



Canadian Women's Heart Health Alliance

Advocacy Working Group | Member Profile



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Alliance member since 2021

Biography

I was born in Oakville, Ontario. When I was young, we moved often. I lived in Burnaby, British Columbia and Calgary, Alberta. I was a competitive swimmer. Swimming helped me to adjust to the moves. I attended the University in Calgary, living in my family home. I wasn't sure what I wanted to study or what career I wanted to pursue. I thought about being a swim coach, a teacher or a therapist. I also considered a Fine Arts degree. I decided on a Bachelors of Physical Education. In the summers I lived with my grandmother in Oakville. I worked as a lifeguard at Syl Apps Youth Centre where I began my first career as a Correctional Officer/Youth Worker. I consider myself a lifelong learner.

It was my father that sparked my interest in heart health. He had bypass surgery in 1997 at the Foothills Hospital in Calgary. I went with him to his cardiac rehab introduction class. At the time I didn't notice that there were more men in the class. I was a correctional officer working with young offenders, but I decided that cardiac rehab would be a good option for a future career. I enrolled in the Cardiology Technology program at Mohawk College. In 2001 I was hired at Credit Valley Hospital (CVH) in Mississauga as a CVT. I went on to become a Cardiac Rehab Therapist. At school I hadn't learned much about the cardiac differences between men and women, working at CVH opened my eyes to the disparities in heart health care for women. I currently work part-time at Milton District Hospital in Cardiac Rehab and I also teach and am a lab assistant in the Cardiology Technology program at Mohawk College. Supporting and caring for women in the cardiac rehab program and educating students on women's heart health is a passion for me.

When I worked at Credit Valley, I facilitated a Women's Group for the cardiac rehab female patients. I followed a Life Skills Coaching plan that I had previously facilitated in groups for young offenders. The group was very successful in that the women that partook provided each other with unique perspectives and support that they did not get from their family or friends. Support from women that had gone through the similar experiences of managing heart disease was so valuable. At MDH, I have worked with women diagnosed with SCAD. These women that don't have the typical risk factors for heart disease, are young, but need just as much if not more, education and support.



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I teach Cardiology Diagnostics and Interventions course at Mohawk College. I added content on women's heart health to the course including, the documentary "Atypical Heart" and research studies through the Heart and Stroke spotlight on women. The students appreciated the content as it is not covered in other courses. They showed great interest in understanding the differences between women and men in heart health diagnosis and care.

I am single. I live in Burlington with my beautiful 14-year-old daughter. It is her first year of high school. As you can imagine beginning high school during a pandemic has been a challenge but she has rose to the occasion. She participates in an Equality Group at her school. She inspires me to advocate for women's health and to live a heart healthy lifestyle.