

# A Seat at the Picnic



Examining how social and structural determinants of health impact HIV risk and health outcomes.



# About This Work

The **Women**<sup>1</sup> and HIV/AIDS Initiative (WHAI) is a community response to HIV among cis and Trans **women**, 2-Spirit and Non-Binary people in Ontario with a focus on the structural and societal factors that increase these populations' risk for HIV. Through a collective impact and community development model, WHAI seeks to work with community organizations and service providers to increase their awareness of and ability to respond to the social and structural determinants that impact **women's** health outcomes.

## What are Social and Structural Determinants of Health?

Social and structural determinants of health impact people's HIV risk, and their overall health outcomes. To be successful at preventing HIV, and supporting those who are living with HIV, we need to understand what these are, and have strategies to eliminate them.

"The social determinants of health (SDH) are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies and political systems." (WHO)



Building on the WHO definition, structural determinants include: "all social and political mechanisms that generate .... stratification and social class division in society and that define individual socioeconomic position within hierarchies of power, prestige and access to resources" and further, that, "structural determinants cause and operate through intermediary determinants of health -

**housing, physical work environments, social support, stress, nutrition and physical activity**

- to shape health outcomes." (National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health)

These social and structural determinants of health deeply underscore the realities of HIV risk and health outcomes for those living with HIV. For more information about gender and HIV rates and the populations most impacted, please visit [whai.ca](http://whai.ca)

<sup>1</sup>The word **women** is bolded throughout this resource as a reminder that gender is not binary, and the importance of thoughtfulness towards inclusivity for Trans, Two-Spirit, and Non-Binary people in WHAI work.

# About This Resource

The goal of this resource is to raise awareness about how social and structural determinants of health impact particular populations more than others and to support community organizations to build strategies to address these and work towards health equity. Using the picnic as a visual tool is meant to evoke feelings of collaboration and connection that come from planning and sharing a meal. Planning must be intentional and thoughtful to ensure the gathering runs smoothly. While social and structural determinants of health

impact all aspects of health, we are focusing on HIV risk and health outcomes for this resource. Throughout WHAI work, we have drawn on creative measures for community capacity building. We use these methods to foster a range of learning and engagement styles. For this resource, we have selected to work with an artist, Jessica Campbell, and use the analogy of a picnic to examine how social and structural determinants impact HIV risk and health outcomes for those living with HIV.

## Who This Resource is For?

This resource is for anyone who works with and supports **women** who may be living with HIV or who face social and structural risks related to HIV. This includes anyone who works at a community organization, in healthcare settings, harm reduction, shelters, prisons, settlement organizations, AIDS service organizations or in other related roles.

## How to Use This Resource

This resource includes this facilitation guide, an accompanying poster illustration of a picnic and key symbolic cut outs of items within the picnic image.



The picnic and its items can be used as analogies to examine social and structural determinants of health. The cutouts can be used during facilitation to have participants write down their thoughts and ideas as you move through the discussion. Consider having poster paper or a board to attach the cut-outs to create your own picnic scene.

The items and their suggested meanings can be found in the legend; however, each group may make different analogies. Be creative and use the discussion to link back to facilitators, barriers, and tools or strategies to strengthen the ways we can all work to access the social and structural determinants of health.

# Facilitation Outline

This resource is ideal for facilitating a group of between 3 and 15 people. Participants can be from one organization or multiple. This exercise could take between 1-3 hours to facilitate and can be used independently or as part of a larger community capacity building.

Facilitation can be adapted to fit with the facilitator’s style and goals. We suggest some or all of the following be considered in the agenda:

- 1
- Opening & Introduction:** An opening is important to setting the tone for the session and creating a welcoming space. Key elements to consider include:

  - Introductions from yourself and the participants
  - An overview of the agenda and what participants can expect from the session
  - The sharing of land acknowledgments, commitments to equity and anti-racism, and values that will guide your session and approach to the work.
- 2
- A Brief Overview of WHAI:** This may include facts about **women** and HIV in your local community or provincially, and an introduction to the definitions for social and structural determinants of health listed on page 2. You can see the WHAI website to select relevant information about **women** and HIV that supports your capacity building needs.
- 3
- An Overview of the Activity:** You can do this by explaining the analogy of the picnic / referring to the legend below and highlighting some key parts as a foundation for the activity. Draw on the analogies that make the most sense to you, and trust that the group will share their ideas too.
- 4
- The Activity:** The activity involves facilitating discussion that uses the identified analogies to explore how the social and structural determinants of health impact facilitators and barriers to:

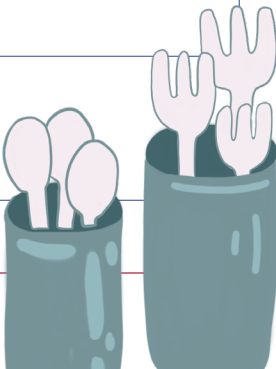
  - HIV risk & prevention,
  - HIV treatment & care, and
  - Overall health and well-being for **women**.

You may choose to focus on one of these, or all of them. The activity also includes a section on identifying commitments to create change. The poster serves as an overview, but the cut out items (ants, utensils, invitation, **women** together, food, picnic basket) provide an opportunity for participants to write down examples and then share with the bigger group using a visual representation.
- 5
- Closing:** This may include sharing additional resources or tools, ways to stay connected and build shared accountability, or a commitment to what next steps participants will take to implement change.
- An illustration of a woman with dark skin, wearing an orange t-shirt and a blue and white checkered skirt. She is walking towards the right, carrying a bowl of red fruit. A small fly is flying near her head.
- # Legend
- The following section outlines the items in the poster, the analogies that they represent, and suggested questions you may use to examine social and structural determinants of health. You can find further explanations of the link between the visual and their discussion focus on the **accompanying poster**.
- Not every element or analogy will relate to every participant and symbols may have different meanings to different cultures. For example, here we use ants to represent barriers to health outcomes, but in many cultures ants are viewed positively. As the facilitator, you can use these opportunities to discuss the importance of inclusivity, cultural considerations, and other barriers that may detract from feeling welcome in a space.
- | DISCUSSION FOCUS   | POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO ASK   |
|--|---|
| Barriers & Risks to HIV risk and health outcomes for those living with HIV<br><br><i>Visual to use in Analogy:</i><br>Ants                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are some things that impact <b>women’s</b> risk for HIV?</li><li>• What threats exist that impact <b>women’s</b> access to HIV care?</li><li>• What risks exist impacting <b>women’s</b> health and happiness?</li><li>• What safety risks exist that may impact <b>women’s</b> ability to engage in HIV prevention or care?</li><li>• How might stigma related to gender reduce someone’s ability to participate in HIV prevention or care?</li><li>• What threatens <b>women’s</b> health and well-being?</li></ul>  |
| Facilitators to prevent / reduce HIV risk and build positive health outcomes for those living with HIV<br><br><i>Visual to use in Analogy:</i><br>Utensils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What tools are needed for <b>women</b> to help prevent HIV?</li><li>• What tools are needed so <b>women</b> can be successful in HIV treatment?</li><li>• What tools are needed to support <b>women’s</b> health?</li><li>• What tools can help a community organization support <b>women’s</b> HIV prevention or their HIV care?</li></ul>   |
| Invitations  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can <b>women</b> be included in HIV prevention?</li><li>• How can <b>women</b> be included in HIV care?</li><li>• Who needs to be involved in community care to help prevent HIV and support <b>women’s</b> HIV care?</li></ul>   |
| Women / Attendees  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why is a social support network important?</li><li>• How do you ensure HIV prevention / care is culturally inclusive and thoughtful?</li><li>• What impact could colonization have on <b>women’s</b> access to HIV prevention and care?</li><li>• What impact could migration have on <b>women’s</b> HIV risk or their engagement in HIV treatment and care?</li><li>• What makes HIV prevention accessible? How can you make it more accessible?</li><li>• What is the impact of not having a social support network or community to support you?</li><li>• Who do you already see involved in HIV prevention? Who is missing?</li></ul> |
- An illustration of a woman with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a purple tank top and a blue skirt. She is sitting in a blue wheelchair, looking towards the left.
- Page 4

| DISCUSSION FOCUS  | POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO ASK   |
|---|---|
| Basic Needs (nourishment, housing, income, education, etc.)<br><br><i>Visual to use in Analogy:</i><br>Food | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What basic needs are essential to HIV prevention and access to HIV treatment and care?</li><li>• What is the impact of not having basic needs, such as food, housing, education, or adequate income?</li><li>• How does power impact someone's ability to take steps to prevent HIV?</li><li>• How does education (or access to information) impact <b>women's</b> ability to prevent HIV?</li><li>• How does education (or access to information) impact <b>women's</b> success in HIV treatment and care?</li></ul> |
| Commitments to Change<br><br><i>Visual to use in Analogy:</i><br>Picnic Basket                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What's one thing you can contribute or offer to help reduce health inequities?</li><li>• How can your organization contribute to shifting practice or policy?</li></ul>   |

The following are additional areas of inquiry. These do not have an accompanying cut out, but can be used to further the dialogue based on the picnic visual.

| DISCUSSION FOCUS  | POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO ASK  |
|---|--|
| Hygiene & Cleaning<br><br><i>Visual to use in Analogy:</i><br>Water Fountain  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does access to basic resources such as clean water impact <b>women's</b> autonomy over HIV prevention?</li><li>• How does access to basic resources such as water impact <b>women's</b> engagement in HIV treatment?</li><li>• What is the impact on <b>women's</b> HIV prevention / engagement in HIV care when people don't have basic needs such as water and hygiene supplies?</li></ul> |
| Foundational elements of HIV prevention and care<br><br><i>Visual to use in Analogy:</i><br>Picnic blanket<br>Rocks or other weights on the blanket corners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What elements are foundational for <b>women's</b> success in HIV prevention / treatment? What helps to weave the care together?</li><li>• What can you do to ensure a comfortable, welcoming space for <b>women</b> to come into?</li><li>• How do you ensure the blanket doesn't blow away? How do you hold the corners down so everyone can enjoy?</li></ul>                                   |
| Protection<br><br><i>Visual to use in Analogy:</i><br>Umbrella  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is needed to offer protection from the elements of risk?</li></ul>  |
| Power<br><br><i>Visual to use in Analogy:</i><br>Sun  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What brings warmth and light?</li><li>• What offers power and strength to <b>women's</b> HIV prevention and care?</li></ul>  |



# Facilitator Self-Reflection Questions

As a facilitator, it is important to ground yourself in why you're doing this work and who you're doing it for. Community work can be filled with many layers—it's personal, it's lived, and it's powerful. Make space to care for yourself before and after you hold space for others. This can help to refine your approach and work from a values-based, thoughtful approach that fosters inclusivity and clear outcomes. Take some time to reflect on the questions below as you prepare to facilitate.

## Purpose & Intention

- What do I hope participants will gain from this activity?
- Are the intentions for this conversation clearly outlined?
- Do I have to adapt this facilitation for today?
- What response is needed if harm/or conflict is present in the group?

## Self-Reflection

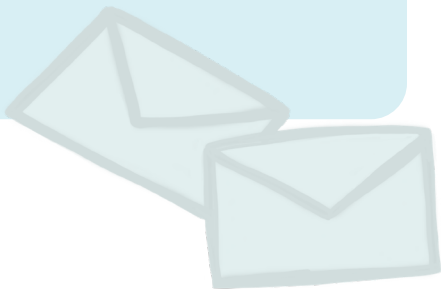
- What personal values am I bringing to facilitate this space?
- How will my social identities create or show up in this space?
- Are there limitations in how I take up space before this session?

## Wholistic Self-care

- Have I nourished my body before this session?
- Have I done a check-in with myself before facilitating?
- Do I have what I need (personally and organizationally) to support me through this session?

## Growth & Reflection (for after the session)

- Was the intention achievable in this session? If not, why? If so, in what ways?
- In what ways am I open to feedback for future sessions?
- What did I learn about myself as a facilitator?
- What new learning did I gain from facilitating?



Thank you for taking time to use this tool. WHAI is dedicated to rupturing systems that contribute to health inequity, and to fostering community leadership in this work. If you have any questions about this resource or other WHAI work, please connect with us. You can find contact information for WHAI workers at [whai.ca/contact-us](http://whai.ca/contact-us).



