

THIS MIGHT BE A STUPID QUESTION BUT...?

Creating Safe Spaces and Dispelling Myths

Training workers outside of the
HIV world on women and HIV

Founded in 1991, Positive Women's Network (PWN) is the longest-running women-focused HIV organization in Canada. We support women in communities throughout British Columbia to make informed choices about HIV and their health. We also provide safe access to education and prevention. As a partnership of women living with and affected by HIV, we provide leadership regarding women's HIV health and related social issues locally and nationally.

Since 2006, PWN has delivered free HIV trainings throughout BC to over 1,300 participants, targeting service providers who work with women living with HIV.

THE ISSUES

- ❖ Women are one of the fastest-growing populations with HIV in Canada
- ❖ Negative social responses to women living with HIV remain pervasive
- ❖ PWN members have consistently reported experiencing HIV-related discrimination from service providers not directly involved in the HIV field
- ❖ Service providers not directly involved in the HIV field report having no to limited HIV knowledge

THE TRAININGS

- ❖ Start with basic information about HIV and transmission
- ❖ Use a holistic lens
- ❖ Address issues linked to the vulnerabilities that put women at risk for HIV, including poverty, violence, addiction, racism, and transphobia

THE PARTICIPANTS

- ❖ Transition house workers
- ❖ Immigration workers
- ❖ Crisis line workers
- ❖ Mental health and addiction workers
- ❖ Students in criminology, social work, and massage therapy

THE CHALLENGES

- ❖ Lack of funding for trainer to travel to rural areas
- ❖ Discomfort of service providers with their lack of HIV knowledge
- ❖ Resistance of service providers to recognizing that HIV affects their clients
- ❖ Heavy workloads of prospective participants, leaving no time to attend trainings

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIES

“Clear, concise general information about HIV and women that all crisis line workers should know.”

“I feel more comfortable and confident working with HIV+ women after taking this workshop.”

“Loved the informal interactive style with an engaging open discussion and no PowerPoint!”

“I learned about HIV transmission and women's sexual stigma and stereotypes.”

“The humour and laughter helped me to relax about such a serious topic.”

“I felt safe to ask anything about HIV.”



Positive Women's Network
Challenging HIV. Changing women's lives.

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