



# Welcome to WHAI's Women\* & HIV in Ontario Toolkit

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- ▶ An overview of the toolkit content
- ▶ How to use this Toolkit
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## WELCOME TO THE WHAI TOOLKIT

This toolkit is part of a series created to assist community organizations and their staff to work with women<sup>\*</sup> in Ontario who are living with HIV or who are facing systemic risk factors for HIV transmission.

Let's get started. >>





# Toolkit content



To print tools and resources from this Toolkit please download a copy at:

 [www.whai.ca](http://www.whai.ca)

 = A tool for you to use

## \* WELCOME

- Toolkit Content
- How to use this Toolkit
- Language, gender & statistics
- Symbols to look for
- What is WHAI (Women & HIV/AIDS Initiative)
- How WHAI Works

## 1 WHAT ARE HIV & AIDS: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

- What are HIV and AIDS?
- Is there a cure?
- HIV transmission
- HIV transmission & pregnancy
- Why you should care about women's HIV experiences

## 2 WOMEN\* & HIV IN ONTARIO

- **Women\* and HIV in Ontario:** How many women are living with HIV in Ontario?
- **Community organizations and women\*:** Are women\* accessing programs in our communities?
- What sectors are key in Ontario's HIV response amongst women\*?
- The social determinants of health, women\* and HIV

*This section can be used to build on the introductory information about HIV & women\*, integrating information about structural and social realities impacting HIV, and the role of community organizations in building welcoming, supportive communities*

Coming Fall 2022

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## POPULATIONS OF WOMEN MOST IMPACTED POSTER





*This is a poster highlighting populations of women\* that are disproportionately impacted by HIV and HIV risk due to a range of intersecting social determinants of health. Our hope is that this poster can help foster awareness and knowledge amongst women\* and community, health and social service providers, and help to build inclusive, supportive communities that prevent HIV transmission and provide care and support for those living with HIV.*

*This poster can be used to provide a visual for community organization awareness raising, team discussion and knowledge building, or as a starting point for community conversation.*

*The current version of this poster is draft, and an updated version will be coming in the Fall of 2022.*

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## NEXT STEPS: ACTIVITIES

- **Next Steps Tools & Activities Overview** 
- **A. Social Determinants of Health Activity**
- **B. Self-Assessment For People Who Work In Community Organizations** 
- **C. Organizational-Assessment for Community Organizations**  
- **D. Action Planning for Change Worksheet**



# How to use this Toolkit

## TOOLKIT GOALS

WHA! has created this toolkit to:

- Enhance community capacity to support women\* living with HIV and women\* at systemic risk for contracting HIV
- Build communities that support women\* and their HIV related needs
- Support communities to prevent HIV transmission
- Provide practical tips, tools and strategies so that community organizations can build welcoming community spaces.

## TIPS FOR USING THIS TOOLKIT

Here are some helpful strategies to help you take advantage of this toolkit.

- This toolkit was designed to be completed in stages. Take your time and work through it at your own pace
- Consider completing it with others at your workplace or in your community as part of collective work to build knowledge and skills
- This toolkit is a starting point and you or your organization may discover other learning points and areas for growth. Use the notes pages and let your local WHA! worker know if you have any feedback.

## LANGUAGE, GENDER & STATISTICS

### \*Women

WHA! strives to be inclusive and to reflect the advancement of gender-inclusive language in all of our work. Our work aims to be inclusive of all femme people including Trans and Non-Binary femme people, people who were designated or assigned female at birth, people who are female-identified that are Trans or Non-Binary, and people that are on the Transfeminine spectrum. We recognize that femme people face particular realities that impact risk for HIV, and health outcomes for those living with HIV.

## SYMBOLS TO LOOK FOR

This toolkit has been divided into modules to help find information about women's HIV related needs.



Custom tools designed to help you.



Helpful information and tips.



Customize the toolkit with your own notes and ideas.



Online resources



Telephone services



People have different comfort levels with language, and different language preferences. These can change depending on the context, situation, sense of safety, or personal identity. The term "woman" and "women" are often used throughout this resource to encompass these identities, and in places we specify Trans or Non-Binary to help clarify or remind us of the importance of striving to build inclusivity in our language and work.

At times, the terms "female" and "male" are also used. This reflects how data is gathered in sources we are referencing, where sex is being used opposed to gender.

Regardless of our comfort levels, in an effort to create accessible, respectful and inclusive spaces, it is important to address people by whatever terms they identify with.

**Note:** HIV testing requisition forms historically only allowed for people to identify as male or female. In 2018 this changed to include male, female, Trans-female, or Trans-male. While this update is an improvement, it still creates limitations for those who do not identify as male or female. In addition, these forms are sometimes completed by the person getting the HIV test, and sometimes by the person administering the test based on their assumptions about the gender of the person being tested. As a result, there are limitations to gender data in HIV testing.

## TERMS USED IN THIS TOOLKIT

**ACB Women:** African, Caribbean and Black Women

**Breast/Chest Feeding:** Phrasing used to affirm the experiences of those infant feeding who do and do not identify as women

**Cis (pronunciation "sis"):** A person who experiences their gender identity in a way that matches the societal expectations of someone with the physical sex characteristics that they were born with. Often shortened to cis from cisgender, the use of this term acknowledges that everyone has a gender identity that has a relationship to their assigned sex. Of note, WHAI choses to not capitalize cis, whereas we do capitalize other identities. We do this to acknowledge power differentials and the need to create change in how we work to build inclusive communities on principles of equity.

**Gender - diverse femme people:** Individuals who experience gender outside of existing gender identity terms, and associated with feminine characteristics.

**HCV:** Hepatitis C Infection

**LGBTQ2S+:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer or Questioning, 2-Spirited and other gender diverse identities

**Non-Binary:** A term used to describe gender identity that is not exclusively masculine or feminine.

**PEP:** Post Exposure Prophylaxis, a prescription medication that helps to prevent HIV acquisition for anyone who may have been recently exposed to HIV. This medication is taken up to 72 hours after exposure.

**PrEP:** Pre-exposure Prophylaxis, a prescription medication for HIV-negative people to reduce their risk of contracting HIV. This medication is taken before exposure.

**STBBI:** Sexually Transmitted Blood-Borne Infections.

**Trans:** An umbrella term for a person who experiences their gender identity in a way that does not match the societal expectations of someone with the physical sex characteristics they were born with.

**U=U (Undetectable=**

**Untransmittable):** Science that shows when someone maintains an undetectable HIV viral load for at least 6 months, they cannot transmit HIV sexually to other people.

To learn more about U=U visit [whai.ca/resource/living-in-the-asterisks](https://whai.ca/resource/living-in-the-asterisks)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

WHAI Trans Inclusion Pocket Guide

➔ [whai.ca/resources](https://whai.ca/resources)



Trans Women HIV Research Initiative (TWIRI)

➔ [transwomenhivresearch.com](https://transwomenhivresearch.com)

For helpful information on language and terminology, check out the 519's Glossary of Terms

➔ [the519.org/education-training/glossary](https://the519.org/education-training/glossary)

# Women & HIV/AIDS Initiative (WHAI)

## WHAT IS WHAI?



WHAI is a community response to HIV and AIDS among women\* in Ontario with a focus on the structural and societal factors that increase risk factors for HIV.

## WHAI'S GOALS



Reduce HIV transmission among women\*.



Enhance local community capacity to address HIV and AIDS.



Create environments to support women\* and their HIV and AIDS-related experiences.

## WHAI'S OBJECTIVE

WHAI's objective is to strengthen the capacity of communities to support women\* living with and affected by HIV and AIDS.

# Where is WHAI?



\*This map is not to scale



WHAI works across the province of Ontario in 16 regions. To find a WHAI worker near you, go to:

➤ [www.whai.ca](http://www.whai.ca)

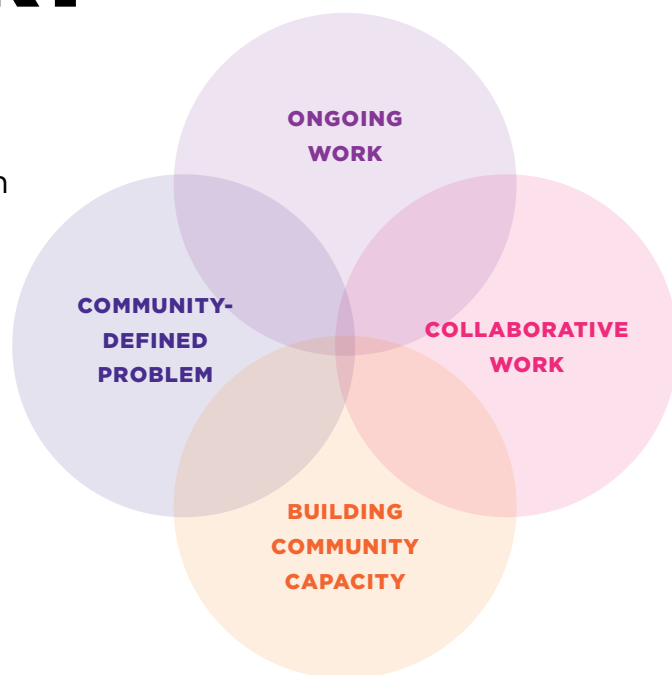


# How does WHAI work?

WHAI works from a **community development perspective**. This means that we work closely with community members to assist in identifying and addressing shared health concerns.

## A community development approach means:

- The problem or issue is defined by the community
- The work is ongoing
- The work is collaborative between community organizations, groups, workers, and those with lived experience in the community
- The goal is to collaboratively build community capacity to address shared health concerns



In our work, we are committed to women\* and community organizations playing an integral role in building community capacity.

Together, we work to:

- Build and strengthen partnerships
- Raise awareness
- Provide information and resources
- Facilitate conversations, training, capacity building and education
- Work towards community change

"We work together with women\* and community organizations to build capacity and effect change."

"The most effective solutions come from communities working together."