



for women living  
with HIV/AIDS

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### **Prevalence of HIV infection in Women**

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- ▶ □ “Heterosexual contact” was cited as the risk factor for women in almost one third (28%) of positive HIV tests in B.C. in 2000 (B.C. Centre for Disease Control).
- ▶ □ Of cumulative AIDS cases in women in Canada, 66.9% are attributed to heterosexual contact (Health Canada).
- ▶ □ Of new HIV infections in 2000, women represented 22% in B.C. and 24% in Canada (B.C. Centre for Disease Control, Health Canada).
- ▶ □ Because HIV doesn't necessarily display symptoms upon infection, women may not be tested for years. Health Canada estimates that the number of positive tests represent *less* than those who are *actually infected*.
- ▶ □ In the past year, Positive Women's Network fielded almost 9,000 requests for support and education.
- ▶ □ Positive Women's Network support staff have 5,000 sessions with clients every year to support women adjusting to their lives with HIV.

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### **Of the Positive Women's Network members:**

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- ▶ 94% live in poverty.
- ▶ 90% of women who use PWN's drop-in on a daily basis live in or frequent the Downtown Eastside.
- ▶ 70% of women who use PWN's drop-in on a daily basis are injection drug users.
- ▶ 45% have children.
- ▶ 35% have no fixed address.
- ▶ 33% are First Nations women.

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### **In addition to dealing with an HIV+ diagnosis, many PWN members are also struggling with:**

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|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| ▶ children in care                    | ▶ racism              |
| ▶ extreme isolation                   | ▶ sexism              |
| ▶ history of childhood sexual abuse   | ▶ sexual assault      |
| ▶ lack of detox and treatment centers | ▶ unplanned pregnancy |
| ▶ lack of safe affordable housing     | ▶ violence            |
| ▶ poverty                             |                       |

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### **PWN as a Community Resource**

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- ▶ 54% of information requests come from community workers, including drug and alcohol counselors, detox unit staff, corrections workers and health care providers.

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Positive Women's Network is a registered charitable organization (number 136586443 RR0001).