

INTRODUCTION:

On behalf of Women, Health, Innovation – Canada (WHI)

Thank you for joining today's round table discussion. We are here to listen, learn, and better understand the health experiences of women in Cape Town. Everyone's perspective is valuable, and there are no right or wrong answers. Our goal is to create a safe, respectful space where participants can speak openly about their challenges, needs, and hopes regarding health and well-being. The insights shared today will inform the development of a larger conference next year, where we will explore these issues more deeply and begin building meaningful solutions together.

A round table is a facilitated group conversation in which every participant is given equal opportunity to speak and contribute. There is no single "authority" in the room; instead, the goal is to share experiences, compare perspectives, and collectively identify key issues, opportunities, and priorities. The discussion is collaborative rather than hierarchical, and it is designed to surface insights that can guide further action and planning.

20 Questions to Guide the Round Table Discussion

Personal and Community Health Experiences

1. What are the most significant health challenges that women in your community currently face?
2. What barriers make it difficult for women to access healthcare services (e.g., cost, transportation, clinic wait times, stigma)?
3. How do cultural expectations or family responsibilities influence women's ability to care for their own health?
4. What healthcare experiences have been positive, and what made them supportive or empowering?

Reproductive and Maternal Health

5. How accessible are reproductive health services, contraception, and family planning resources?
6. What challenges do women face during pregnancy, childbirth, and postnatal care?
7. Are there enough safe and supportive places for women to discuss reproductive health concerns?

Mental and Emotional Well-Being

8. What are the leading causes of stress, anxiety, or depression among women in Cape Town?
9. How comfortable do women feel seeking mental health support, and what keeps them from accessing it?
10. Are there safe spaces for women to talk openly about emotional struggles or trauma?

Gender-Based Violence and Safety

11. How does gender-based violence or safety concerns in the community affect women's health?
12. What services exist for survivors, and what gaps still remain?
13. What community-driven safety or support measures could make a difference?

Chronic Illness, Nutrition, and General Health

14. What common chronic conditions (e.g., hypertension, diabetes) are affecting women, and what support exists for managing them?
15. How do cost and access to nutritious food impact women's health choices?
16. Are there community resources that promote exercise, wellness, or preventative care?

Youth and Intergenerational Perspectives

17. What health challenges are young women and girls facing today that may differ from older generations?
18. How can intergenerational conversations or mentorship help support women's health?

Healthcare System and Solutions

19. What improvements would make the healthcare system more supportive, accessible, and respectful to women?
20. What types of support, programs, or community initiatives would make the greatest impact moving forward?