

## **An artistic approach to knowledge translation: using art to connect women living with HIV to research findings**

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**Background:** Women living with HIV in British Columbia, and across Canada, deeply feel the loss of women-centred spaces for connection, learning, and meaningful knowledge translation and exchange (KTE). We, therefore, developed a series of arts-based KTE events for women to learn about healthy aging research.

**Methods:** Our KTE team includes women living with HIV, a provincial HIV/AIDS Service Organization, Community Research Associates, trainees, and researchers. Events consisted of a lay-language presentation about actionable research findings, brainstorming sessions around

health improvement in relation to the theme, an art activity, a shared meal, and gift bags containing health-promoting items customized to the theme. To gauge their value and efficacy, participants completed evaluation forms for each event.

**Results:** Four events have been held thus far, three in Vancouver and one in Prince George, with 14-19 attendees/event. Themes included cortisol/stress management, menopause, and chronic pain. Each used a different art medium, including canvas painting, body mapping, and stencil drawing. Thirty feedback forms were received from three events (response rate = 30/48, 62.5%). The majority of participants agreed that the topics were important to them (100%), they felt safe attending the event (100%), they had fun (93.3%), they would recommend the event to a friend (100%), the art activities helped them to interact with the knowledge shared (92.6%), and they know more about the presented topic than they did before attending the event (92.6%). One participant shared “we really get uplifted with connection at this level!” Women’s appreciation and engagement in learning about health and science through art was resounding.

**Conclusion:** The positive reception and high attendance at these events aligns with national calls to action by women living with HIV to create women-centred spaces. Our results emphasize the value of such events for connection, art, and learning by and with women living with HIV.