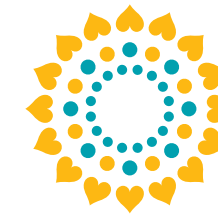


LISTEN TO THE WHISPERS

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Ovarian Cancer Canada
Cancer de l'ovaire Canada

INTRODUCTION

Developed by Ovarian Cancer Canada (OCC), *Listen to the Whispers* is a 60-minute program for well women. The program is delivered by trained volunteers who are provided a kit with professional DVD/video, PowerPoint slides, handouts and tips on coordinating sessions at the community level. Developed with expertise and input from medical advisors, women with ovarian cancer and women across Canada, it fills a void with informed, grassroots, word-of-mouth communication.

BACKGROUND

A Decima Research study released in September 2005 by OCC uncovered gaps regarding women's knowledge of ovarian cancer, the most fatal of gynecologic cancers and a disease that kills over 60% of those diagnosed. Furthermore, there is no effective screening test for this disease. Clearly the need for awareness and for more information is critical.

Education and awareness are the best tools to help detect ovarian cancer and to increase survival. *Listen to the Whispers* was developed to reach women across the country in community settings such as



work, health centres, places of worship and service groups.

Listen to the Whispers was initially developed as a Lunch and Learn program to be presented by volunteers from OCC. Originally directed at women in the corporate workplace, this highly successful initiative was expanded to reach women in any community setting using audiovisual materials and a guide for volunteer presenters.

PURPOSE

To increase awareness of ovarian cancer by providing information about symptoms, risks and risk-reduction factors.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Raise general-public awareness about ovarian cancer
- Alert women, encourage and empower self-advocacy in health care, information-sharing
- Use existing networks for diverse and exponential reach
- Make personal contact with hard-to-reach groups

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Research has shown that adult learning is most effective when it is reinforced in several different ways. For that reason, this kit provides the following three different levels of teaching to reinforce the important facts about ovarian cancer:

1. Information about the disease from both a medical and personal perspective is included in the 24-minute *Listen to the Whispers* DVD/video.
2. Supporting visuals are provided on a CD included with the kit. They emphasize key points from the DVD/video.
3. Finally, awareness fact sheets for well women are provided for attendees.

OUTCOMES

- Volunteers convey the basics of ovarian cancer awareness. The DVD/video and other tools deliver the facts
- Program fills information void
- Diverse, exponential reach, via existing networks: Catholic Women's League, Chinese and Muslim communities, Daughters of Penelope, Women's Institutes, professional networks
- Connections through volunteers' personal networks: synagogues, church groups, women's groups, ethnic communities, religious sisterhoods, neighbourhoods, workplaces, etc.
- Over 130 trained volunteers across Canada



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Identify potential volunteers and networks regionally
- Focus on diverse and isolated communities
- Ensure that all presenters undergo training
- Quality assurance program for trained presenters
- Feasibility of follow up ovarian health reminder to ensure ongoing awareness