Susan Dewey, Ph.D., is an applied feminist anthropologist with over a decade of research and consulting experience on sex work, violence against women, and feminized labor. Since receiving her Ph.D. in 2004, she has published widely in these areas, including nine books, several dozen articles and book chapters, as well substantial technical reports for UN Women, the US Census Bureau, and the Wyoming Department of Corrections. Her work has featured in national media outlets such as The Chronicle of Higher Education, PBS, The Huffington Post, The Washington Post, and The Nation. Since 2010 she has conducted research in Denver, Colorado with street-involved women and the social services and criminal justice professionals with whom they regularly interact; this work is the basis for her forthcoming book, with legal scholar Tonia St. Germain, Women of the Street: How the Criminal Justice-Social Services Alliance Fails Women in Prostitution (New York University Press, 2016).

Susan’s scholarly investigations into sex work commenced with her Fulbright Hays-funded dissertation research in India, where she explored young women’s use of intimate labors as a social mobility strategy, and which resulted in her first book, Making Miss India Miss World: Constructing Gender, Power, and the Nation in Postliberalization India (Syracuse University Press, 2008). Her second book, Hollow Bodies: Institutional Responses to Sex Trafficking in Armenia, Bosnia, and India (Kumarian Press, 2008), was based upon her postdoctoral work in Armenia (and later Bosnia-Herzegovina), where she explored how anti-trafficking initiatives impacted individuals involved in a complex amalgamation of international and non-governmental organizations. Her third book, Neon Wasteland: On Love, Motherhood, and Sex Work in a Rust Belt Town (University of California Press, 2011), explored the ethnographic context in which exotic dancers negotiate their lives as parents, family members, and workers in a stigmatized profession. These research experiences inspired Susan to co-author two books about the ethical issues unique to sex work research: Ethical Research with Sex Workers: Anthropological Approaches (with Tiantian Zheng; Springer, 2013) and Sex Workers and Criminalization in North America and China: Ethical and Legal Issues in Exclusionary Regimes (with Tiantian Zheng & Treena Orchard; Springer, 2016).

From 2004-2014 Susan’s research in Fiji, funded by the National Science Foundation, the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, and UN Women, explored the complex role that the feminized labor of market trade plays in how capitalist markets create, reinforce, and subvert ethnic differences and accompanying political rhetoric. This applied ethnographic work produced a substantial number of UN Women reports and will eventually be the subject of a book, tentatively titled Cassava and Bitter Mango: Market Women and the Politics of Everyday Life in Fiji, an ethnographic account of the struggles that women market traders face as they navigate the significant socioeconomic and political challenges that shape their lives and work.

Most recently Susan and colleagues initiated “Wyoming Pathways from Prison,” a multi-faceted feminist collaborative project which aspires to support current and formerly incarcerated women.