

Feasibility & Acceptability of *Women Be Healthy 2*: An Intervention to Improve Cancer Screenings



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Women Be Healthy 2 is a course designed to teach women with intellectual disabilities about cervical and breast cancer screenings and to help them become more active partners in their health care. An evaluation of *Women Be Healthy* found that the course was effective in increasing the knowledge of women with intellectual disabilities related to breast health and breast cancer screenings, but was less effective in increasing their knowledge with respect to cervical cancer screening.¹ *Women Be Healthy* was revised based on these findings, interviews with course instructors and class participants, as well as a review of current literature and health screening recommendations. The new curriculum, *Women Be Healthy 2*, increases the number of classes from 8 classes taught once per week to 22 classes taught twice per week. Overall class time is increased from 12 to 22 hours. In addition, the new curriculum has an increased focus on cervical cancer screening, more repetition, an increased focus on experiential activities, and new class kit materials.

The new *Women Be Healthy 2* has been taught at eight sites across North Carolina and a total of 48 women with developmental disabilities are participating. Instructors who previously taught *Women Be Healthy* are receiving training on the new curriculum.

Interviews with instructors and the women participants revealed overwhelmingly positive feelings and experiences with *Women Be Healthy 2*. The participants with developmental disabilities reported liking the course and appreciating the opportunity to learn about different types of cancer and how to maintain their health. Instructors found the new class structure and content to be promising. They reported the increase in repetition and “hands-on” learning activities to be especially useful. Some sites reported difficulty teaching twice per week because of participant work schedules or problems with participant transportation. Other sites reported the new schedule worked well.

¹ Parish, S.L., Rose, R.A., Luken, K., Swaine, J.G., & O’Hare, L. (2012). Cancer screening knowledge changes: Results from a randomized control trial of women with developmental disabilities. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 22(1), 43-53.

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