

# Welcome

## IN THIS SECTION

- 2 Welcome to the WHAI toolkit
- 3 Toolkit contents
- 4 How to use this toolkit
- 5 Acknowledgements & notes
- 6 How does WHAI work?





## WELCOME TO THE WHAI TOOLKIT

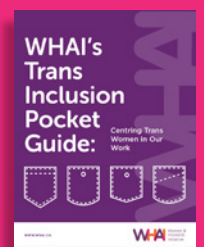
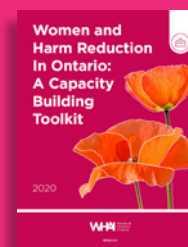
This toolkit is part of a series created to assist community organizations and their staff to work with **women** in Ontario who are living with HIV or who are facing systemic risk factors related to HIV.

Let's get started. >>

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

The other toolkits in this series are:

1. **Women & HIV in Ontario: An Introductory Toolkit**
2. **Women & HIV: A Disclosure Toolkit**
3. **Women and Harm Reduction in Ontario: A Capacity Building Toolkit**
4. **WHAI Trans Inclusion Pocket Guide**



Find them all at  
 [www.whai.ca/resources](http://www.whai.ca/resources)



# Toolkit contents

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

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

 = A tool for you to use

- \* WELCOME**
  - 2 Welcome to the WHAI toolkit
  - 3 Toolkit contents
  - 4 How to use this toolkit
  - 5 Acknowledgements & notes
  - 6 How does WHAI work?
- 1 AN INTRODUCTION TO STIGMA**
  - 2 Stigma: an introduction
  - 3 Stigma
  - 5 Types of stigma
  - 6 Institutional stigma
  - 10 Social stigma
  - 12 Stigma by association
  - 14 Internalized stigma
  - 15 Impacts of HIV-related stigma for **women**

- 2 CREATING WELCOMING SPACES**
  - 2 Creating welcoming spaces
  - 4 Physical space
  - 10 Organizational culture and atmosphere
  - 11 Individual staff actions
  - 16 Strategies to create welcoming spaces
  - 17 Acknowledging strength
  - 17 Ensuring representation
  - 18 Food
  - 18 Centering Indigenous experience
  - 20 4 Steps to engaging women in welcoming spaces
  - 23 Moving from planning to change making
- 3 ACTIVITY: A GROUP DISCUSSION ABOUT INSTITUTIONAL STIGMA **
- 4 ACTIVITY: BRICK WALL OF STIGMA & LADDER OF RESILIENCY **
- 5 ACTIVITY: IDENTIFYING STIGMA **
- 6 CREATING WELCOMING SPACES POSTER **



# How to use this toolkit

## OVERALL OBJECTIVES

What are we hoping to achieve with this toolkit?

- Support and foster community organizations to connect and work with **women** living with and affected by HIV
- Support and foster knowledge of the issues faced by **women** living with HIV
- Build an understanding of the intersecting types of stigma and how they impact **women** living with and affected by HIV
- Provide practical tips, tools, and strategies to end stigma and foster welcoming community spaces.

## HOW TO USE 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
- This toolkit is a starting point and you or your organization may discover other learning points and areas for growth.

## SYMBOLS TO LOOK FOR

This toolkit has been divided into modules to help find:



Tools designed to help you.



Helpful information and tips.



Thoughts and questions for further discussion.



Customize the toolkit with your own notes and ideas.



Online resources





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development and updating of this resource connects to our gratitude to the land we live on, the communities where we work, our commitment to working against deep systems of racism and colonialism, and towards equity. WHAI acknowledges that our work happens on the various unceded, occupied lands, traditionally belonging to the many First peoples across Ontario, including the ancestral and current lands of a diverse range of First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples. We honour the many treaties, views, and practices of First people living on this land now and throughout history. We ground our ongoing work in listening, reflection and actions of solidarity in support of movements of justice and self-determination for First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples in Ontario. We bridge our settler and immigrant experiences and histories on the land with feminist transnational movements seeking freedom from settler occupation and colonialism.

We acknowledge the leadership of the communities we work with across Ontario in leading this work and its deep alignment with racial, gender and health equity. In particular, we are grateful for input, leadership, and critical analysis from the AIDS Service Organizations across Ontario who are part of the WHAI network along with Harshita Iyer, Amanda Leo and Loop: Design for Social Good for their support in the updating of this resource.



## A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE

WHAI uses an inclusive definition of “**women**” which recognizes the diversity of gender including cis and Trans **women**, 2-Spirit and Non-Binary people, and the experiences of other gender diverse people. WHAI seeks to be informed by and amplify the experiences of those who face structural discrimination and exclusion, which impact both HIV risk and broader health outcomes. Throughout this document, the term “**women**” is written in colour to remind us of the importance of prioritizing and centering communities of **women** who face disproportionate risk of HIV, as well as a reminder that gender is not binary, and to promote thoughtfulness and consideration for the needs of Trans, 2-Spirited, and Non-binary individuals in WHAI work.



## WISDOM FROM COMMUNITIES ACROSS ONTARIO

We have included quotes to showcase the thoughts and experiences of **women**, whose insights have informed the strategies and recommendations to build welcoming spaces. These **women** come from diverse backgrounds, such as African, Caribbean, Asian, Indigenous, or white. Some identify as Trans, Non-Binary, or cis, while others don't align with any specific gender category. The quotes cover a wide range of experiences, including motherhood, incarceration, and perspectives from those involved in sex work and who use drugs. Descriptors have been removed from the quotes to respect the complexity of **women**'s identities. It's important to recognize that we cannot define a **woman** solely by one identity or experience – our goal is to represent the richness and complexity of **women**'s lives.

# 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.

For more information, visit our website at [www.whai.ca](http://www.whai.ca)

## WHAI'S OBJECTIVE

WHAI's objective is to strengthen the capacity of communities to support **women** living with and affected by HIV and AIDS.<sup>1</sup>

## 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.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Other WHAI resources that might be helpful are:

1. Growing Partnerships of Mutual Care (a Resource for WHAI Coordinators)
2. PrEP & Women: What you need to know
3. PEP & Women: What you need to know
4. Collective Action Community Change: A report amplifying community voices
5. By the Numbers – What we've learned

