

Renata

I would never have got involved if I had known how the strip industry actually works. Sharing the stories from women who have escaped would have helped.

We should be raising consciousness of having healthy self-esteem, self-worth. And the authorities should be aware that a history of trauma is a key predictor of risk of entering the industry – women who have been bullied and abused repeatedly in their lives. The strip industry is certainly well aware of this and uses this trauma to its full advantage.

It's really important to acknowledge what is really going on in the industry. The level of abuse the women go through at strip clubs often puts them in situations where they feel suicidal.

We need to create an environment where dancers who expose the industry will be believed.

You're so used to not being believed and being told we won't be believed – it's just what perpetrators say and do to silence their prey. And the gaslighting by the clubs and by local authorities when they are relicensed again just replicates abusers' behaviours.

Some women desperately want to leave but become trapped – they are used to the money, their lives have been so damaged, they can be brainwashed and conditioned to such a severe degree and they feel they have no other option but to stay.