

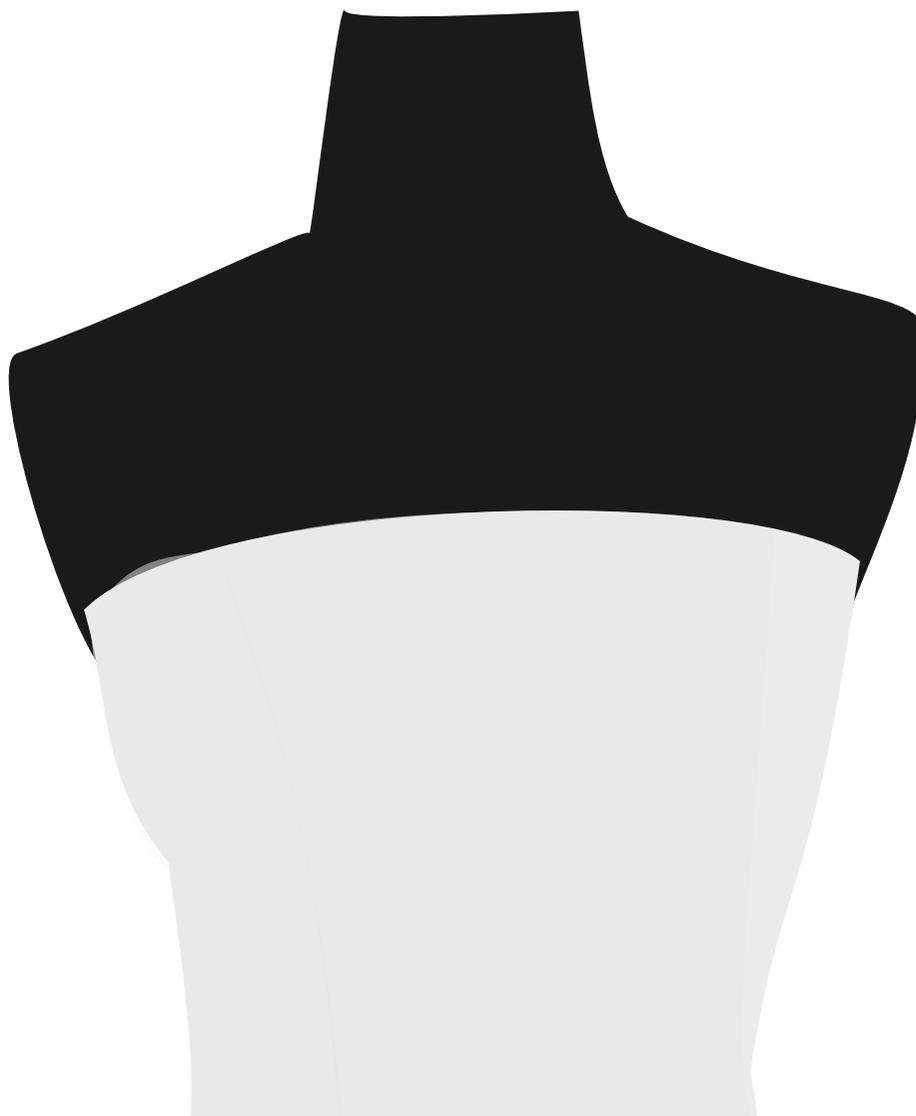
WHITE ROOSTER THEATRE PRESENTS

The Cut of It

A Film



Discussion Guide



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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FUNDERS

STAGE PLAY

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City of St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

FILM

Arts NL: Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council

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For more information about the **Cameron Inquiry and Report** (formerly, the Commission of Inquiry on Hormone Receptor Testing), please visit <https://www.cihrt.nl.ca/default.htm>

For more information on the research study visit www.patientstories.ca

This work was supported by the **Multisensory Studio** www.multisensorystudio.ca

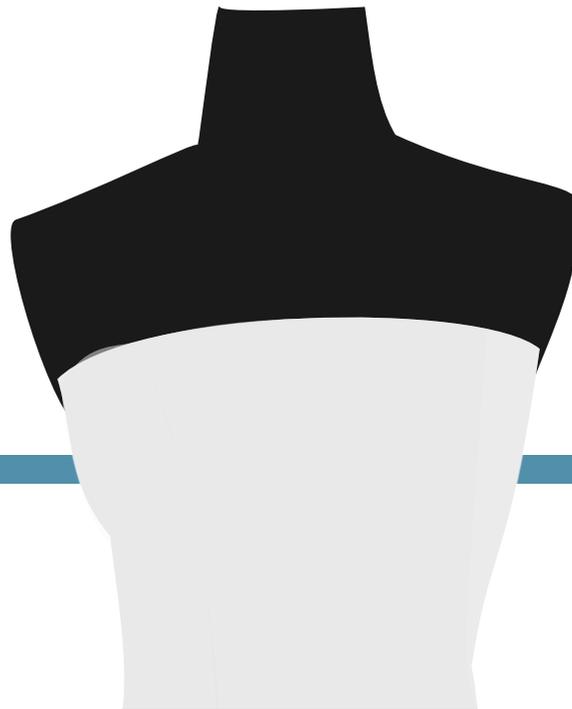
THANK YOU

We would like to thank all of the patients at Eastern Health, Newfoundland and Labrador, who generously shared their stories and experiences for the research. We thank you for your guidance and support for creating the film.

We are honoured to hold space for your stories.

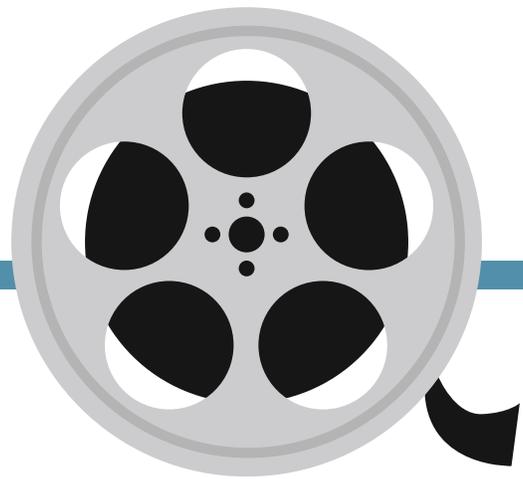
In dedication to the patients and families

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OVERVIEW



THE CUT OF IT is a film adaptation of a stage play inspired by the stories of breast cancer patients who participated in a research study led by Dr. Kathleen Sitter, "Understanding the Experiences of Breast Cancer Patients through Digital Storytelling."

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCES OF BREAST CANCER PATIENTS THROUGH DIGITAL STORYTELLING is a patient-oriented research project that explores the experiences of cancer care from diagnosis, treatment, and surgery through the lenses of women diagnosed with breast cancer. Using digital storytelling, breast cancer patients shed light on their experiences of navigating the health care system, including the specific factors and circumstances that influence patient choices regarding treatment and surgery.

In addition to sharing their stories in the research project, participants were actively involved in each stage of the creative process of developing the stage play and film. Participants provided feedback on the original stage play script as well as the initial film reading by White Rooster Theatre. Several of the participants also acted in the play and film production.

Drawing upon key themes and messages gathered from the patients' stories, **THE CUT OF IT** was created to honour the voices of the women who shared their experiences in the research project.

The hope is that by sharing patient stories via film, greater awareness and dialogue about the following will occur:

- (1) The delivery of health information** to breast cancer patients, caregivers and family members more broadly
- (2) Ways to support patient-identified priorities and choice**
- (3) The importance of taking a "whole-person care" approach** in breast cancer treatment.

For more info about the project and to view/download the report, visit <https://www.patientstories.ca/>

For more information about the film, visit: <https://multisensorystudio.ca/>

FILM CREDITS

Written by Meghan Greeley.

Directed by Ruth Lawrence.

Production by White Rooster Theatre.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

While this guide is designed to encourage emerging social workers to think about the realities of women living with breast cancer, it can also be used and adapted for health care professionals and staff. The term "social worker" can be used interchangeably with terms such as health care professional, doctor, nurse, therapist, etc. in the sections below to provide guidance on how to adapt the guide for other groups. Like the film, the purpose of this guide is to inspire conversation that will better inform and improve systems of care for breast cancer patients.

1 IN 9 WOMEN WILL DEVELOP BREAST CANCER AT SOME POINT IN THEIR LIVES.

Although **The Cut of It** is based on the breast cancer experiences of women, we acknowledge that breast cancer can occur across all genders and gender identities. We also acknowledge that the film contains limited representation from equity-seeking groups which includes, but is not limited to, Indigenous, racialized, disability, and LGBTQIA2S+ communities. More research, education, and awareness concerning the experiences of equity-seeking groups is needed to better inform culturally-sensitive, anti-oppressive, and equitable prevention and treatment of breast cancer.

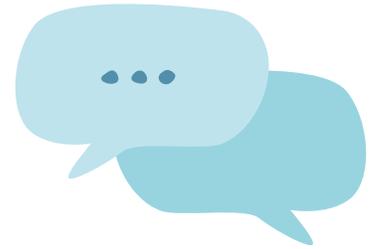
The questions in this guide are organized into 8 themes: **general, gender and identity, fear and control, relationships, choice and self-determination, support, systems and structures, and research.** These questions are meant to offer a starting point for conversation. In addition to the questions, themes, and key words provided, we invite you to explore any aspects of the film that resonate with your personal experiences and/or professional practice that you would like to discuss.

Due to the sensitive nature of the film, intense emotions or feelings of discomfort may arise for you or members of your discussion group. Please take time to honour these experiences and respond appropriately. For additional information and supports, please check out the list of resources provided on pages 12 and 13.

KEYWORDS

breast cancer
patient-oriented research
digital storytelling
information delivery
whole-person care
self-determination
sexual health

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



General Questions

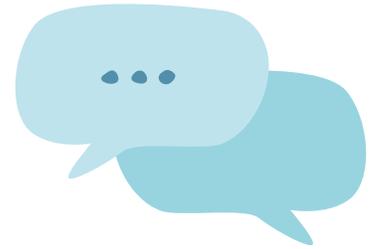
1. What was one key message from the film that resonated most with you? How will this message inform your social work practice?
2. If you could ask any of the characters in the film a single question, what would you ask them and why?
3. What is the "ringing of the bell"? How do the characters respond to this ritual?
4. The film contains scenes that make space for humour and comedic relief. Do you think humour has a role in the treatment of breast cancer? Why or why not?

Gender and Identity

1. Although there are many aspects that make up a person's sense of self, how might someone's identity be connected to their physical body? How might changes to the physical body impact a person's sense of self?
2. How are breasts understood and described in the film?
3. In what ways do the characters in the film affirm their personal power and control over their own bodies? How do they affirm their unique expressions of womanhood during breast cancer surgery and treatment?

4. How can social workers support breast cancer patients in their relationships with their bodies before, during, and after cancer treatment?
5. Acknowledging intersectionality is an essential part of social work practice. What can social workers do to demonstrate they are adopting an intersectional approach when supporting patients with breast cancer?
6. In one of the scenes, a health care professional enters the waiting area and says to one of the patients, "Any minute now and you will be out of that wheelchair" [11:30] and then leaves. The patient says to the patient beside them, "Should I tell her that I've been in this wheelchair since I was four? The wheelchair and the cancer surgery are unrelated" [11:36 – 11:42]. What assumptions are being made about this character? What can health care practitioners do to challenge their own biases and assumptions?
7. The same character recounted in joy about the possibility of having children. She ends the scene with, "No one told me to freeze my eggs before chemo" [17:08]. Why is this an important message?
8. Thinking about Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), whose voices are represented in the film? Whose voices are not represented? Why is this problematic?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Fear and Control

1. How did the characters in the film react when they noticed a lump in their breasts? Do you think this experience could have a ripple effect on their experience in treatment and care? Explain your responses.
2. In what ways do the characters in the film demonstrate acts of resistance towards their breast cancer diagnosis? How about during treatment?
3. Consider the emotional impact the diagnosis may bring; how do you think information can be best delivered when supporting a patient with breast cancer? What qualities or skills should social workers use when delivering information related to diagnosis?
4. What are some of the myths mentioned in the film about the causes of breast cancer? Why is it important to address myths and stigma surrounding breast cancer?
5. What role does a social worker have in promoting breast cancer awareness?
6. How did the women in the film cope with their breast cancer diagnosis? How can social workers support these coping mechanisms? What about the health care system?

7. How do the women in the film make sense of their experiences with breast cancer? In what ways can social workers create spaces that provide patients with a sense of control?

Relationships

1. At one point in the film, a character is given meals, flowers and cards [17:22-18:13], but later there is nothing [26:37-26:56]. What is the underlying message in this context?
2. How can a well-meaning message or gesture have a negative impact on an individual? Think of a time when someone offered you words or had taken actions to show support that made you upset. Reflecting on this experience, what could have been done differently?
3. As a social worker, how would you support someone who has just been diagnosed with breast cancer? What words, non-verbal cues, or skills would you use?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Choice and Self-determination

1. When a patient's choices are limited or removed, what is your role as a social worker to respect the patient's right to self-determination?
2. In what ways can a social worker respect a breast cancer patient's sexual health while communicating treatment plans that may inhibit their agency with their bodies?

Support

1. In what ways are the characters in the film supported by their loved ones? After watching the film, how have your ideas and understandings of "support" changed?
2. How can social workers support patients during their breast cancer treatment? What skills, approaches and values can they use? What about after treatment?
3. How can social workers support patients in communicating what they need or do not need throughout breast cancer treatment and recovery?
4. As a social worker, how do you acknowledge/honour that everyone's experience with breast cancer is unique?
5. What are the benefits of having an interdisciplinary team to support breast cancer patients?

6. In the research study, breast cancer patients expressed the importance of providing care for the whole person rather than treating the breast(s) as an isolated entity. How can health care professionals re-imagine breast cancer care as whole-person care?

Structures and Systems

1. Why does the delivery of health information from health care professionals to patients matter? What role does language, health care culture, and context play in the delivery of information?
2. At a structural level, how can regional health authorities better support the delivery of information about breast cancer, treatment options, and supports to patients?
3. What supports can regional health authorities offer to family members of breast cancer patients?
4. It is widely known that disparities in health care disproportionately affect Indigenous and racialized groups in Canada. How can regional health authorities provide a more equitable culture of care (including prevention, screening, and treatment) for Indigenous and racialized patients with breast cancer?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



5. Under the Canada Health Act, each province and territory is responsible for delivering cancer care services that meet national standards within their respective jurisdictions. What are the benefits of having multi-level collaboration between regional, provincial/territorial, and federal jurisdictions regarding breast cancer services? What are the challenges?

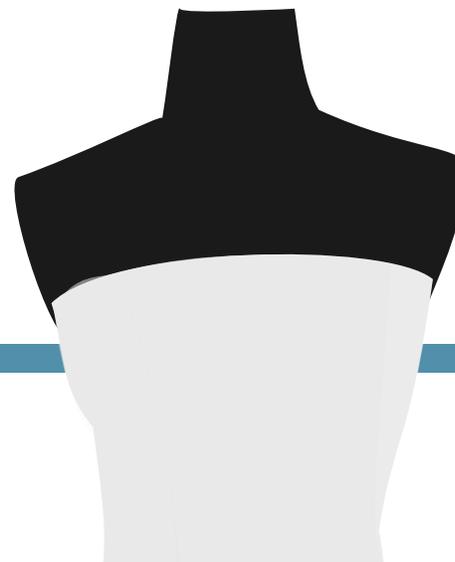
Research

1. What are the benefits of utilizing digital storytelling as a tool in participatory research?
2. What should be considered before using digital storytelling in a patient-oriented research project?
3. How can researchers ensure that participants' wellbeing is prioritized before, during and after the making of digital stories?
4. This film was adapted from the digital stories of breast cancer patients. What do you think the research team, writers, and production staff needed to consider in order to ensure the participants' messages were accurately represented in the film?
5. In what ways can researchers protect the confidentiality and privacy of participants when using digital storytelling as a methodology?

6. When using digital storytelling as a way of generating and sharing knowledge, how should researchers acknowledge and honour ownership of stories?
7. How might this film impact future breast cancer research? How might the film impact cancer-care treatment and practices?
8. There are several creative forms of theatre in research. For example, Augusto Boal's "Theatre of the Oppressed" utilizes dramatic techniques to illuminate systemic oppression to promote social justice and change. How does this film align with- and differ from- this form of popular theatre?
9. Do you know other projects using theatre and film for health and illness research, and if yes, do you see similarities, differences, and potential links with this film for a broader appeal to the Arts in health and illness research, community activism, and policy change?

RESOURCES

By province/territory



ALBERTA

AHS Screening for Life

<https://screeningforlife.ca/breast/>

My Health Alberta

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/breast-health/living-with-breast-cancer/support>

BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC Cancer

<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/screening/breast/>

MANITOBA

Cancer Care

<https://www.cancercare.mb.ca/screening/breast>

Shared Health Manitoba

<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/services/breast-health-centre/about-breast-cancer/>

NEW BRUNSWICK

New Brunswick Breast and Women's Cancer Partnership

<https://nbbwcp-pcscfnb.ca/en/>

New Brunswick Breast Cancer Screening Program

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/health/NewBrunswickCancerNetwork/content/NewBrunswickBreastCancerScreeningProgram.html>

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Eastern Health

<https://cancercare.easternhealth.ca/prevention-and-screening/breast-screening-program/>

NOVA SCOTIA

Breast Screening Program

<https://breastscreening.nshealth.ca/>

Nova Scotia Health

<http://www.nshealth.ca/service-details/Mammogram>

ONTARIO

Cancer Care Ontario

<https://www.cancercareontario.ca/en/cancer-care-ontario/programs/screening-programs/ontario-breast-obsp>

Government of Ontario

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/breast-cancer-testing-and-prevention>

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Government of Prince Edward Island

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-pe/pei-breast-screening-program>

QUEBEC

Government of Québec

<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/advice-and-prevention/screening-and-carrier-testing-offer/quebec-breast-cancer-screening-program>

SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan Cancer Agency

http://www.saskcancer.ca/screening-article/screening-program-for-breast-cancer?_ga=2.119661708.528570255.1638308900-434880130.1637865377

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Government of NW Territories- Health & Social Services

<https://www.hss.gov.nt.ca/sites/hss/files/nwt-breast-cancer-screening.pdf>

Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority

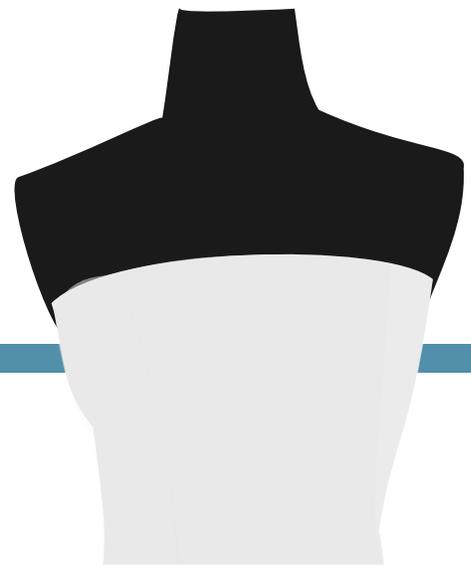
<https://www.nthssa.ca/en/services/cancer-screening-programs/breast-cancer-screening>

YUKON

Yukon Hospitals

https://yukonhospitals.ca/sites/default/files/mammography_program_brochure_2019_edit.pdf

MORE RESOURCES



After Breast Cancer

<https://www.afterbreastcancer.ca/>

BIPOC Women's Health Network

Cancer Resources

<https://bipocwomenshealth.com/>

Breast Cancer Society of Canada

<https://bcsc.ca/>

Breast Cancer Compass

<https://www.mybreastcancercompass.ca/>

Canadian Cancer Society

<https://cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-types/breast/what-is-breast-cancer>

Canadian Cancer Society

Screening in LGBTQ communities

<https://cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/find-cancer-early/screening-in-lgbtq-communities>

CURE Foundation for Breast Cancer

<https://www.curefoundation.com/>

DisAbleD Women's Network (DAWN) Canada

Breast Cancer and Disability

<https://dawnCanada.net/issues/bcam-2015/>

Look Good Feel Better

<https://lgfb.ca/en/>

Cancer's Margins

<https://www.lgbtcancer.ca/>

Rethink Breast Cancer

<https://rethinkbreastcancer.com/>

