

LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN

Implementation Guide

A special thank you to the women living with HIV across Ontario and beyond who participated in this process for their work, insights, and experiences that helped inform this implementation guide. Love Positive Women, and this guide, is for you.

2018

Developed by Jessica Whitbread
with support from the WHAI Network
and Ontario Women's Working Group
Graphic Design: pulpandpixel.ca

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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.

The goals of WHAI are to:

- Reduce HIV transmission among women.
- Enhance local community capacity to address HIV and AIDS.
- Create environments to support women and their HIV & AIDS-related experiences.

WHAI's objective is to strengthen the capacity of communities to support women living with and/or affected by HIV and AIDS through the implementation of strong community development practices. At WHAI, community development refers to collective efforts by communities which are directed towards increasing community control over the social determinants of health, thereby improving health. WHAI works with women living with and facing systemic risks for HIV, as well various community partners, to collectively identify and address their shared health concerns.

A key principle separating community development from other health promotion approaches is that the needs, problems, or issues around which a community is organized must be identified by community members themselves. As such, WHAI focuses on collaborative problem solving, raising awareness of structural forces, and getting people to view their problems as collective social issues instead of solely individual problems.

WHAI works across the province of Ontario in 16 regions. To find a WHAI worker near you, go to  www.whai.ca.

**Note - The term 'woman' is used throughout this guide as an umbrella term, meant to encompass a wide range of identities within the women's community, including cis and trans women, women with trans experience, as well as folks on the transfeminine spectrum.*



What is LPW?



LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN (LPW) happens each year between February 1st–14th. It is a global project, conceptualized in 2012 and implemented in 2013, raising awareness about women and girls living with HIV using social media to link local grassroots gestures of love. Using Valentine’s Day as a backdrop, Love Positive Women creates a platform for individuals and communities to engage in public and private acts of love and caring for women living with HIV. Going beyond romantic love to deep community love and social justice, Love Positive Women is call to action. It requires participants to spend time reflecting about how they, as either a woman living with HIV or an ally, will commit to loving women living with HIV. Through action, change can be made. Working from a place of strength, Love Positive Women focuses on the idea of interconnectedness, relationship building, loving oneself and loving ones community. By starting from a place of love, there are endless ways to build strong communities.

While Love Positive Women is active primarily between February 1st–14th, it remains a symbol of how the world can be different throughout the year. Groups in over 45 countries have participated in shifting lives and making a difference through acts of love.

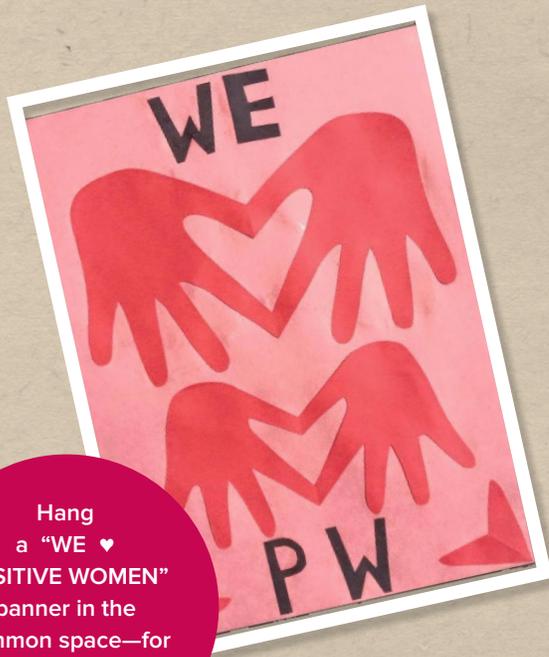
So what does this really look like?

Since 2014, WHAI Coordinators have been supporting Love Positive Women by engaging women living with HIV, women who face systemic risks for HIV, as well as the broader community through activities that aim to build community love for women living with HIV. At WHAI, we are committed to ensuring that women living with HIV remain at the heart of our programming and are celebrated for being themselves. This implementation guide is meant to support the agencies and community groups working with women living with HIV to develop and implement their own activities to be part of the Love Positive Women movement. Activities have ranged from card making to spa days and beyond. Some of these activities are included in this guide and can be adapted to best suit your community.

 www.facebook.com/LOVEPOSITIVEWOMEN

Setting the stage to Love Positive Women

While some organizations have programs that work specifically with women living with HIV, many do not. Regardless of your organizational structure or the populations that your organization primarily works with, it is easy to create a celebratory atmosphere to show women living with HIV, and other service users, that women living with HIV are an important part of your community. It might not happen right away, but when women living with HIV see that they are valued, they are more likely to disclose their HIV status, feel cared for and valued, return to access community programs and even support others who are living with HIV. Here are some ideas to create the mood for loving positive women:



Hang a “WE ♥ POSITIVE WOMEN” banner in the common space—for extra love make it yourself.



Get staff to take a selfie with a poster saying Love Positive Women and display it in the reception area.

Put up a sign on the door to your office, the bathrooms, lunch room—anywhere women might see it.



Have a local bakery donate treats. Put up a sign to say “Thanks to our friends at [the Bakery] who are showing their love to the amazing women living with HIV in our community”.

Have children draw images of how much they love their moms who are living with HIV or partner with a local school group and post them in the office.



Hire a childcare worker and let women drop their kids off for a few hours to have time to themselves.



Make Love Positive Women condom packs or harm reduction kits and give them to EVERYBODY.

Talk about the needs of women living with HIV in your staff meeting.

Have your Executive Director put out a special statement (via email, social media or in your newsletter) on why their organization cares about women living with HIV in their community.



AS WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV
WE ARE A SYMBOL OF STRENGTH,
COURAGE AND DETERMINATION.

WE ARE LEADING OUR
COMMUNITIES TO CHANGE THE
WORLD. LPW IS TIME TO SUPPORT
WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV FOR
ALL THAT THEY DO AND TO
CELEBRATE TOGETHER.

-C.Z.

Projects

Don't forget—the first step for these activities is inviting people. Think through who you want to invite (women living with HIV, those facing systemic risk for HIV, allies, families, etc). Wherever possible, consult with women living with HIV in your community about who will be involved and share information on how to participate accordingly. If you're doing an activity to support women living with HIV remember to maintain their confidentiality. Finally, these projects are suggestions, we highly encourage you to adapt these projects to best suit the women in your community and build your own amazing space to Love Positive Women!

WHAT YOU NEED

any paper (try recycled scraps, construction paper, magazine cut outs, old wrapping paper or even newspapers!), markers, scissors, glue and/or tape, decorating materials such as glitter, little hearts, lace, and other useful crafting supplies, warm thoughts.

COST: low

GROUP SIZE: 1–50

LOCATION: somewhere that has a table and/or space to make things

TIME:

Prep 10 minutes

Activity 15–45 mins.

Clean Up 10 mins.

Follow Up 0–2 hrs.

Card Making

Card Making has become a staple of Love Positive Women. Making and distributing the cards can happen in many different ways. Cards can be made with women living with HIV to exchange within their community, they can be made and sent to women living with HIV abroad, or exchanges can be arranged to send cards between groups of women living with HIV to make meaningful connections. Card making is an easy event to organize and can be done for, by or with women living with HIV.

How to Implement a Love Positive Women Card Making Activity

- Step 1** Get your materials ready and lay them on a table.
- Step 2** Invite people to take a sheet of paper, decorating supplies and design a card.
- Step 3** Write thoughtful messages inside the cards.
- Step 4** Repeat until the activity is over.
- Step 5** Post on the Love Positive Women page and social media. Including pictures or quotes from the cards. 🌟 www.facebook.com/LOVEPOSITIVEWOMEN
- Step 6** Distribute cards and/or exchange with women from other groups.



If you are stuck for what to write start with “We love positive women because...” or “Positive Women are the best because...” then think of all the ways in which women living with HIV are so incredible. Here are some suggestions:

- ...you are a pillar of our community.”
- ...you are strong and beautiful.”
- ...you are courageous.”
- ...you deserve to be loved and celebrated.”

If your group wants to make Love Positive Women cards to send to women living with HIV in another city don't forget to add postage fees to your budget and a bit of extra time for prep to link with other key contacts. To link with another organization, you can reach out to a staff person at an agency where you already have connections or you can reach out through the Love Positive Women Facebook page to find partners in other areas to exchange with.

It's easier and less expensive to send one package of cards to another organization but sending individual envelopes out to the women who request them by providing their mailing information is incredibly powerful - especially for those who live in rural areas or don't connect often to groups. If you do send out individual cards, ensure that you only do so to women that request them personally, and that the cards themselves are mailed in a discrete envelope for confidentiality purposes.

WHAT YOU NEED

strong thread or thin wire, beads, needle, safety pin (to clip on shirt).

COST: medium

GROUP SIZE: 1–15

LOCATION:
space with comfy
chairs and tea

TIME:

Prep 10 minutes

Activity 30 minutes

Clean Up 10 minutes

Follow up 0–2 hours

Beaded Ribbons

Beading red ribbons is a very special way to share that you care about people living with HIV. To take the time to hand make a unique beaded ribbon is meaningful to those that receive them. This activity was first done for Love Positive Women by a group of Indigenous women from the West Coast of Canada, who then started a beaded ribbon exchange with/for Indigenous women living with HIV across Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Other variations of beaded ribbon exchanges have also been popular amongst women who also have rich history of beadwork in their cultures.

How to Implement a Love Positive Women Beaded Ribbons Activity

- Step 1** Get your materials ready and lay them on a table.
- Step 2** Take a string and pull it through a thin needle.
- Step 3** Take one red bead and slide it onto the needle. Pull it through almost to the end. Tie a knot around the bead so it is secure.
- Step 4** Continue to add enough beads until you have enough for your desired ribbon size. Tie a knot around the final bead and remove the extra thread.
- Step 5** Twist the beaded thread into a ribbon like shape.
- Step 6** Put a piece of your traditional healing herbal medicines behind the ribbon to add strength to your ribbon (optional).
- Step 7** Hold in place with a safety pin on clothing.
- Step 8** Post on the Love Positive Women page and social media.

 www.facebook.com/LOVEPOSITIVEWOMEN

Thinking about integrating Indigenous medicines into this activity? Consider picking medicines together or creating medicine bundles to go with the beaded ribbons. If you're unsure about how to do this, reach out and consult with Indigenous partners or Elders in your community.

This activity could be an excellent opportunity to partner with an Indigenous organization and build relationships with Indigenous women living with HIV in your community.



WHAT YOU NEED

8 1/2 x 11 paper, thin markers, scissors, glue and/or tape, decorating materials such as glitter, stickers, little hearts, lace, and other useful crafting supplies, black fine tipped pen.

COST: low

GROUP SIZE: 3–12

LOCATION: somewhere that has a table to make things

TIME:

Prep 15 minutes

Activity 2.5 hrs.

Clean Up 20 mins.

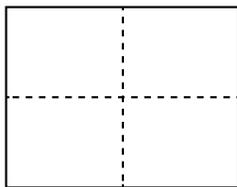
Tiny Books

Tiny books are a combination of zine making and storytelling. They are an expression of the individual and the purpose is to share a tiny piece of your story (or a story that you'd like to share) in a tiny book that fits in a pocket, keepsake box or other discrete place. The books can be kept or shared. It's your story, so you get to decide what to do with it. If you want to make a tiny book for someone else consider using it as an opportunity to tell them why they are so great or write a story of your favourite memory together.

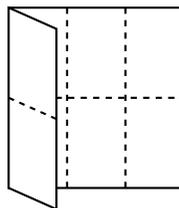
How to Implement a Love Positive Women Tiny Book Making Activity

- Step 1** Get your materials ready and lay them on a table.
- Step 2** Lead the group in a visioning exercise to start to think about their stories they want to write in their tiny books.
- Step 3** Using a piece of paper fold the tiny book. It might take a few tries. See example below.
- Step 4** Write, draw or craft your story.
- Step 5** Share your tiny book with others in the group.
- Step 6** Post on the Love Positive Women page and social media.

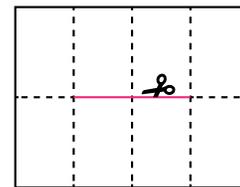
 www.facebook.com/LOVEPOSITIVEWOMEN



FOLD A SHEET OF PAPER
HALWAY IN BOTH DIRECTIONS



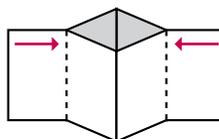
PLACED HORIZONTALLY
FOLD SIDES TOWARDS CENTRE



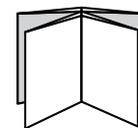
CUT ALONG THE CENTRE
CREASE AS SHOWN ABOVE



FOLD IN HALF VERTICALLY



PUSH ENDS INWARDS AND THE
CENTRE SLIT WILL OPEN



FOLD INTO A BOOK



THE TINY BOOK MAKING ALLOWED FOR CONNECTION WITH COMMUNITY, REFLECTION AND HONOURING WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV. IT WAS A POWERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO BE A PART OF A SMALL EVENT BUT A GLOBAL MOVEMENT TO AFFIRM THAT WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV MATTER, THAT WE ARE LOVED AND THAT WE ARE VALUED.

WE ARE DEFINITELY NOT TOLD THIS ENOUGH.

- BRITTANY

WHAT YOU NEED

needles, thread, sewing machine (optional), lots of different fabrics, lace, markers, felt, tracing pencils, scissors, fabric glue, paper.

COST: medium

GROUP SIZE: 1–12

LOCATION:
somewhere that has
a lot tables and/or space

TIME:

Prep 45 minutes

Activity 4–6 hrs. or could be
spread out over two workshops

Clean Up 30 mins.

Collective Quilt Making

Quilting has been deeply rooted in the HIV movement since the 1980s when people made quilted panels to remember a loved one who died of AIDS into the AIDS Memorial Quilt. Since then, many communities have continued making quilts in this tradition - including a movement in the Caribbean of women living with HIV who are sewing quilts, tote bags and pillows to talk about how to live with HIV for Love Positive Women. This idea has been adapted from their annual sewing workshops. For Love Positive Women quilts, the important piece is to build community by working together. The quilts have little to do with skill or ability to craft. If you have access to a few sewing machines that is wonderful —if not, hand stitching works. In a pinch, you can even get fabric glue and stick everything on. Whenever possible, let women living with HIV in your community decide who participates in the event (i.e. allies, service providers, their friends and families, etc.).



SEEING A QUILT ON SOCIAL MEDIA THAT SAID LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN HAD A BIG IMPACT ON THE WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV IN MY COMMUNITY. WE LOVED IT SO MUCH, WE MADE OUR OWN!
-OLENA



How to Implement a Love Positive Women Community Quilt Making Activity

- Step 1** Get your materials ready and lay them on a table.
- Step 2** In small groups of 2- 4, have participants brainstorm what they would like to see on their quilt. Some groups like to draw this out paper, others just start cutting. There is no wrong way to do this. To start the conversation, ask women to think about what makes them smile and supports them through difficult times. Themed quilts about empowerment or self-care are just some ideas of what can be done.
- Step 3** Choose a large piece of fabric. It will be used as the base for other fabrics to be sewn onto.
- Step 4** Now choose the other fabrics that will be cut into the shapes that you will sew onto the fabric.
- Step 5** Cut out the shapes and designs.
- Step 6** Pin them on the base fabric to hold their place.
- Step 7** Sew or glue them into place. Note: Steps 5–7 can be done at the same time giving each group member different tasks.
- Step 8** Share your finished quilt with the group and decide where to hang it.
- Step 9** Post on the Love Positive Women page and social media.

 www.facebook.com/LOVEPOSITIVEWOMEN

These quilts can be done in two different ways:

- Either by making individual panels that can all be sewn together at the end, or
- Working in small groups to create larger collective quilts.

Quilt making can be a long process, so it would be good to have a few snacks available or tell people to bring something to share to cut costs. You can also have the activity broken up over multiple days.

It is also important to know that the themes can be changed to represent issues in the community (such as stigma, intimate partner violence, or HIV criminalization) which can make it a helpful tool for talking through difficult issues with other women who may have shared experiences.

Tea Parties

WHAT YOU NEED

teacups, small plates, table cloth, baked goods, kettle, selection of teas, milk, sweetener (sugar, honey), tea pot, napkins, soft music.

COST: medium

GROUP SIZE: 3–12

LOCATION: space with comfy chairs and a table

TIME:

Prep 10 minutes

Activity 1–2 hours

Clean Up 30 minutes

Sharing tea with other women is practiced across all cultures so there are many variations to hosting a tea party. Tea parties are great opportunities for women living with HIV to sit back and relax, while at the same time making space for incredibly important network building and making friends. Many tea parties are also the site of consciousness raising where women can learn important information from each other, share experiences, tips for self-care, and problem solve together. These events should be an invitation to women living with HIV and, depending on the community, those facing systemic risk and those most affected. Tea Parties are also great for combining with letter writing or card making.

How to Implement a Love Positive Women Tea Party

- Step 1** Set up the room so that women are sitting in a circle.
- Step 2** Set the table by putting on the tablecloth and laying out the dishes and baked goods.
- Step 3** Turn the kettle on and make tea (repeat many times through out the tea party).
- Step 4** When the women come, have them take a seat and pour each other a cup of tea. Note: If this is a special tea party for women living with HIV, it might be a good opportunity for others not living with HIV to leave the room and give some space for the women to talk amongst themselves for the allocated time. Honouring this is powerful.
- Step 5** Have the women all introduce themselves and share a bit of their thoughts on why celebrating women living with HIV is important.
- Step 6** Sip tea, eat baked goods, share conversation, and enjoy until it is time to go.
- Step 7** Post on the Love Positive Women page and social media.

 www.facebook.com/LOVEPOSITIVEWOMEN

The cost of hosting a tea party can vary. For a low or no budget event, encourage everyone to bring a bag or two of their favourite tea and bake something to share. For an extra personal touch, save venue costs and host it in someone's home or a space that they choose. If there are resources, catering or going out for high tea are other options. No matter the budget, it will be wonderful.

Your event doesn't need to be a tea party—or gigantic event. You can also do little things as a group such as have someone make gingerbread cookies or cupcakes and have everyone decorate their own. Why not have a potluck meal and have everyone bring in a traditional dish from their family culture and talk about it. The purpose of this activity is to come together and share not only food but stories and experiences. Money doesn't need to be a barrier.



I WENT TO A TEA PARTY AND IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I FELT LIKE I HAD THE TIME AND SPACE TO CONNECT WITH OTHER WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV. THE EVENT WAS SO BEAUTIFUL AND THE TREATS WERE DELICIOUS.

I WAS THANKFUL TO MEET SO MANY AMAZING OTHER WOMEN IN MY AREA GOING THROUGH THE SAME THINGS AS I AM.

- JANICE



Do it Yourself (DIY) Spa Day

Of all the activities in the implementation guide, hosting a DIY Love Positive

Women Spa Day has the potential of being the most expensive and extravagant but there are also many ways to lower the cost. Sure, you can pay for a group to go to a fancy spa and be pampered but there are many examples of ways that groups of women living with HIV have set up their own spa days that are just as wonderful. Women in communities from Jamaica to Waterloo have come together to create their own mini-spas at almost no cost by doing it themselves and making or bringing in their own products. For this activity, we're building from donated or low cost methods. But, of course, feel free to pay the big bucks and take women living with HIV on an all-inclusive spa retreat if possible.

WHAT YOU NEED

people to do any of the following—massage, manicure, pedicure, nail painting, face treatments, yoga instructing, or whatever else sounds relaxing, soft music, water with cucumber slices in it, towels, pillows, foot bath, massage table or whatever else you can get your hands on depending on the services provided.

COST: medium

GROUP SIZE: 2–10

LOCATION: having two rooms would be really helpful to have one with treatments that are quiet and the other with some refreshments and perhaps services where talking is okay

like getting your nails painted. Easy access to water and sinks is also very helpful.

TIME:

Prep 4–6 weeks

Activity 4 hours

Clean Up 1 hour

How to Implement a Love Positive Women DIY Spa Day Activity

- Step 1** Weeks in advance find a school, practitioners or other community members who able to provide services on the set date of the DIY Spa Day.
- Step 2** On the day, move furniture, dim the lights, turn on soft music and making the space relaxing. Cut up cucumbers and put them in the water—they always have this at fancy spas so it'll help create the atmosphere.
- Step 3** Put out a sign up sheet for services and have women sign up for 1-2 when they arrive. This gives some structure to the event.
- Step 4** Start the DIY Spa Day with a guided meditation to get everyone to relax. Use an audio recording if you do not have a volunteer to lead it.
- Step 5** Have women go to their first appointments while others chat and relax together.
- Step 6** Put out some small snacks like finger sandwiches and fresh fruits.
- Step 7** Continue to have the women use the services, relax and chat until the time for the spa is over.
- Step 8** Post on the Love Positive Women page and social media.

 www.facebook.com/LOVEPOSITIVEWOMEN

OMG IT WAS THE BEST! TO BE HONEST, GOING TO THE SPA HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN A COMFORTABLE EXPERIENCE FOR ME BEING HIV POSITIVE, SO IT WAS REALLY MEANINGFUL TO DO IT OURSELVES. IT WAS SUCH A FUN BONDING DAY WITH THE GIRLS.

-DESIREE



HOMEMADE SECRETS FROM YOUR PANTRY:

- avocado + yogurt + honey = face mask
- brown sugar + lemon + honey = face scrub
- baking soda + lemon + toothbrush = teeth whitening
- old coffee grounds + water = foot scrub

Five-minute ideas to add to your existing programming

LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN SELF CARE REMINDERS

- 1 Give everyone a piece of paper that is approximately the size of a business card (you can also use a business card with a plain light coloured back).
- 2 Ask them to write down 2 self-care activities that they want to do to show that they love themselves (take a bubblebath, watch their favourite film, buy flowers, go for a run, paint their nails, read a book).
- 3 Then 1 activity to support women living with HIV in their community (call a friend to check in, bake cookies for a local support group, send a card, babysit for a woman living with HIV).
- 4 Now tell them to put the paper in their wallet and cross off the activities as they complete each reminder during the 14 days of Love Positive Women..

SHORT VIDEOS

- 1 Have your group stand together like you are posing for a photo.
- 2 Using a smart phone or other recording device record the group saying “[insert group/organization name] LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN!!!”.
- 3 Upload this on social media.

REMEMBERING THOSE LOST

Hold a moment of silence for all the women living with HIV that are no longer with us.



BULLETIN BOARD MESSAGES

- 1 Get a large piece of paper
- 2 Write LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN in the middle with colourful markers
- 3 Ask people to write a special message to share with women living with HIV.
- 4 Post it up on the bulletin board.
- 5 Hang a marker near by so people can share more messages.

Overcoming Barriers during LPW

There are many reasons why women living with HIV cannot make it to an event. Here are some common barriers and how to try to accommodate them:

1 TRANSPORTATION

Give bus tickets or host activity in a location more accessible to the participants.

2 WOMEN LIVING IN RURAL SETTINGS

Send something in the mail such as a kits to make a card, beaded ribbon or tiny book. Or better yet send them something that was made in the workshop as a gift.

3 CHILD CARE

Hire a caregiver or get volunteers on site and make a kids room down slightly away from the activity.

4 STIGMA

Host an activity only open to women living with HIV.



In a hurry or need a little inspiration? No problem! Print the posters on the next pages to spread the word! You can even print them on legal size paper and add your event information to the bottom to advertise!

LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN

A close-up photograph of several vibrant pink roses, showing the intricate details of their petals. The roses are set against a bright yellow background, which is the same color as the top half of the image.

[#lovepositivewomen](#)

LOVE POSITIVE WOMEN



#lovepositivewomen

