



## **Making Us Visible: Promoting Access to Breast Health and Breast Cancer Services for Lesbian and Bisexual Women**

**Funded by:** The Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation (Ontario Chapter), Community Health Promotion Grant Program.

**Lead Agency:** Sherbourne Health Centre. **Partner Agencies:** The Ontario Breast Cancer Community Research Initiative (Chris Sinding); Gilda's Club Greater Toronto (Teri Henderson); Metropolitan Community Church of Toronto (Jennifer Alexander) and Willow Breast Cancer Support and Resource Services (Danielle VandeZande).

All partners were involved in the Lesbians and Breast Cancer Project – a Community Based Participatory Research project conducted over two years. The partners bring an understanding of lesbian and bisexual women's lives, of the challenges of living with breast cancer, and a range of professional and community contacts.

### **Brief Summary of Project Activities (over 2 years):**

- Work with lesbian and bisexual women to create culturally appropriate educational resources – resources that recognize their relationships, particular risk factors and alienation from the health care system
- Invite women from diverse sectors of the lesbian and bisexual community to create their own breast health initiatives. Document their stories and make them available through websites and print materials to enable others involved in breast health promotion to integrate strategies that fit for lesbian and bi women.
- Pilot a support group for lesbians and bisexual women living with breast cancer, in partnership with Gilda's Club Toronto.
- Enrich current breast cancer support initiatives by piloting a training program for telephone counsellors, one-on-one volunteers and support group leaders. Increase knowledge and sensitivity when working with lesbian and bisexual women with breast cancer.
- Develop a tool kit of resources and materials to provide culturally appropriate materials for community members and health care providers to use to ensure that lesbians and bisexual women and their partners do not have to struggle with homophobia at the same time as they are dealing with so many other stresses.
- Create a final report and community event to describe the project in detail and profile the strategies and materials created throughout the two years.

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