réduction des méfaits: sources, situation, pratiques*. Quebec, Quebec: Comité permanent de lutte à la toxicomanie, Government of Quebec.

32 Marlatt, G.A., and Donovan, D.M. (2005). *Relapse Prevention: Maintenance Strategies in the Treatment of Addictive Behaviors*. New York, New York: The Guilford Press.

33 A way of describing how a group hopes to achieve a given long-term goal that serves as an aid to developing solutions to complex social problems. See Anderson, A.A. (2005) *The Community Builder's Approach to Theory of Change: A Practical Guide to the Theory Development*. Columbia, Washington: The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change.

To learn more about the common intervention framework of the SPHÈRES program and the implementation of individualized psychosocial follow-ups, consult the *Common Intervention Framework – SPHÈRES Program*.³⁴

The first stage in developing and implementing the SPHÈRES program requires the co-construction of a common intervention framework for sexual exploitation using evidence-based practices. This step is inherent to the implementation of individualized psychosocial activities aimed at persons who commodify their sexual services. The goal is essentially to develop the knowledge, hard skills and soft skills of the youth workers as a dynamic and iterative process that enriches the interventions themselves in order to refine the common framework. In concrete terms, this step brings together all awareness, promotional, training and support activities for partners and youth workers involved in the SPHÈRES program. These activities are based on the desire to recognize the expertise of the various SPHÈRES program partners and that of the youth workers who help sexually exploited persons. These activities also provide a space to experiment with practices that are integrated into a common vision of the intervention needs of persons who commodify their sexual services.

The second stage of the theory of change favoured by the SPHÈRES program refers to all individualized psychosocial interventions aimed at sexually exploited persons. These activities are guided by the transtheoretical model of change by Prochaska and DiClemente.³⁵ The trajectory of withdrawal from the cycle of sexual exploitation is actually comparable to the process of change³⁶ insofar as it involves different stages that reveal a complex evolution of back-and-forth behaviour requiring coping strategies.³⁷

Therefore, the SPHÈRES program requires recognition of the stage at which the persons commodifying their sexual services find themselves in order to determine the most appropriate interventions to help them evolve to the next stage, particularly with the help of motivational interviewing³⁸ and relapse prevention.³⁹

To learn more about the strategies and intervention tools required in working with persons being helped by the SPHÈRES program, consult the *My Stratosphere Youth Worker Notebook – SPHÈRES Program*.⁴⁰

In addition, the SPHÈRES program follows the premises of complex trauma treatment⁴¹ and harm reduction,⁴² which take into account the multitude of profiles and backgrounds of sexually exploited persons. Therefore, the program has the following goals:

- Focus on the process of self-reconstruction rather than terminating the commodification of sexual services.
- Mobilize individuals to change their lifestyles.
- Position individuals as active agents in their lives who are capable of making decisions and taking action to implement them.
- Provide a safe intervention environment so that persons can focus their energy on achieving their full potential.

Finally, a key principle of the SPHÈRES program is to support the persons being helped in the means they have found to achieve the goals they have set for themselves. Inspired by the Wraparound approach used for cases of sexual exploitation as part of the Exit Doors Here program at the Elizabeth Fry Toronto⁴³ organization, the SPHÈRES program aims to ensure that the needs identified as important by the persons being helped are met through strategies established in collaboration with them. Clinical support must enable these persons to make contact with the appropriate resources, achieve successes and develop

34 Gélinas, N., Jobin, P., and Fredette, C. (2022). *Common Intervention Framework – SPHÈRES Program*. Quebec, Montreal: Institut universitaire Jeunes en difficulté du Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal.

35 Prochaska, J.O., and DiClemente, C.C. (1982).

36 See Brisebois, R.-A., and Fredette, C. (2021).

37 Bruhns, M.E., Del Prado, A., Slezakova, J., Lapinski, A.J., Li, T., and Pizer, B. (2018). Survivors' Perspectives on Recovery From Commercial Sexual Exploitation Beginning in Childhood. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 46 (4): 413-455.

38 Miller, W.R., and Rollnick, S. (2002).

39 Marlatt, G.A., and Donovan, D.M. (2005).

40 Gélinas, N., Brisebois, R.-A., and Fredette, C. (2022). *My Stratosphere Youth Worker Notebook – SPHÈRES Program*. Quebec, Montreal: Institut universitaire Jeunes en difficulté du Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal.

41 Briere, J., and Lanktree, C. (2013). *Integrative Treatment of Complex Trauma for Adolescents (ITCTA)*. Treatment Guide (2nd ed.). California, Los Angeles: <https://keck.usc.edu/adolescent-trauma-training-center/>.

42 Brisson, P. (1997).

43 Elizabeth Fry Toronto (2018). *Exit Doors Here* (<https://www.efrytoronto.org/sex-work-transition-program/>); program funded by the NCPS of Public Safety Canada.

their power to act. The SPHÈRES program allows them to identify their skills and strengthen their capacity to change by relying on a team of youth workers from various community and institutional organizations supporting them throughout the change process.

In summary, the SPHÈRES program relies on the close collaboration of institutional and community youth workers in order to enable persons who commodify their sexual services to recover physically, psychologically and socially by facilitating access to specialized resources and community services that will allow them to meet their needs, improve their personal development and acquire socio-professional skills.

The program structure

The partners

The implementation of the Sphères program requires the collaboration of various institutional and community organizations working with people who sell their sexual services or are at risk of doing so in a given region.

First, the Centres intégrés de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS) and the Centres intégrés universitaires de santé et de services sociaux (CIUSSS) are essential partners in the implementation of the SPHÈRES program. Through their organizational, structural, human and financial resources, they are able to ensure the governance (i.e., management and clinical coordination) of a program of this scope.⁴⁴ In addition, due to the large pool of troubled adolescents they deal with, the CISSS and CIUSSS are the main organizations that refer sexually exploited minors to the SPHÈRES program.

Second, it is essential to join forces with community partners that provide outreach intervention (such as L'Anonyme⁴⁵) and shelter services any time all year round⁴⁶ (such as En Marge 12-17⁴⁷) in order to ensure the variety and continuity of services. Because all sexually exploited persons who wish to initiate changes in their lives are eligible for the SPHÈRES program, regardless of their gender, gender identity or sexual orientation, the participation of organizations that cater to both men and women or members of the LGBTQIA2S+⁴⁸ community is also encouraged.⁴⁹

Although community youth workers are bound by the same civil and legal obligations, including those set out in sections 38(d) and 39.1 of the *Youth Protection Act*,⁵⁰ the paradigms of their interventions give them greater flexibility in supporting sexually exploited persons. These youth workers are the ones who mainly refer adults to the SPHÈRES program. Furthermore, their role of referring individuals to specialized resources in the community allows for increased cooperation between the different intervention environments and, as a result, improves the quality and nature of the response to the needs of those benefitting from the SPHÈRES program.

If community partners do not offer workshops that provide sex education and promote consensual relationships, it is suggested to seek the collaboration of a regional organization with expertise in this area. Sex education is an essential component of working with people who sell sex. Similarly, if community partners do not offer support services to the family and friends of sexually exploited persons, including parents, it is advisable to ask for assistance from a regional organization with such expertise. Friends and family often need help themselves to be able to support sexually exploited persons in their efforts to change.

44 That being said, another partner organization involved in the implementation of the SPHÈRES program in a given region (e.g., a community resource) could take charge of its management and coordination as long as it has the organizational, structural, human and financial resources necessary for the program's governance.

45 <https://www.anonyme.ca/en/>

46 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year

47 <http://www.enmarge1217.ca/>

48 The acronym stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, two-spirit, and all other sexual orientations and gender identities.

49 A list of resources for people concerned with sexual and gender diversity is available at <https://interligne.co/en/>.

50 This refers to the obligation to report any sexually exploitative situation involving a minor, which is considered sexual abuse under the *Youth Protection Act*.

The collaboration of designated centres for medical-social interventions with victims of sexual violence or an organization providing specialized treatment to victims of sexual violence, such as the Marie-Vincent Foundation,⁵¹ is also strongly suggested. Many victims of sexual exploitation require therapy to change the course of their lives.

Depending on regional realities, the involvement of organizations serving Indigenous populations is also encouraged. The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls⁵² and the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec⁵³ have highlighted the vulnerabilities of Indigenous people to sexual exploitation. Such individuals have also recommended that services intended for them be culturally sensitive.⁵⁴ The SPHÈRES program benefits from joining resources targeting Indigenous communities in order to respond in a culturally safe manner to the needs of members who have been sexually exploited.

In addition, the participation of police departments in the SPHÈRES program is necessary, especially that of teams involved in the fight against sexual violence, such as the Montreal police department's Investigations division examining sexual exploitation⁵⁵ and its Les Survivantes program.⁵⁶

The risks associated with the commodification of sexual services and the illegitimate nature of the settings in which it takes place sometimes require repressive and preventive interventions to protect victims of sexual exploitation and the people around them. Police officers in the Les Survivantes program are trained to assist individuals who wish to denounce the exploitation they are enduring as a result of the commodification of their sexual services by following up directly with the investigative team responsible for solving crimes of this nature. The officers also help develop plans to ensure the safety of victims and their loved ones. In addition to supporting victims of sexual exploitation, the Les Survivantes program is also a valuable asset for educating professionals who work with such victims. For this reason, the deployment of the Les Survivantes program in other regions of Quebec is strongly encouraged.⁵⁷

In short, the close collaboration of institutional and community resources recognized as credible in a given community and likely to contribute to a variety of services for sexually exploited minors and adults is fundamental to the implementation of the SPHÈRES program.

It would be wise to join forces with a research team from a CIUSSS, university, research centre or research chair in order to evaluate the implementation, interventions and impact of the SPHÈRES program.⁵⁸ This evaluation process is necessary for its deployment and sustainability. In particular, it will help assess the value of the program from a cost-benefit perspective. As well, it will permit necessary adjustments to be made over time in order to ensure that actions taken as part of the SPHÈRES program are based on promising practices supported by research.

51 <https://marie-vincent.org/en/>

52 See the final report (2016-2019): <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/>.

53 See the final report (2016-2019): <https://www.cerp.gouv.qc.ca/index.php?id=2&L=1>.

54 Chez Doris (<https://www.chezdoris.org/en/>), The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal (<https://www.nwsm.info/en/home>) and Open Door (<https://www.opendoortoday.org/>) are the few organizations in Montreal that provide culturally sensitive services to Indigenous people. The Women's Centre of Montréal (<https://centredesfemmesdemtl.org/en/>), in partnership with Quebec Native Women (<https://faq-qnw.org/en/>), also provides front-line services to Indigenous women living in an urban environment.

55 <https://spvm.qc.ca/en>

56 <https://spvm.qc.ca/en/Pages/Discover-SPVM/Projects/Les-Survivantes>

57 The CSESM (December 2020) recommends (recommendation no. 40) that the Les Survivantes program be incorporated into the *Équipe intégrée de lutte contre le proxénétisme* (EILP), which unites the efforts of the Montreal police department (SPVM), Sûreté du Québec, RCMP and police departments in Quebec City, Laval, Longueuil and Gatineau. The program has already been replicated in the Laval police department (SPVL) (<https://gotmyinfo.com/listing/les-survivantes-service-de-police-de-laval/>).

58 The initial SPHÈRES program in the Greater Montreal area is the subject of an implementation and impact evaluation (2018-2022) conducted by Mathilde Turcotte, Sophie T. Hébert and Denis Lafortune of the IUJD at the CCSMTL and International Centre for Comparative Criminology (Turcotte, M., Hébert, S.T., and Lafortune, D. (2018). *Projet SPHÈRES: répondre à ses besoins autrement que par la prostitution (6350-C156)*. Evaluation design submitted to Public Safety Canada. Quebec, Montreal).

The role of partners

The partners are the soul of the SPHÈRES program. As both managers and service providers, they are involved in the following:

- Referring participants to the SPHÈRES program
- Offering relevant services for their change process
- Supporting the family and friends of the persons being helped
- Promoting the program
- Supporting the youth workers of organizations dealing with people who sell their sexual services or are at risk of doing so

The partners are also involved in training and raising awareness of the issue of sexual exploitation among representatives of the justice system, health and social services, and community resources. In doing so, they directly contribute to the collective efforts aimed at preventing and detecting sexual exploitation, treating persons who commodify their sexual services and providing ongoing training to stakeholders who work with them.

Partnership agreements

The cooperation of all SPHÈRES program partners is facilitated through formal partnership agreements. Duly signed by the directors of each partner organization, these agreements establish the terms for the sharing of responsibilities, materials, human and financial resources, and the structures and services required to implement the SPHÈRES program.⁵⁹

These agreements must specify the roles, responsibilities and expectations of both the managers and youth workers involved in the SPHÈRES program. For example, managers of partner organizations are expected to carry out the following tasks:

- Sit on the Steering Committee to ensure that the principles of the program are followed.
- Be the standard-bearer for the program within their organization.
- Act as a liaison, when necessary, with the person responsible for the clinical coordination of SPHÈRES.
- Supervise their youth worker involved in the provision of direct services to participants.

This last point is important because it is this administrative and organizational support that allows youth workers to be adequately trained, ensuring their legitimacy and continued involvement in the program. Youth workers, for their part, are expected to do the following:

- Be willing to adapt their practices so that they correspond to the guiding principles of the SPHÈRES program.
- Clarify their role with their colleagues and agree to be supervised by the person responsible for the clinical coordination of the SPHÈRES program.
- Address any administrative and organizational issues to the manager of their organization.

Considering the importance of information sharing between youth workers from different organizations involved in a common intervention, as required by the SPHÈRES program, it is also important to establish a protocol for the sharing of personal information which protects a person's privacy, as provided for in the *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information*.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ For the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program in the Greater Montreal area, these agreements were established informally, even though all partner organizations submitted a letter of support for the project at the time of the funding application. It is strongly recommended that formal partnership agreements be established, approved and signed by each of the program's partner organizations.

⁶⁰ Although all partner organizations comply with the various laws governing the sharing of personal information, no official information sharing protocol was established for the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program in Greater Montreal. It is strongly recommended that this be done.

Management and clinical coordination

For the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program funded by Public Safety Canada's National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS),⁶¹ a management team was created and placed under the responsibility of the CCSMTL's Institut universitaire Jeunes en difficulté. This team was composed of the following people:

- A project manager responsible for organizing the activities required to run the program effectively and achieve its objectives (liaison with the funder, donors and partners; financial management; preparation of financial and performance reports, etc.)
- A coordinator responsible for carrying out all activities required to run the program effectively and achieve its objectives (supervision of human resources, reception of requests for information and applications for admission, supervision of participant follow-ups, keeping of participant records, promotion of the program, liaison with the evaluative research team, etc.)
- An administrative officer
- An administrative technician

At the operational level, it is necessary that one person be assigned to both the management and clinical coordination of the SPHÈRES program. The organization and planning of the coordinated efforts required to implement the program must be supported by an official structure. Rooted in the priorities of the partner organizations, this structure must have the human resources (including an administrative officer and administrative technician) and funds necessary for its operation.

While the implementation or sustainability of a program should not rely entirely on the expertise of a single person, the management and clinical coordination of this program should nevertheless be assigned to one position. Managing and coordinating a program such as SPHÈRES requires time. In order for such a program to be a permanent part of the psychosocial services available to sexually exploited persons, a dedicated position must be established in the budget. The person occupying the position is responsible for the achievement and compliance of all program objectives and activities. This includes the following tasks:

- Ensure that collaborative links between partners are maintained.
- Greet and support the program's youth workers (see the onboarding protocol for a youth worker in the appendix).
- Support the managers of partner organizations with the coaching of their youth workers involved in the program.
- Detect and resolve problems.
- Promote the program.
- Plan the training sessions.
- Respond to requests for information.
- Ensure the follow-up of interventions.
- Solicit donors to fund activities.
- Manage admissions, finances, material purchases and reimbursements of expenses inherent to the program.

In short, the program manager is responsible for the administrative functions of SPHÈRES and reports to the program's Steering Committee.

Three proposals for a governance structure

It is recommended that the governance structure of the SPHÈRES program be integrated into the structure of the youth program in every CISSS or CIUSSS so that a full-time person is dedicated to its management and clinical coordination. Furthermore, it is recommended that the SPHÈRES program be constituted as an administrative unit in order to benefit from a certain level of autonomy, including a discretionary budget to facilitate a range of operational requirements (e.g., management of expense reimbursements related to the provision of direct services).

Another possible scenario would be to divide the management and clinical coordination of the SPHÈRES program between a

⁶¹ As part of the Crime Prevention Action Fund (CPAF)

CISSS or CIUSSS and one of the community partners through a secondment.⁶² This means that the management and clinical coordination tasks would be split between two part-time individuals. Such a scenario would make it possible to retain the services of the community youth worker who was initially part of the SPHÈRES program implemented in Greater Montreal.⁶³ It would also allow the funding of a community youth worker position, which would be responsible for identifying victims of sexual exploitation who are likely to benefit from the services of the SPHÈRES program, working in concert with community resources and ensuring the ongoing training of professionals working with sexually exploited persons. In addition, if the new funding formula recommended by the CSESM (recommendation no. 19)⁶⁴ were to be implemented – that community organizations fighting against sexual exploitation be funded according to their mission rather than their projects – it would mean that the funding for the management and clinical coordination of the SPHÈRES program could be ensured jointly by the CISSS or CIUSSS and one of the community partners.

In a third possible scenario, all SPHÈRES program partners could contribute to the funding of the management and clinical coordination position. One of the partners would be designated as the program's administrative manager, meaning that it would be responsible for all aspects of the management and clinical coordination position.⁶⁵ Of course, this administrative manager would be accountable to all partners that contribute to the funding of the position. A long-term funding formula for the management and clinical coordination position would also need to be agreed upon by the partners.

That being said, the partners mobilized in each region where SPHÈRES will be implemented are in a position to evaluate which organization will be responsible for the program's management and regional coordination. However, they must keep in mind that this organization must possess the structural, human and financial resources necessary for the governance of a program such as SPHÈRES. This organization must also follow the fundamental principle of concerted action at the heart of the program which requires the sharing of decision-making power. In concrete terms, this means that all decisions related to the management and coordination of the program must be endorsed and supported by all SPHÈRES partner organizations. It is important to note that only the governance structure used by the CISSS or CIUSSS was evaluated as part of the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program in Greater Montreal.

At the same time, the implementation and sustainability of the SPHÈRES program requires the funding of an external resource dedicated to the training and clinical supervision of community and institutional youth workers in the motivational interviewing method, one of the main foundations of the intervention favoured by the program.⁶⁶

The Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is composed of the managers of SPHÈRES partner organizations, including the person responsible for the program's management and clinical coordination. This person plans and hosts the committee's meetings as well as follows up on the decisions made.

The Steering Committee meets approximately four times a year for two to three hours each time. It ensures that the program's partnership agreements and guidelines are being followed and administers the program's activities. It directs and endorses the work of the person responsible for the management and clinical coordination of the SPHÈRES program. Members of the Steering Committee are also accountable for the actions of the youth workers in their organization who are involved in the SPHÈRES program. They make sure that these youth workers have the resources they need to do their job, particularly administrative supervision and clinical support. With the collaboration of the person in charge of the program's management and clinical coordination, the members ensure the development and performance of their youth workers.

The Clinical Committee

The Clinical Committee brings together youth workers from each partner organization providing services for the SPHÈRES program. These include youth workers from a CISSS or CIUSSS as well as those from community resources who ensure the

62 Such a service agreement involving a part-time resource already exists between En Marge 12-17 and the CCSMTL's youth program as part of the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program in Greater Montreal.

63 In the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program in Greater Montreal, the full-time (35 hours per week) salary of a youth worker at En Marge 12-17 was financed by Public Safety Canada's National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) grant awarded to the IUJD at the CCSMTL as part of the Crime Prevention Action Fund (CPAF).

64 CSESM report, December 2020

65 This can be established similar to a trust. For example, the designated trustee could be the CISSS/CIUSSS or a community organization.

66 The cost of this resource in the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program in Greater Montreal was \$6,389.72 per year.

follow-up of interventions conducted with SPHÈRES program participants.

Joining them are specialized resources in sexual violence who are involved in the program or any other partner likely to be mobilized for a participant's clinical process. These resources contribute significantly to the services available to participants and the realization of multidisciplinary interventions that can cover a broad spectrum of therapeutic actions necessary for their recovery and resilience.

One or more representatives of the police department (representatives of the Les Survivantes program, if applicable) also sit on the committee. On the one hand, the collaboration of police officers on the Clinical Committee enables the consideration of legal and security issues underlying the follow-ups of participants and the rapid adoption of effective strategies to manage them. On the other hand, it allows us to get potential updates concerning inactive participants; that is, participants from whom the youth workers have not heard, but who are still under the radar of the police, or to prevent the risk of setbacks for those who attract the attention of law enforcement. Finally, the police officers who sit on the Clinical Committee are in contact with the loved ones (particularly the parents) of runaways or missing persons who could potentially benefit from the services of the SPHÈRES program. These officers are also in a position to refer these individuals to community resources⁶⁷ that can help them. Representatives of the police department contribute significantly to the services available to SPHÈRES participants and the use of multidisciplinary interventions that cover a broad spectrum of preventive and protective actions.

The person in charge of the management and coordination of the SPHÈRES program plans and hosts the Clinical Committee meetings. This person also supports the youth workers in order to ensure the follow-up of decisions made during these meetings.

The meetings of this committee are held on a weekly basis and last two to three hours. They serve as team work meetings whose main purpose is to follow up on the activities and clinical issues of the SPHÈRES program. To do so, each youth worker plans a discussion on his or her clinical follow-ups (i.e., case presentation, follow-up status, priority issues, challenges, successes, etc.). These clinical discussions provide an opportunity to take stock of the interventions being carried out with participants and discuss the challenges, issues and successes of these interventions. They are also an opportunity for youth workers to share successes and difficulties with their colleagues (e.g., their experiences dealing with certain participants) and discuss potential intervention options.

Clinical discussions are held to enable youth workers to share information on the four motivational interviewing processes that constitute the basis of the follow-up for persons being helped by the SPHÈRES program. These include the following:

- 1) Commitment to the relationship: What strategies are being used to encourage the creation of a bond of trust?
- 2) Focus: What is the common objective?
- 3) Evocation: What strategies are being used to promote the emergence of the language of change?
- 4) Planning: What are the means being used to support the change?

Clinical Committee meetings also serve to manage the admissions of participants to the SPHÈRES program. Persons who are referred and admitted to the program are assigned a youth worker who will support them throughout their change process.

A research representative also attends the meetings in order to facilitate the program's evaluation, an essential component of its implementation and sustainability.

The roles of youth workers

Youth workers⁶⁸ are responsible for introducing the SPHÈRES program to the persons referred to it, then welcoming those admitted and supporting them throughout their change process. To do so, they identify participants' most important needs and facilitate their contacts with their support network and the community resources that can be used to meet those needs. Youth workers ensure that participants are exposed to various activities that promote the construction of a positive identity, the belief in their power to act and the development of their autonomy. They also support the persons being helped in developing a life plan that will allow them to realize their personal aspirations and promote the overall improvement of their well-being.

67 For example, Parents En Marge de la Rue at En Marge 12-17 (www.enmarge1217.ca).

68 See the sample youth worker job posting and interview template in the appendix.

While professionals from partner organizations or other community resources refer most participants to the program, youth workers also help identify individuals who are likely to benefit from SPHÈRES services, in collaboration with other Clinical Committee members and youth workers from partner organizations.

Youth workers and other Clinical Committee members also contribute closely to the outreach and promotion of the SPHÈRES program by participating in various knowledge transfer activities (e.g., conferences, seminars, scientific days, etc.). In order to illustrate the importance of the partnership that forms the essence of the SPHÈRES program, youth workers host activities in teams of two, each coming from a different organization.

Finally, youth workers respond to requests for support from other professionals in institutional and community networks working with sexually exploited persons. In doing so, they contribute more broadly to preventive efforts, the screening and treatment of sexually exploited persons, and the awareness and continuing education of the youth workers supporting them.

Number of youth workers and employment status

For the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program, the intervention team was composed of four people from En Marge 12-17, L'Anonyme, the CCSMTL and the CODIM. The intervention resources from the two community organizations worked full time (35 hours/week) in the SPHÈRES program while those from the CIUSSSs worked part time (28 hours/week).

The initial experience with the SPHÈRES program confirms the relevance of not only potentially increasing the number of people making up the intervention team, but also of granting each of these persons the status of full-time employment. The popularity of the services provided by the SPHÈRES program was such that the intervention team was quickly overloaded.

In addition to granting full-time employment status to all SPHÈRES youth workers, it is also strongly recommended that the number of such workers be increased by mobilizing other partners, such as organizations offering shelter services to persons in difficulty, Indigenous people or men who sell their sexual services.

Other committees

As part of the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program, two other committees were set up to facilitate communications and broaden the sharing of information between the different intervention environments involved in the fight against sexual exploitation in the Montreal Metropolitan Community.⁶⁹

The Joint Committee

The Joint Committee is composed of members of the Steering and Clinical Committees in order to bridge the gap between the management and clinical issues affecting the SPHÈRES program. The two annual meetings lasting three hours each allow problems to be identified and solved, successes to be noted and partnership agreements between organizations involved in the program to be monitored and re-evaluated, if necessary. The meetings also provide an opportunity to follow the work of the evaluative research team and adjust the components and activities of the SPHÈRES program based on the preliminary results.

The Extended Committee

The Extended Committee brings together members of the Clinical Committee and youth workers from other partners for interventions related to sexual exploitation in the Montreal Metropolitan Community, including Crime Victims Assistance Centres⁷⁰ in Montreal, the CISSS MOBILIS project in Montréal-Est⁷¹ and the Longueuil police department.⁷² Other stakeholders also join this committee from time to time, as needed:

- Managers of youth workers from SPHÈRES partner organizations

69 The Montreal Metropolitan Community includes 82 municipalities on the island of Montreal and its southern and northern suburbs.

70 <https://cavac.qc.ca/en/>

71 <https://www.santemonteregie.qc.ca/en/east>

72 <https://www.longueuil.quebec/fr/services%2Fservice-de-police-de-lagglomeration-de-longueuil>

- Collaborating youth workers, including the coordinator of the sex education program from L'Anonyme⁷³ and managers of the Parents En Marge de la Rue program from En Marge 12-17⁷⁴
- Youth workers from assessment-determination teams and those providing care on behalf of the Director of Youth Protection (DYP) and CCSMTL
- Professionals from the Clinique des jeunes de la rue⁷⁵

The Extended Committee meets four times a year for one to two hours. Its purpose is to promote the SPHÈRES program in order to increase its visibility and maximize efforts to recruit participants. Meetings of the Extended Committee also provide an opportunity for the different intervention providers directly or indirectly involved in the SPHÈRES program to present their respective services. They encourage discussions on the issues and challenges encountered during interventions with sexually exploited persons and harmonize the actions of different institutional and community resources involved in the fight against sexual exploitation in the Greater Montreal area. In doing so, they contribute to the development of an inter-regional intervention framework to address sexual exploitation.

Establishment of a Sexual Exploitation Advisory Committee

In order to implement and maintain the SPHÈRES program, it is recommended that an advisory committee on sexual exploitation interventions be formed. This committee is made up of managers and youth workers from the various institutional and community organizations in a given region which work with people selling sexual services. This would help implement recommendation number 20 of the CSESM.⁷⁶ However, contrary to this recommendation, which relies on coordinating groups solely dedicated to sexually exploited minors, the architects of the SPHÈRES program reiterate the need to work with all sexually exploited persons regardless of their age to promote the continuity of services available to them. A comprehensive intervention is a better response to their needs than a specific agency action based on age.⁷⁷ That said, in keeping with the recommendation of the CSESM, the mandate and name of the recommended advisory committee should be consistent with those of other similar bodies in the province. Collaboration between these various bodies could promote not only the sharing of information, but also the implementation of the SPHÈRES program in other regions of Quebec.⁷⁸

Admission to and participation in the program

Admission criteria

To be admitted to the SPHÈRES program, persons must be 12 to 24 years of age, reside (main address) in the area where the program offers its services or frequent this area (e.g., visit friends and family, receive services or sell sex), and recognize the harms of commodifying their sexual services in one or more areas of their lives. Therefore, persons in sexually exploitative situations must be in the contemplation stage of change in order to be referred to the SPHÈRES program.

At the contemplation stage, persons recognize that they have a problem, but are ambivalent about changing. It is the “Yes, but ...” period.

To benefit from the services of the SPHÈRES program, sexually exploited persons need to recognize that there are risks and harms associated with the commodification of sexual services. They must also be ready to commit to a process designed to resolve their ambivalence when it comes to changing certain lifestyle habits in order to reduce their harms and aspire to a better life.⁷⁹

⁷³ <https://www.anonyme.ca/programmes/sex-education-program/>

⁷⁴ www.enmarge1217.ca

⁷⁵ <https://ciusss-centresudmtl.gouv.qc.ca/propos/qui-sommes-nous/leadership-et-innovations/clinique-jeunes-de-la-rue>

⁷⁶ CSESM report, December 2020

⁷⁷ Vinet-Bonin, A. (2013)

⁷⁸ Moreover, these bodies could be represented at the *Coalition québécoise contre la traite des personnes* in order to promote co-operation and consistency in the fight against sexual exploitation (<http://www.cathii.org/node/83>).

⁷⁹ The implementation of the SPHÈRES program in Greater Montreal revealed that persons in sexually exploitative situations need the support of a trusted person in order to recognize the harms resulting from the commodification of sexual services and the issues associated with it. Depending on people's characteristics and situation, it may be desirable to refer them to the SPHÈRES program, even if they are only focused on the benefits of their situation and are not yet considering changing (i.e., while they are still in the precontemplation stage).

Finally, people who commodify their sexual services and are simultaneously involved in recruiting others for the purpose of sexual exploitation can participate in the SPHÈRES program under certain conditions. They must recognize the risks they pose to others, admit that they recruit others and immediately commit to stop doing so. They must, similar to other candidates, demonstrate their motivation to change and recognize the harms associated with the commodification of sexual services. An assessment of the risk these people pose to other participants is also conducted by the Clinical Committee. This results in a description based on their delinquent profile and level of involvement in a criminal network. If the sum of the benefits of their participation in the SPHÈRES program exceeds the sum of the risks they represent, these persons will be officially admitted. However, they will not participate in any activity that could bring them into contact with other persons being helped by the SPHÈRES program.

Program referrals and admissions

The SPHÈRES program is recommended for persons likely to benefit from it by the program's youth workers, collaborating youth workers from the organizations involved in the program, and any other intervention provider working with sexually exploited persons. Promotional tools (postcards and information leaflets presented in the appendix) are used to promote the program and recruit participants. Candidates are referred to the person in charge of the management and clinical coordination of the SPHÈRES program, who oversees the admissions and ensures that these people meet the admission criteria. This manager is responsible for collecting nominative information on the candidates, including the following:

- Age
- Area of residence or care setting (rehabilitation unit, group home, halfway house, etc.)
- Nature of legal care, if applicable
- Contact information
- Language spoken
- Reasons for referral to the program

This information is shared with the Clinical Committee at its weekly meeting to determine who will be responsible for the follow-up. Depending on the circumstances, the person in charge of management and clinical coordination may decide to forward an admission request directly to a youth worker so that the follow-up process can be started quickly.

An initial meeting with potential candidates is organized in order to confirm their interest in taking steps to change due to the harms associated with the commodification of their sexual services and to introduce the services of the SPHÈRES program. This meeting also aims to clarify their understanding of the program and the role of the youth workers. It is preferable that the contact be initiated by the candidates. The manager and clinical coordinator communicates with the person who referred the youth to the program to provide the person with the contact information of the assigned youth worker. If circumstances do not allow the candidate to initiate this contact, the youth worker will communicate with this person or with the person who referred the youth to the program to make an appointment. A face-to-face meeting is preferred.⁸⁰ If circumstances do not allow it, a teleconference or videoconference (e.g., Skype, FaceTime, etc.) can be held. It can also be hosted in teams of two. This way, if the assigned youth worker is absent or leaves the program, a replacement who is known to the person being helped can be provided (see the protocol for the departure of a youth worker in the appendix). Following this first meeting, potential participants can take the time to reflect or decide to commit to the program immediately. Once these persons are admitted, the assigned youth workers get them to sign the information and consent form (see the appendix⁸¹), which is securely stored by the person in charge of the management and clinical coordination of the SPHÈRES program in accordance with the laws protecting personal information. Youth workers make sure that issues related to confidentiality and information sharing are clearly explained to the persons admitted to the program. It is important to obtain their informed consent to the sharing of personal information necessary for their care between the youth workers and other partners. This information sharing must never be detrimental to the person.

80 Since early 2020, it has become clear that all meetings must comply with the health constraints imposed by provincial and federal governments in order to manage the pandemic (COVID-19).

81 The information and consent form presented in the appendix is the one initially used for the SPHÈRES program in Greater Montreal. It must be read and understood so that the issues related to the sharing of personal information, particularly those associated with the duty to report any sexually exploitative situation involving a minor (sections 38(d) and 39.1, YPA), are indicated in order to obtain the person's free and informed consent.

The duty to maintain confidentiality is rooted in the fundamental value of privacy. However, this principle may be violated if the safety or development of a person is or risks being compromised. In the case of sexual abuse, as defined in section 38(d) of the YPA, section 39.1 of the same law requires it.⁸²

After the initial meeting, youth workers support the persons being helped in their change process. The number of persons being followed by one youth worker varies according to the frequency of meetings, travel, activities carried out, mutual availability and the intensity of the support.

Follow-up and communication methods

Follow-ups of SPHÈRES program participants are normally done in person.⁸³ Depending on the needs of the persons being helped and the circumstances, these meetings may be held at the offices of the partner organizations or in public places (e.g., restaurant, park, recreation centre, etc.). In the latter case, the youth worker makes every effort to ensure the confidentiality of the discussions. If circumstances do not allow for a face-to-face meeting, a teleconference or videoconference (e.g., Skype, FaceTime, etc.) may be arranged. Follow-ups are adapted to each participant's needs, therefore the pace of the meetings and communications will vary according to the participant's characteristics, needs, risks and circumstances.

The preferred method of communication between youth workers and participants is by cell phone (calls, text messages and Messenger). Youth workers will ask the persons being helped to enter their names as contacts into their cell phones. An elastic bracelet discretely displaying the phone number of the youth worker assigned to the follow-up of the person being helped could also be provided. If necessary, the persons being helped are asked to wear this bracelet at all times in order to have this phone number on them in case they lose their cell phone or have it seized by someone they know (e.g., violent partner, pimp, gang member, etc.).

Once a meeting is scheduled, youth workers inform the persons being helped that if they are unable to attend the meeting, they must notify the youth worker by phone or text message as soon as possible. If they do not show up at the scheduled time without notifying their youth worker, the youth worker will wait for about 15 minutes before leaving the agreed-upon meeting place. The youth worker will then contact the person being helped to inquire about the reason for the absence and arrange a new meeting. A strategy is established with the person being helped to ensure that a similar situation does not recur.⁸⁴ In the interest of "empowering" the persons being helped, youth workers will encourage them to determine their own strategies for meeting their commitments to the SPHÈRES program.

When persons being helped can no longer be contacted, the youth workers assigned to their follow-ups will try again a maximum of two times. This renewed effort aims to verify what is going on and assess their motivation to continue with the SPHÈRES program. In the event that the intervention team still cannot contact the person being helped, the follow-up for this individual becomes inactive. If a break is agreed upon between the youth worker and person being helped, the terms for resuming contact are determined. In the interest of "empowering" the person being helped, the youth worker will once again encourage this person to determine the conditions for his or her return to the SPHÈRES program.

Besides the voluntary withdrawal of a participant, a follow-up becomes inactive if the intervention team believes that the person is no longer benefitting from SPHÈRES program services⁸⁵ or the program is no longer able to adequately meet the person's needs. A follow-up may also become inactive if the intervention team believes that a person is using his or her participation in the program for purposes other than the reduction of harms associated with the commodification of sexual services and the improvement of his or her lifestyle.⁸⁶

A follow-up is completed when the person being helped and intervention team consider the achievements targeted by the psychosocial follow-up provided by the SPHÈRES program to be consolidated, the new lifestyle habits resulting from the program

⁸² Section 72.6 stipulates that confidential information may be disclosed without a person's consent to any individual, organization or institution with responsibilities under the YPA (or which must collaborate with the DYP) and to courts called upon to render decisions regarding a child, when such disclosure is necessary to enforce the law.

⁸³ Since early 2020, it has become clear that all meetings must comply with the health constraints imposed by provincial and federal governments in order to manage the pandemic (COVID-19).

⁸⁴ For example, text messages are exchanged the day before to confirm the meeting.

⁸⁵ This happens when, for example, a person is simply going through the motions or stops making progress.

⁸⁶ This happens when, for example, a person participates in the SPHÈRES program in order to regain custody of her children in the care of the DYP or to avoid legal proceedings, without recognizing that these situations can be considered harms or the consequences of selling their sexual services.

become part of a new lifestyle, and the strategies developed to prevent setbacks have been integrated. Again, to encourage the principle of “empowerment,” persons being helped are encouraged to judge for themselves whether or not it is worthwhile to continue their involvement in the SPHÈRES program.

All follow-ups may be reactivated at any time. The SPHÈRES program is designed to support and coach individuals who commodify their sexual services for as long as they need it.

Youth workers record the actions carried out with participants receiving follow-ups in a computer file (in the appendix, see the progress notes Excel file and instructions for filling it out). These notes are used to quantify how the follow-ups are carried out (e.g., duration, frequency, intensity, nature of the interventions and activities, etc.) and document what is done or not done as part of the follow-ups (e.g., meetings, phone conversations, discussions with other youth workers involved with the participants, etc.). They also make it possible to quickly identify the participants with whom the intervention team loses contact (e.g., who, when, why, for how long, etc.).⁸⁷

Coaching and support

The psychosocial follow-ups of the persons being helped by the SPHÈRES program involve coaching guided by the *My Stratosphere Youth Worker Notebook*.

The procedures established in the *My Stratosphere Youth Worker Notebook* have the following goals:

- Agree on the follow-up methods.
- Respond to the urgent and crucial needs of the persons being helped.
- Identify the needs being affected (or not being met) by lifestyle habits and behaviour associated with the commodification of sexual services of the persons being helped.
- Develop strategies to meet the needs of the persons being helped without compromising their safety or development.
- Facilitate the resumption or maintenance of links between the persons being helped and their network of caregivers and professionals as well as community resources.
- Allow the persons being helped to reflect on situations that could compromise their safety or development and install a safety net to protect themselves.
- Encourage the persons being helped to build a positive identity, exercise their power to act and develop their autonomy.
- Enable the persons being helped to set goals and develop stimulating life plans that promote the achievement of their personal aspirations and improvement of their overall well-being.

To learn more about the strategies and intervention tools used to coach and support persons being helped by the SPHÈRES program, please consult the *My Stratosphere Youth Worker Notebook – SPHÈRES Program*.⁸⁸

Financing clinical activities to support change



In the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program, the cost of certain clinical, recreational and cultural activities (e.g., registration for professional training sessions and the purchase of reflection and discussion tools) were covered by the grant awarded to the IUJD and its partners by the NCPS's Crime Prevention Action Fund (CPAF).⁸⁹ Other costs incurred, such as meals,⁹⁰ taxis, temporary hotel accommodations, and the purchase of a computer or equipment required for professional training, were assumed by the Fondation des jeunes de la DPJ⁹¹ and partner organizations of the SPHÈRES program. Without these invaluable financial investments, many of the interventions supporting the change process of participants could not have been carried out.

⁸⁷ For the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program, the progress notes Excel file is also used as a database for the evaluative research.

⁸⁸ Gélinas, N., Brisebois, R.-A., and Fredette, C. (2022). *My Stratosphere Youth Worker Notebook – SPHÈRES Program*. Quebec, Montreal: Institut universitaire Jeunes en difficulté de the Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal.

⁸⁹ Appendix D of the CPAF form outlines the type of eligible expenses. Expense eligibility is subject to the discretion of the NCPS program officer assigned to manage the project.

⁹⁰ In the initial SPHÈRES program implemented in Greater Montreal, the NCPS's CPAF did not reimburse meal expenses related to follow-up meetings between the persons being helped and youth workers. The Fondation des jeunes de la DPJ generously provided numerous gift cards to cover these costs.

⁹¹ <https://www.fondationjeunesdpj.ca/en/>

It is essential to allocate funds for the full or partial reimbursement (depending on the situation and circumstances of the persons being helped⁹²) of the costs required to conduct clinical, recreational and cultural activities. The funds must be managed according to certain criteria, such as the flexibility, boldness and creativity of the activities for which these funds will be used. For example, consideration must be given to the appropriateness and feasibility of funding participants (rather than a service structure) in order to be able to tailor clinical activities to the specific needs of each individual.

Shared funding between SPHÈRES program partners and private foundations is undoubtedly a viable solution. For example, soliciting Quebec entrepreneurs who are able to sponsor certain costs, such as restaurant meals, transportation costs, overnight stays in hotels, a new wardrobe for a return to work or the purchase of baby clothes and accessories for the arrival of a new child could also be considered a financing option.

Evaluative research

Evaluating an intervention program is not a luxury, but a necessity.

The SPHÈRES program implemented in Greater Montreal (2017-2022) was the subject of evaluative research (2018-2022)⁹³ financed by Public Safety Canada's Crime Prevention Action Fund as part of the National Crime Prevention Strategy.⁹⁴

The main objectives of the original program evaluation were to study the following:

- 1) The program's implementation process
- 2) The assessments and impacts of the individual psychosocial follow-ups conducted with participants
- 3) The broader impact of the program on the clinical practice of youth workers and their partners
- 4) The costs of the program

An **implementation evaluation** makes it possible to document the deployment of a program and assess the quality of its implementation. Although this is always relevant, it is even more so for a program such as SPHÈRES which proposes new ways of working with people who are being sexually exploited. The exercise creates the opportunity, if required, to immediately redefine the ways in which the program is implemented to ensure that the activities carried out truly correspond to the needs of participants and are consistent with the common intervention framework established. The implementation evaluation focuses on the program's ability to recruit the number and type of participants expected and to avoid an excessively high dropout rate.⁹⁵ It also takes into account the frequency of meetings, their duration and the nature of the activities offered to participants. Data is collected in the progress notes Excel file that youth workers fill out (see the appendix).

Individual interviews with youth workers on the Clinical Committee and managers on the Steering Committee are also conducted in order to evaluate the extent to which the principles and values of the SPHÈRES program are being respected. These interviews make it possible to document the subjective assessments of the partners regarding the accuracy of the implementation and the effects of the SPHÈRES program. Finally, the implementation evaluation focuses on contextual aspects that help or hinder the deployment of the SPHÈRES program and the strategies used to meet the challenges encountered.

In addition, an **effect evaluation** is performed based on a contribution analysis,⁹⁶ which aims to determine the extent to which the SPHÈRES program plays a role in the changes observed in the participants. To do so, subjective assessments are collected through annual qualitative interviews with a sample of participants. Self-reported data is also collected at least twice during their time in the program using validated instruments that measure changes related to program targets. The clinical notes

92 In an effort to promote a sense of "empowerment," persons being helped are encouraged to make a financial contribution to cover certain costs related to the activities proposed to them in order to support the development of their autonomy. However, the precarious financial position in which many of them find themselves requires financial assistance to ensure that the costs associated with their change process do not constitute grounds for their return to commodifying their sexual services.

93 Turcotte, M., Hébert, S.T., and Lafortune, D. (2018).

94 The initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program was also funded by the CPAF. The program's management team was required to submit annual performance reports to the administrative officer responsible for monitoring the program.

95 Sexually exploited persons represent a highly mobile group with significant related problems, which has an impact on the ability of the SPHÈRES program to retain participants.

96 Mayne, J. (2008). *Contribution Analysis: An Approach to Exploring Cause and Effect*. Initiative Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Brief, 16.

of youth workers on the psychosocial follow-ups and the changes that they perceive in the persons being helped provide context to the effects of the program reported by the interviewees.

Preliminary results of the effect evaluation

The first collection of quantitative self-reported data from 40 individuals provides a portrait of participants at the beginning of the program.

This portrait confirms the complexity of the profiles and needs of the persons referred to the program. Participants generally have cognitive difficulties, post-traumatic symptoms and the feeling of having little control over their lives. Their motivation to change is low given that every participant is in the precontemplation stage.

The main aspects of their profile that are more positive and can act as levers for intervention are their identity and social group. The persons being helped have a positive self-image overall and feel that they are well surrounded by people who can help them.

The sample at time 2 (n = 15) is too small to draw conclusions, but nevertheless suggests improvements in all these “spheres” of life. Therefore, the SPHÈRES program could help resolve some of the difficulties standing in the way of stopping the commodification of sexual services.

Despite the challenges posed by the target clientele, persons who participate in the SPHÈRES program are very satisfied (n = 36 qualitative interviews). With the average length of a follow-up during the program being a little over two years, the young people that were met were able to explain how SPHÈRES youth workers managed to convince them to make changes in their lives. It seems that young people initially appreciate the possibility of confiding in someone without any consequences for their activities related to selling sex. They then become more open to the influence of their SPHÈRES youth worker as they notice the extent to which the advice they are given, once followed, produces positive effects. The openness and approach of the SPHÈRES youth worker creates a non-judgmental environment which enables young people to feel free exploring the kind of person they want to become and weigh the pros and cons of prostitution. Certain events that occur during their time in the program (e.g., resolving conflicts with their parents, becoming parents themselves, running away, etc.) are often decisive in convincing them to actively try to get out of prostitution.

Finally, a descriptive analysis of the costs associated with the SPHÈRES program will be conducted to determine whether its deployment and implementation are within budgetary norms. To do so, financial data related to the program’s implementation is collected from the quarterly financial statements and annual reports prepared by the management and clinical coordination team. The analysis focuses exclusively on the cost details by budgetary item and the total expenses incurred by the SPHÈRES program for each fiscal year (2017-2022).⁹⁷

The evaluative research has received ethical approval, and the volunteers – managers, youth workers and SPHÈRES participants – signed an information and consent form (see the appendix). This form is kept in a secure location by the research coordinator in accordance with research ethics principles.

To ensure the sustainability of the SPHÈRES program, it is wisely recommended that the program undergo a thorough evaluation, particularly in terms of its effectiveness, by creating a control group for comparison purposes. It is suggested that a research team from a CIUSSS, university, research centre or research chair be involved in evaluating the program’s implementation, interventions and impact. Research is necessary for the implementation and sustainability of any large-scale intervention program such as SPHÈRES. It makes it possible to evaluate the program’s performance (i.e., cost effectiveness) and make the necessary adjustments to ensure that the actions of the SPHÈRES program are truly based on practices that are considered promising and supported by scientific knowledge.

⁹⁷ The costs related to the regular provision of services by SPHÈRES partner organizations are subtracted from the calculations.

Issues, challenges and recommendations

The implementation and sustainability of the SPHÈRES program raises multiple challenges and issues that cannot be ignored. Firstly, there are those related to the following aspects:

- Management and clinical coordination of the program
- Employment status of the youth workers
- Sharing of personal information between partners
- Nature and funding of clinical activities for the persons being helped

These issues and challenges have been mentioned previously, and recommendations have been made.

However, there are other issues and challenges that are just as important, including the following:

- Adherence to the common intervention framework for sexual exploitation and the guiding principles of the SPHÈRES program
- Recognition and outreach of the program in terms of state governance
- Stability of the membership on the steering and clinical committees
- Retention of youth workers involved with sexually exploited persons who receive services from the program

Finally, we cannot turn a blind eye to the issues and challenges related to the support and human and financial resources required to implement the SPHÈRES program in other regions of Quebec.

Adherence to the common intervention framework and guiding principles

The most important challenge to overcome is undoubtedly the accreditation of organizations, their managers and the youth workers to the common intervention framework for sexually exploited minors and adults⁹⁸ and the guiding principles on which the SPHÈRES program is based. Although these principles seem to be accepted in theory, they are not always applied faithfully or without conflict. In such cases, gaps are highlighted between what the SPHÈRES program theoretically requires and what is actually realized in practice. The litmus test of reality seems to affect the degree of adherence to implementing the prescribed components of the SPHÈRES program.

The SPHÈRES program requires organizations, their managers and their youth workers to adapt their clinical and management practices to the guiding principles and values that underlie its framework, even if this means deviating from their mission and the normal provision of their services. For example, institutional partners must agree to prioritize meeting needs and reducing harm, not just managing risk at all costs, even with minors. Community partners, meanwhile, must accept that managing situations that could be compromised may sometimes require going against the pace and wishes of the persons being helped.

Respecting the paradigms of the approaches favoured by the SPHÈRES program raises issues that remain unresolved regarding the duty to report sexually exploitative situations involving minors, the management of communications between youth workers and runaways, denunciations in the event of non-compliance with a court order, and the sharing of personal information. These issues are directly related to the moral conflicts raised by sexual exploitation interventions. To this day, there is an implicitly dual perception of the sexually exploited person. The perception of the victim (often a minor), who requires protection despite his or her wishes, is still in conflict with the perception of the willing sex worker (often an adult), who is free to choose whether to be helped or not. The moral acceptability and personal value-based beliefs (rather than research-derived data) associated with the sex industry, the commodification of sexual services, and sexual exploitation impede the adoption of effective policies. They hinder the implementation of programs that can save lives, not just physically, but more importantly, existentially: living freely and autonomously in decent living conditions that serve the person's physical, psychological and social well-being.

98 See Brisebois, R.-A. and Fredette, C. (2021).

The SPHÈRES program is based on the idea that a sexually exploited person, whether a minor or an adult, is both a victim of violence who must be cared for AND a person who is free to make choices, however risky they may be for his or her safety. As a result, the SPHÈRES program focuses on the ability of sexually exploited persons to change the course of, and regain control over, their lives from a harm reduction perspective (i.e., pragmatic and humane) rather than a prohibition perspective (i.e., control and alienation), whose harms greatly outweigh its health, social and economic benefits.

Based on findings in the scientific literature, the SPHÈRES program has adopted the following approach: instead of simply managing the risks to which sexually exploited minors and adults are exposed, it is more effective to support, in a concerted manner, their ability to make choices that are good for them and their power to solve their problems, whatever they may be.

In summary, the SPHÈRES program believes that the most effective approach consists of supporting these persons so that they can reduce or even eliminate the harms that threaten their safety and development. The SPHÈRES program considers the best strategy to ensure the protection of sexually exploited minors and adults to be the development of their autonomy so that they can avoid ending up on the street or staying there. To achieve this, they must be exposed to every opportunity to test their judgment, practise making choices, assert themselves, develop their social skills and exercise their power to act, not only in a static environment that ensures their safety, but also in a safe, dynamic environment as proposed by the SPHÈRES program.

"Sometimes the biggest risk is not taking any."

Paul Journet, Quebec editorial writer for La Presse

The senior management of the institutional and community partner organizations must publicly take a position in favour of the SPHÈRES program's sexual exploitation framework, which is based on practices that have proven to be effective. It must make the necessary representations to the governing bodies, including the provincial ministries of health and social services and public safety, so that the guiding principles of SPHÈRES set out the actions taken to fight sexual exploitation in Quebec.

Government recognition and outreach

The second challenge, closely related to the first, concerns the recognition of SPHÈRES by the political authorities governing the program's partner organizations and its outreach to these authorities, including the Quebec government's health and social services and public safety ministries. It is surprising that the SPHÈRES program has received so little attention from the commissioners in charge of the CSESM, whose report was tabled in December 2020.⁹⁹ The SPHÈRES program was not included in any specific recommendations, even though it addresses the concerns of the CSESM by contributing considerably to the awareness and training of the various youth workers involved in the fight against sexual exploitation as well as the concerted efforts addressing prevention, repression, self-reconstruction and rehabilitation. Yet, SPHÈRES is the only program to bring together all the organizations that have been working for over two decades to make the fight against sexual exploitation a national priority.¹⁰⁰ The architects of the SPHÈRES program clearly have a wealth of expertise in addressing sexual exploitation, whether it involves training, partnerships or promising practices. This expertise deserves to be more widely known and politically recognized.

⁹⁹ CSESM report, December 2020.

¹⁰⁰ Several initiatives to combat sexual exploitation since the early 2000s by partner organizations of the initial SPHÈRES program have paved the way for the development of multiple training sessions as well as prevention and intervention programs in the Greater Montreal area, Quebec City and other administrative regions of the province.

The senior management of the institutional and community partner organizations must also make the necessary representations to the political authorities that govern them, including the health and safety and public safety ministries, so that the SPHÈRES program is a leader in the development of the action plan to implement the recommendations of the CSESM.

The third challenge, which undoubtedly explains the second, is the absence of a real communication plan to effectively promote the SPHÈRES program to the general public, institutional and community intervention environments in other regions of Quebec, and political authorities. At the moment, no communication activity is planned to inform the general public, targeted populations and government authorities. In addition, the SPHÈRES program website (<https://spheresprojet.com/en/>) is incomplete and lacking in features.

The SPHÈRES Steering Committee must use the services of a communication specialist in order to develop and implement an annual communication plan to increase its outreach and facilitate its promotion. It should also consider hiring a web specialist to optimize its website and keep it up to date, as it is an important promotional tool.

The stability of decision-making bodies and retention of youth workers

Another serious challenge associated with the implementation and sustainability of the SPHÈRES program concerns the stability of the members serving on the steering and clinical committees of the partner organizations and the retention of the youth workers providing services to participants as part of the program.

The importance of this stability for the development and implementation of a program of such scope cannot be disputed. It ensures not only adherence to the framework which constitutes its basis, but also consistency in the decisions taken to promote its deployment and guarantee the quality of the personal, clinical and administrative supervision of the youth workers at the partner organizations involved in the direct provision of services.

Partner organizations must ensure that the SPHÈRES program is among their organizational priorities and that managers and youth workers representing them on the steering and clinical committees are committed to the program for a considerable period of time. They must appoint a second representative who is consistently aware of the commitments made by their organization. If a departure is inevitable, a replacement is quickly installed, thereby avoiding a discontinuity in decision-making and a slowing of operations.

Changes to the team of youth workers are also not without consequences when it comes to the quality of individualized psychosocial follow-ups with persons being helped in the SPHÈRES program. The establishment of a therapeutic relationship and its underlying bond of trust take time and are particularly complex with a troubled population such as sexually exploited minors and adults.

While there are several reasons to explain the turnover rate among the team of youth workers in the SPHÈRES program (e.g., parental leaves, new employment opportunities, employment status, working conditions, circumstances surrounding the “lending of services,” precariousness, etc.), compassion fatigue deserves special attention. Working with trauma victims is not without consequences. It exposes youth workers to the risk of being traumatized themselves. Therefore, it is also important to take care of them in order to prevent burnout, loss of empathy, a deterioration of their personal and professional lives, presenteeism, decreased productivity, work stoppages and the onset of PTSD.¹⁰¹

101 See Geoffrion, S., Goncalves, J., Marchand, A., Boyer, R., Marchand, A., Corbiere, M., and Guay, S. (2018). Post-traumatic Reactions and Their Predictors among Workers Who Experienced Serious Violent Acts: Are There Sex Differences? *Annals of Work Exposures and Health*, 62 (4): 465-474.

Managers sitting on the Steering Committee, the person in charge of the management and clinical coordination of the SPHÈRES program, youth workers, and other Clinical Committee members must be aware of and trained in vicarious trauma or compassion fatigue.¹⁰²

Managers sitting on the Steering Committee and the person in charge of the management and clinical coordination of the SPHÈRES program must ensure that youth workers and other Clinical Committee members have access to supervision (individual or group) that allows them to develop and implement a personal safety plan and “vent” on a regular basis. These moments of supervision should be opportunities solely reserved for psychological debriefing (i.e., separate from clinical and administrative supervision).

Support for the implementation of the SPHÈRES program

Finally, the last major issue concerns the human and financial resources that will be required not only for the sustainability of the SPHÈRES program in Greater Montreal, but also for its implementation in other regions of Quebec. The establishment of the program will require significant support from the organizations in other regions that wish to implement it.

The persons most sought after by these organizations will probably be those in charge of managing and coordinating the program, youth workers and other members of the Clinical Committee. These people undoubtedly have the technical knowledge and experience necessary to support the implementation of the SPHÈRES program in other parts of Quebec. The issue is not one of expertise, but rather the human and financial resources that this will require.

Support for the implementation of the SPHÈRES program should never compromise the sustainability of the program initially tested in Greater Montreal. Moreover, it is important to reflect on recurring financing strategies for the SPHÈRES program in Montreal and its surroundings in order to be able to maintain the expertise developed by the professionals in the initial program.

The senior management of the institutional and community partner organizations must make the necessary representations to the political authorities that govern them, including the health and safety and public safety ministries, so that the SPHÈRES program obtains the necessary and recurring financial resources to sustain its operations in Greater Montreal and support its implementation in other regions of Quebec.

Conclusion

The creators of the SPHÈRES program share the conviction that the innovative approach proposed merits widespread adoption throughout the province of Quebec in order to lessen the prevalence of sexual exploitation and reduce its harms. The challenges associated with its implementation and sustainability mentioned above need to be addressed so that an effective participatory and collaborative intervention for cases of sexual exploitation is maintained in the Greater Montreal area and deployed in other administrative regions of Quebec.

The SPHÈRES program relies on the close collaboration of institutional and community partners to support the change efforts of sexually exploited persons. Its goal is to effectively support, in a concerted manner, their ability to make choices that are good for them and their power to solve their problems, whatever they may be.

The humanistic values of empowerment and mobilization as well as respect for the integrity, multitude of experiences, pace and safety of sexually exploited persons, are the basic foundations of the SPHÈRES program. Anyone wishing to implement the SPHÈRES program shall respect and promote its fundamental values.

¹⁰² Visit <https://violencetravail.criusmm.net/en/>.

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Appendixes

Youth worker onboarding protocol

The person in charge of the management and clinical coordination of the SPHÈRES program must provide youth workers with the following:

- The cell phone number of the SPHÈRES program
- The contact information of the youth workers and other professionals on the Clinical Committee
- The contact information of Steering Committee members
- The contact information of Extended Committee members
- A laptop computer or tablet
- Access to a secure computer network that allows the update of the list of SPHÈRES program participants and their contact information, the completion of files used for progress notes and the saving of consent forms for persons involved in the SPHÈRES program, all in compliance of the *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information*
- Passwords to access the secure files of progress notes and consent forms of the persons involved in the SPHÈRES program
- A business card with general contact information (phone number and email address) for the SPHÈRES program
- Promotional tools (postcards and information leaflets) for the SPHÈRES program in all the languages of those who could benefit from the program's services
- The My Stratosphere *youth worker notebook*
- The *Support Guide for the Implementation and Sustainability of the SPHÈRES Program*
- A petty cash fund to reimburse the travel expenses of the youth workers¹⁰³

Once a youth worker joins the SPHÈRES clinical team, the person in charge of management and clinical coordination must do the following:

- Introduce the program to the youth worker.
- Give the youth worker a copy of the My Stratosphere *youth worker notebook*.
- Give the youth worker a laptop computer (or tablet) and a cell phone.
- Plan the necessary meetings to coach the youth worker as he or she becomes familiar with the SPHÈRES program.
- Plan SPHÈRES training sessions which the youth worker must attend.
- Ask the youth worker to make note of the dates and times of the weekly Clinical Committee meetings in his or her calendar.
- Provide the youth worker with the contact information of the other youth workers and professionals on the Clinical Committee.
- Plan activities to integrate the youth worker into the program, such as onboarding meetings.
- Provide the youth worker with access to a secure computer network to be able to save consent forms for participation in the SPHÈRES program and to fill out the progress notes.
- Provide the youth worker with passwords for the secure files of progress notes and consent forms for SPHÈRES program participants.
- Provide the youth worker with all other relevant and necessary information for the provision of services.
- Provide the youth worker with business cards showing his or her contact information (phone number and email address) if the youth worker does not have one.
- Provide the youth worker with promotional tools (postcards and information leaflets) for the SPHÈRES program to be used for promotional activities.
- Present the evaluative research to the youth worker and explain his or her role in its completion.

¹⁰³ In the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program in the Greater Montreal area, the petty cash fund was managed by partner organization L'Anonyme.

Sample posting for youth worker position

SPHÈRES Project: Posting Section 6.06, E) Local Arrangements APTS

Educator – CIUSSS Youth worker position

Duration:	Two years
Status:	Part-time (28 hours/week)
Directorate:	Direction du programme jeunesse
Branch:	Service de réadaptation à l'adolescence
Workplace:	9335 Saint-Hubert Street, Montreal
Posting period:	March 13-28, 2020

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SPHÈRES has been established to support young Montrealers aged 12 to 24 who find themselves in sexually exploitative situations. The intervention provided is a personalized approach focused on their needs and aspirations. Youth participation is voluntary, meaning that they must recognize that they are engaged in sexual activities that they perceive as problematic. The SPHÈRES project relies on the collaboration between institutional and community resources in order to support these young people in their efforts to change, build a positive identity, develop their autonomy and find their place. The general objective of the SPHÈRES project is to encourage partnerships and the development of concerted actions in order to help young people meet their needs in ways other than through their involvement in sexually exploitative behaviour.

JOB DESCRIPTION

The successful candidate will conduct interventions, according to the appropriate legal framework and taking into account different clinical programs, with young people experiencing problems associated with sexual exploitation in an effort to help them learn and adopt more appropriate behaviour.

In general, interventions are aimed at young boys and girls 12 to 24 years of age.

The youth worker must perform personalized follow-ups with young victims of sexual exploitation, ensure their safety, support them, refer them to appropriate resources and provide them with positive experiences. He or she will also provide support and personalized advice to youth workers conducting interventions with sexually exploited persons as well as group information and awareness sessions on preferred interventions. The youth worker may also act as the institution's representative with partner organizations.

Working for a university institute, the youth worker must support new staff and interns in their learning and participate in activities related to the university affiliation.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

The youth worker directly educates and rehabilitates users in institutional or external environments according to established intervention programs in collaboration with the team of professionals in place, all in an effort to reintegrate such individuals into society. He or she applies educational techniques using actions from daily life and organizes, coordinates and hosts program activities to ensure the learning and acquisition of appropriate attitudes and behaviour. The youth worker observes and analyzes the behaviour of users, helps evaluate their needs and abilities, and notes their evolution by completing the appropriate documents. He or she is responsible for scheduling the necessary activities.

CLASS 01

The successful candidate must hold a college-level diploma (DCS) in special education techniques or delinquency intervention techniques from a school recognized by the appropriate ministry. This class also includes persons who hold a certificate of collegial studies in special education techniques or institutional rehabilitation.

CLASS 02

This person must have completed fourteen (14) years of general education recognized by the appropriate ministry or Certificate of Qualified Executive Childhood Educator recognized by the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and the appropriate ministry, and/or have completed fifty per cent (50%) of the general course leading to the official diploma in institutional rehabilitation or special education (CEGEP course).

CLASS 03

This person must hold a high school diploma recognized by the appropriate ministry.

One (1) completed year of higher education, recognized by the appropriate ministry, entitles the holder to one (1) additional grade up to fourteen (14) years of education.

No current or future employees may request to be classified below this position.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Must have a full-time or part-time position (refer to section 6.06E)
- Must have a valid driver's licence

The selection process will be conducted through an interview. The passing grade is 70%.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES REQUIRED

- Leadership (40%):
 - Local support for various legal actions related to sexual exploitation, pimping and human trafficking
- Clinical interventions (60%):
 - In-depth knowledge of the issues (the cycle of sexual exploitation)
 - Mastery of the legal framework: the sections of the various laws related to sexual exploitation, pimping and human trafficking
 - Mastery of the judicial process related to sexual exploitation, pimping and human trafficking

Interested candidates should submit their resume with a cover letter (one page maximum) **by March 28** showing the following information: AP-2020-01-SPHÈRES: SPHÈRES project, Direction du programme jeunesse, to the attention of [name and contact information of the person responsible]. **Interviews will be held during the week of March 30 to April 3, 2020.**

Sample job interview

Interview guide – Educator – SPHÈRES project

HIRING INTERVIEW PROCEDURE:

1. Inform the candidate how the interview will be conducted.

- Introduction of the committee members:
 - ➔ Objective of the meeting
 - ➔ Assessment of the candidate's skills

2. Proceed with the actual interview.

- ➔ The two committee members will speak.
- ➔ Open-ended questions
- ➔ Situational exercises
- ➔ Duration: 45 minutes
- ➔ Take notes in order to produce a report that accurately reflects the candidate's performance, skills and knowledge.
- ➔ At the end of the interview, there will be a period during which you can ask questions, adjust the points that you feel should be revisited and give us your assessment of the interview.
- Part I: Candidate's presentation (professional background, interests and motivation) - 10 minutes
- Part II: Common core of skills
 - ➔ Individual situational exercises
- Part III: Skills required for the job

3. Questions from the candidate

4. Reminder of the next steps in the hiring process

5. End of the interview

INTRODUCTION	POINTS TO NOTE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of the committee members (very brief) • Before I explain how the interview will be conducted, I would like to ask those who have not already done so to please turn off their cell phones. Thank you! Today's meeting will last approximately 45 minutes. • Throughout the interview, we will be taking notes. At the end, if you have any questions, feel free to ask them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuality • Attire • Presentation • Attitude 	
CANDIDATE'S PRESENTATION		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe how your work experience and education have prepared you for the position for which you are applying (maximum of two minutes). 2. What is your perception of the issues and challenges you will face in this position? 3. What actions and strategies will you put in place in the short, medium and long term following your appointment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation, interest • Ability to summarize information • Leadership • Link between previous experience and that requested • Oral communication 	
<p>Notes:</p>		

QUESTIONS AND SITUATIONAL EXERCISES		
<p>1. Knowledge of the institution and the role of the SPHÈRES educator Tell us what you know about the SPHÈRES project. How did you learn about this project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation, interest and perception of the position • Self-knowledge • Application of clinical intervention 	
<p>Notes:</p>		
<p>2. Situational exercise: As a SPHÈRES project manager, you are asked to make a presentation to a coordinating group to talk about the project's philosophy. However, the people gathered around the table do not share your point of view at all, and what they say goes against the project's values. How do you position yourself?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership 	
<p>Notes:</p>		

<p>3. Situational exercise:</p> <p>You work in partnership with schools. One of them approaches you about a report of sexual exploitation involving a youth. This report was dismissed by the DYP.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How will you position yourself? 2. What support could you offer? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Application of clinical intervention 	
<p>Notes:</p>		
<p>4. Situational exercise:</p> <p>A youth to whom you are providing counselling has been the victim of multiple sexual assaults. She wants to file a complaint. How would you explain to her the steps involved and how the entire process works?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of clinical intervention 	
<p>Notes:</p>		
<p>5. Situational exercise:</p> <p>You have been working with David, age 15, for almost six months, but the youth is no longer answering his phone nor coming to appointments. His participation in the program is voluntary.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your interpretation of his behaviour? 2. How will you try to engage him? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of clinical intervention 	
<p>Notes:</p>		
<p>6. What sexually exploitative situation would you find most challenging?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What would be your limitations? 2. How would you provide an appropriate intervention? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Application of clinical intervention 	
<p>Notes:</p>		

<p>7. Tell us about an experience in which you made mistakes that had a major impact.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How did you deal with it?2. What did you learn?	• Leadership	
<p>Notes:</p>		
<p>You have answered all the questions we have for you. Do you have any questions for us?</p> <p>Before you go, I would like to remind you that you must be available at the times you confirmed to us during your test.</p> <p>Thank you for meeting with us. For those of you who have not yet submitted their police certificate, it is important to do so, because we will follow up with each of you only when the file is complete, which should be within 10 days.</p>		
<p>Notes and general comments:</p>		

Youth worker departure protocol

Due to the potential turnover rate, it is important to plan a strategy to minimize the impact of a youth worker's departure in order to protect the relationship between the person being helped and the SPHÈRES program. The quality of the transition period between two youth workers is crucial.

Whether the departure is planned or not, it is important that the partner organizations and the person in charge of managing and coordinating the SPHÈRES program ensure the following:

- Appoint a replacement and integrate the person into the program quickly.
 - It is suggested to consult with the intervention team to determine the hiring criteria.
- Ensure that the youth worker who is leaving notifies the project participants with whom he or she is working of his or her departure.
- Redistribute the follow-ups assigned to the youth worker, either to his or her successor or to another member of the intervention team.
 - It is suggested to make sure that the profile of the person succeeding the departing youth worker is compatible with the needs and characteristics of the persons being helped whose follow-ups will be re-assigned to the successor.
 - If the persons being helped have already been in contact with another youth worker, either through an introductory meeting or a group activity, it is suggested to evaluate the potential of this familiar person serving as the successor.
- Ensure that the youth worker leaving the project determines how the follow-ups will be transferred in consultation with the persons being helped.
 - Do they prefer a phone call from the new youth worker?
 - Do they prefer an introductory meeting with the departing youth worker and the successor?
- Ensure that the youth worker completes, before his or her departure, the progress notes concerning the follow-ups of the project participants with whom the person was working.
- Make sure that the outgoing youth worker writes a summary of the situation and the steps taken by the project participants with whom the person was working for the members of the Clinical Committee in order to optimize the continuity of the follow-ups.
- Ensure that the youth worker returns all equipment, teaching aids and clinical materials obtained through the SPHÈRES program (e.g., computer or tablet, cell phone, books, promotional tools, etc.).
- Ensure that the youth worker provides you with all authentication data (e.g. passwords, usernames, answers to security questions) that he or she uses to log in to a device, an online platform or password-protected files in the course of his or her work.

SPHÈRES program promotional tools

INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR PARENTS¹⁰⁴ (FRENCH VERSION)

Les motivations du/ de la jeune à adopter

DES ACTIVITÉS DE prostitution

- Faire de l'argent rapidement;
- Répondre à des besoins fondamentaux (amour, protection, appartenance, etc.);
- Fuir certains problèmes (familiaux, financiers, etc.);
- Arborer un style de vie glamour;
- Se sentir valorisé-e;
- S'amuser;
- Contester l'autorité;
- Explorer ou questionner sa sexualité;
- Payer sa consommation d'alcool et/ou de drogue.

Télex du Guide de prévention et d'intervention en prostitution juvénile, 2008

Des ressources en cas de besoin

Vous soupçonnez votre jeune d'être victime d'exploitation sexuelle?
Vous éprouvez un sentiment d'impuissance et êtes inquiet-ète pour sa sécurité?

Dans ce cas, il est important d'aller chercher de l'aide. Vous n'êtes pas seul-e

Projet Sphères → spheresprojet.com

SPVM → Contactez l'agent socioéconomautaire de votre poste de quartier : 514 280-04XX (les deux derniers chiffres correspondent au numéro de votre poste de quartier) Exemple: Poste de quartier 24 = 514 280-0424

L'Anonyme (sans frais) → 1 855 236-6700

En Marge 12-17 → 514 849-5632

Ligne Parents (sans frais) → 1 800 361-5085

Direction de la protection de la jeunesse
→ 514-896-3100 (français)
→ 514-935-6196 (anglais)

CAVACS Centres d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels (sans frais) → 1 866 532-2822

spheresprojet.com

● SPVM ● L'ANONYME ● EN MARGE 12-17 ● CRUSS ODM ● CCMSTL

LE PETIT GUIDE D'INFORMATION SUR l'exploitation sexuelle

À L'INTENTION DES parents

SPHÈRES

Le projet Sphères vise à accompagner des jeunes de 12 à 24 ans, en situation d'exploitation sexuelle, dans une démarche centrée sur leurs besoins et leurs aspirations.

Savoir plus pour mieux comprendre

QU'ENTEND-ON PAR exploitation sexuelle?

Il peut s'agir d'activités sexuelles en échange d'argent, de services, de faveurs matérielles ou affectives (par exemple de la nourriture, un hébergement, de la drogue ou de l'alcool, des vêtements, un cellulaire, etc.);

Les jeunes filles qui se retrouvent en contexte d'exploitation sexuelle sont souvent en amour avec leur proxénète, aussi appelé pimp. Plusieurs proxénètes utilisent la manipulation et la séduction afin de contrôler leurs victimes;

L'exploitation sexuelle peut se manifester dans divers contextes, notamment les agences d'escortes, les bars de danseuses, les salons de massages érotiques ou encore à travers la pornographie sur internet et les divers réseaux sociaux;

Pour certaines jeunes filles, le fait de faire de la prostitution peut reposer, au départ, sur une entente mutuelle entre deux parties dans laquelle il y aurait un partage des revenus engendrés par les activités prostitutionnelles.

Inspiré de SPVM, 2008 et Ministère de la sécurité publique, 2012

Cycle du recrutement DE L'EXPLOITATION SEXUELLE

1 Situation de détresse
Mélissa se sent rejetée, seule et a besoin d'être aimée. La relation avec ses parents est tendue et elle se chicane souvent avec ses ami-e-s.

2 Rencontre
Mélissa a rencontré Marco dans une fête et elle est tombée en amour. Avec lui et ses amis plus vieux, elle se sent en sécurité et enfin acceptée. Il est si gentil et protecteur.

3 Lune de miel
Après quelques semaines, Marco invite Mélissa à habiter dans son appartement. Il veille à ce qu'elle ne manque de rien, lui achète tout ce dont elle a besoin et même plus! Mélissa vit un vrai rêve.

4 Remboursement
Marco explique à Mélissa qu'il a des problèmes d'argent. Il lui dit qu'elle devrait payer sa part et lui propose d'aller danser dans un bar du centre-ville qu'il connaît bien, puisqu'elle a le corps idéal pour ce job.

5 Exploitation sexuelle
Après quelques semaines à danser nue, Mélissa se voit contrainte de faire plus d'argent. Marco prétend des problèmes financiers. Amoureuse, elle accepte de faire des clients et de lui remettre la totalité de ses revenus.

Ce que je peux faire en tant que parent

- Brisez le silence! Osez parler avec votre jeune.
- Prenez le temps de l'écouter et de lui offrir du soutien.
- Intéressez-vous à son quotidien, à ses activités, à ses fréquentations, etc.
- Établissez des règles et des limites. Soyez cohérent-e, juste et ferme afin de les faire respecter.
- Veillez à ce qu'elle reste active/in en participant à des programmes positifs, dynamiques et supervisés.
- Informez-vous avec votre jeune du phénomène de l'exploitation sexuelle et des gangs de rue.
- Condamnez tout recours à la violence verbale ou physique comme moyen de défense.
- Renforcez son estime de soi en l'aidant à développer ses forces et ses talents.
- Adopter une attitude de non-jugement, désirant mieux comprendre son univers et ses expériences.

À mes parents à lire important

Ça fait déjà un bout que je voulais vous en parler, mais que j'avais trop peur de votre réaction. Je sais que vous n'avez jamais vraiment aimé Marco, mais si vous saviez comme il est cool avec moi. Il est tellement généreux et pense toujours à moi. Par exemple, il paye mon cell et comme ça, il peut me rejoindre en tout temps. Vous voyez bien il ferait tout pour moi et pour me protéger!

Je sais franchement qu'on a quinze ans à peine, alors mieux vaut la vivre pleinement. Je sens que Marco, vu qu'il est plus vieux et toute sa gang pourrait me permettre de vivre des expériences extraordinaires. J'ai jamais rencontré des gens qui avaient autant envie de m'avoir, comme amie. Ça change de l'école pis de mes amies immatures qui ne me comprennent pas du tout!

Tout ça pour vous dire que je compte aller vivre avec mon chum en appartement. Quoi que vous disiez, je vais le faire.

Mélissa

104 This leaflet was used as part of the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program in Greater Montreal. The Marie-Vincent Foundation was not mentioned in it because it was not yet an official partner of the program at the time this tool was produced. To ensure the sustainability of the program, the Foundation's contact information will be added to the leaflet.

POSTCARDS¹⁰⁵ (FRENCH AND ENGLISH VERSIONS)¹⁰⁶

SPHÈRES

Le projet Sphères vise à accompagner des jeunes Montréalais.es de 12 à 24 ans, en situation d'exploitation sexuelle, dans une démarche volontaire centrée sur leurs besoins et leurs aspirations.

ACTIVITÉS
 Suivi personnalisé
 Accompagnements et références vers des ressources adaptées
 Activités et expériences positives
 Soutien aux intervenant.e.s

Ce projet, dont le maître d'œuvre est l'Institut universitaire Jeunes en difficulté, fait l'objet d'une évaluation de processus et d'impact.

Téléphone : 514 896-3590
Spheresprojet.com

● SPVM ● L'ANONYME ● EN MARGE 12-17 ● CODIM ● CCSMTL

Financé par le gouvernement du Canada.

Canada

SPHÈRES

The Sphères project aims to support young Montrealers aged 12 to 24 who are being sexually exploited. The project focuses on the young person's needs and aspirations. Participation is voluntary.

ACTIVITIES
 Personalized counselling
 Support and referrals to specialized resources
 Positive activities and experiences
 Support to educators and youth workers

This project, chaired by the *Institut universitaire Jeunes en difficulté*, is subject to a process and impact assessment.

Telephone : 514 896-3590
Spheresprojet.com

● SPVM ● L'ANONYME ● EN MARGE 12-17 ● CODIM ● CCSMTL

Funded by the Government of Canada.

Canada

¹⁰⁵ These postcards were used in the initial implementation of the SPHÈRES program in Greater Montreal. The Marie-Vincent Foundation was not mentioned because it was not yet an official part of the program at the time these tools were produced. To ensure the sustainability of the program, the Foundation's name will be added.

¹⁰⁶ It is recommended that these promotional tools (information leaflets and postcards) be produced in all the languages spoken by those likely to benefit from the SPHÈRES program, even if its services are provided only in English and French.

Information and consent form – SPHÈRES program

This information and consent form is the one initially used as part of the implementation of the SPHÈRES program in the Greater Montreal area. It must be read and understood so that the issues related to the sharing of personal information, particularly those associated with the duty to report any sexually exploitative situation involving a minor (sections 38(d) and 39.1 of the *Youth Protection Act*), are clearly indicated in order for the participant in the SPHÈRES program to give his or her free and informed consent.

This document provides information about the SPHÈRES intervention project. If there are words or sentences in this document that you do not understand, feel free to ask questions. In order to participate in the SPHÈRES program, you will need to sign the consent form at the end of this document. We will then provide you with a signed and dated copy.



SPHÈRES PROJECT OBJECTIVES

SPHÈRES is aimed at individuals who are involved in activities associated with sexual exploitation. The objective of the project is to reflect on the different spheres of life that are common to all human beings in order to build a future that is consistent with the ambitions and strengths of each participant. As part of the intervention, persons being helped have their needs evaluated before being offered support, an attentive ear and counselling toward the necessary resources.

SPHÈRES PROJECT PARTNERS

- CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (CCSMTL), Centre jeunesse de Montréal – Institut universitaire
- Institut universitaire Jeunes en difficulté (IUJD)
- CIUSSS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal (CODIM), Batshaw Youth and Family Centres
- Montreal police department: Les Survivantes program
- Marie-Vincent Foundation
- En Marge 12-17
- L'Anonyme

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW WITHOUT PREJUDICE

It is understood that your participation in SPHÈRES is completely voluntary and that you are free, at any time, to end your participation without having to justify your decision.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

During your participation in SPHÈRES, youth workers will collect and record information about you in a computer file. Only information necessary for the program's operation will be collected. This information may include the following: name, date of birth, gender, home address, healthy living plan, safety plan, summary of meetings, results of questionnaires that you will be asked to complete during the program, etc. The information collected will only be accessible to members of the Clinical Committee for follow-up purposes.

All information collected will remain strictly confidential within the limits prescribed by Canadian and Quebec laws. Information that can identify individuals participating in the SPHÈRES program will not appear in any documentation.

I agree that the information collected may be used for research as part of the SPHÈRES program in order to evaluate the quality of the services provided. All information collected and forwarded shall be anonymous. In no case will this information allow me to be personally recognized or identified.

FREE AND INFORMED CONSENT

I, _____, declare that I have read and understand this form and have received a copy. I understand the nature of and reason for my participation in SPHÈRES. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, which have been answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby freely agree to participate in the project.

Signature of participant:

In _____ on _____ 20__

DECLARATION OF RESPONSIBILITY

I, _____, a partner of the SPHÈRES project, declare that the persons in charge of the Clinical Committee agree to comply with the duties set out in this document and to also inform you of any aspect that could modify the nature of your consent. I agree to ensure that the objectives of the project are adhered to and to protect the confidentiality of the information.

Signature of SPHÈRES youth worker:

In _____ on _____ 20__

Progress notes Excel file

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THE PROGRESS NOTES EXCEL FILE

“Renseignement” (information) box:

- “ID du jeune” (youth ID) line: The number assigned by the Clinical Committee to the participant (e.g., #2019-02). To assign a number, refer to the list of participants maintained by the designated person in charge.
- “Sexe” (gender) line: Indicate the gender with which the participant identifies.
- “Date de naissance” (date of birth) line
 “Date d’entrée dans le projet” (date of entry in project) line: Indicate the month and year.
- “Évaluation niveau de risque d’implication dans la prostitution au moment de l’admission” (risk assessment of involvement in prostitution at time of admission) line: A subjective assessment of each participant’s level of concern regarding the commodification of sexual services at the beginning of the follow-up in order to understand and analyze the decisions made and interventions advocated
 - The commodification of sexual services is considered dangerous (red light).
 - The commodification of sexual services is considered worrisome (yellow light).
 - The commodification of sexual services is considered safe (green light).
 - There is no commodification of sexual services at the time of admission.

“Passation de l’instrument autorévélé” (administration of self-reporting instrument) box: Allows the research team to quickly identify the participants to be interviewed for the qualitative component for the “temps 1” (first meeting) and “temps 2” (second meeting)

- “Fait?” (done) line: Have the self-reporting questionnaires been administered?
- “Date” line: If yes, when?
- “Réévaluation niveau de risque implication la prostitution” (risk re-assessment of involvement in prostitution): A subjective re-assessment of each participant’s level of concern regarding the commodification of sexual services at the time the self-reporting questionnaires are completed

- The commodification of sexual services is considered dangerous (red light).
- The commodification of sexual services is considered worrisome (yellow light).
- The commodification of sexual services is considered safe (green light).
- There is no commodification of sexual services.

“Suivis” (follow-ups) box: Data on what happens every week, including whether there is no meeting or communication (if there is not, indicate why):

- “Semaine du” (week of) column: Indicate the first day of the follow-up week.
- “N de rencontres en personne” (N face-to-face meetings) column: Number of times the participant was met during the follow-up week
- “Durée des rencontres” (duration of meetings) column: Total time spent in face-to-face meetings with the participant during the follow-up week
- “Autres communications” (other communications) column: Other than face-to-face meetings, indicate other means of communication used to contact the participant (e.g., phone, text message, Messenger, email, etc.).
- “Aucune rencontre/comm. Pourquoi?” (no meeting/comm. Why?) column: Drop-down menu with the following choices: meeting/communication not scheduled, no news, impossible (e.g., closed therapy), withdrawal from project, or other reason
 - If “Other reason” is selected, fill out the following field: “Aucune rencontre/comm. Autre raison, spécifiez” (no meeting/comm. Other reason, specify).
 - For other answers, see the explanations in the sections entitled “Résumé des activités de la semaine/notes qualitatives” (summary of weekly activities/qualitative notes) and “Autres informations pertinentes sur le suivi/notes qualitatives” (other relevant follow-up information/qualitative notes).
- “Activité principale” (main activity) column: Indicate the main follow-up activity conducted during the week (e.g., scheduling a meeting, informal discussions, meeting with a survivor, watching a video, visiting a museum, etc.).
- “Besoin visé” (targeted need) column: Drop-down menu with the following choices: emergency, stability, participation, recovery, relationship¹⁰⁷
- “Satisfaction de l’intervenant” (satisfaction of youth worker) column: Drop-down menu with the following choices: dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied, satisfied, very satisfied
 - Subjective assessment of the youth worker’s level of satisfaction with the follow-up activities conducted during the week
- “Satisfaction du jeune” (satisfaction of participant) column: Drop-down menu with the following choices: dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied, satisfied, very satisfied
 - Subjective assessment of the participant’s level of satisfaction with the follow-up activities conducted as perceived by the youth worker
- “Résumé des activités de la semaine/notes qualitatives” (summary of weekly activities/qualitative notes) column: Summarize in chronological order and in a few sentences what was said and done with the participant during the follow-up week. Begin by specifying the type of activity (e.g., medical, recreational, sports, cultural, social, legal, community, clinical, etc.), then explain why that particular activity or intervention was organized or implemented.
- “Autres informations pertinentes sur le suivi/notes qualitatives” (other relevant follow-up information/qualitative notes) column
- “Notes de suivis sur les autres intervenants au dossier/notes qualitatives” (follow-up notes about other youth workers on case/qualitative notes) column: Summarize in chronological order and in a few sentences the communications made with other youth workers involved with the participant, including the difficulties and challenges encountered.

Worksheets J, J2, J3, etc.: One worksheet per participant so that the youth worker only has to maintain one computer file (J2 = participant no. 2, J3 = participant no. 3, and so on).

¹⁰⁷ Refer to the hierarchy of needs diagram in the *My Stratosphere Youth Worker Notebook*. It outlines general needs, not just those associated with the commodification of sexual services.

Information and consent forms - SPHÈRES research

To obtain consent forms and learn more about the research protocol, please contact the researcher in charge of the project:

Mathilde Turcotte, Lead Researcher: mathilde.turcotte.ccsmtl@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

