

# Be a Breast Friend Salon Project

## Health Promotion in a Nontraditional Setting

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### OVERVIEW

The Be a Breast Friend Salon Project capitalized on the uniquely intimate relationship women have with their hair stylists. The project empowered stylists to talk with their clients about breast health and the importance of regular breast cancer screening for women 50+.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To build community capacity by engaging hair stylists to act as lay health educators in promoting regular breast cancer screening.
  - Mammograms can save lives.
  - Women 50+ need regular mammograms.
  - All women should know how their breasts look and feel.
  - Women 50+ can book their own mammograms at the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP).
2. To increase awareness of four key breast health messages:
  - Mammograms can save lives.
  - Women 50+ need regular mammograms.
  - All women should know how their breasts look and feel.
  - Women 50+ can book their own mammograms at the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP).
3. To increase the number of women planning to attend the OBSP in the Hamilton, Halton, Niagara, Brant, and Haldimand-Norfolk regions of Ontario.

### METHODS & MATERIALS

#### Salon Recruitment Package

- A brochure outlining project details.
- Copies of Squeeze, a glossy, full-colour breast health magazine.
- A “Stylists save lives. Ask me how” workstation mirror decal to prompt conversation.
- Emery boards with the OBSP 1-800 number and the Be a Breast Friend Project website address.
- Canadian Cancer Society Thingamaboobs for stylists to use with their clients to highlight the effectiveness of regular mammograms.

### Website

Stylists and clients were directed to [www.beabreastfriend.ca](http://www.beabreastfriend.ca) to learn more about the project, to read Squeeze magazine online and to complete a survey.

### Reminders & Incentives

- A reminder postcard was sent after three months to all salons in the region, encouraging them to take part in the project.
- Incentive prizes were offered to salons that encouraged stylists and clients to complete and return surveys.

### EVALUATION

#### Process Data

- 980 salons received recruitment packages.
- 120 salons requested additional resources.
- 9,006 copies of Squeeze magazine were distributed.
- 3,111 mirror decals were distributed.
- 22,175 emery boards were distributed.
- 4,451 Thingamaboobs were distributed.
- 5,360 people visited the website.

#### Client Survey Results (n=594)

- 51% of clients were 50 or older.
- 70% reported having a conversation about breast health with their stylists.
- 28% of eligible clients planned to book a mammogram at an OBSP site because of the conversation; 20% said they had already booked a mammogram.
- 61% felt encouraged to get regular mammograms.
- 96% were interested in having their stylist talk about breast screening and thought salons were an appropriate place to do so.
- 97% reported that Squeeze magazine was an informative resource to learn about breast screening and overall breast health.

- 98% felt the Thingamaboob was an informative visual tool to learn about the importance of regular breast screening.
- 95% plan to tell other women about the importance of mammography.
- 97.8% responded accurately to first three key messages (see Objectives).
- 74.6% responded accurately to knowing they could book their own mammogram.

#### Stylist Survey Results (n=59)

- 68% reported speaking to five or more clients per week about breast screening.
- 97% thought the four key messages about breast screening were easy to remember and responded accurately when surveyed.
- 99% felt comfortable talking to their female clients about the importance of regular breast screening; 76% felt comfortable talking to their male clients about the importance of regular breast screening.
- 100% thought the project was easy to implement and that the salon was an appropriate venue to discuss health topics.
- 95% reported they would continue to promote breast screening to their clients after the project ended.

### CONCLUSIONS

1. Stylists can increase community capacity by raising awareness about breast health and the importance of regular breast cancer screening with their clients.
2. Women who visited participating salons reported an increase in their awareness of breast health and their intent to participate in breast cancer screening after speaking with their hair stylists and viewing project resources.

### KEY LEARNINGS/RECOMMENDATIONS

- Having a champion at each salon increased commitment to the project and project sustainability.
- Making initial contact with stylists in person or by phone increased participation rates.
- Being flexible to salons' needs helped attract more salons.
- Offering instant incentives and more resources for completing hard copy surveys increased survey participation.
- Sharing magazine with other organizations was a good method of increasing reach of the project.
- Reinforcing that women can book their own appointments at OBSP should improve recall of that message.

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