

## Seeking Community Advisors for Research Project on HIV/STBBI Care & Prevention for Queer West Asian and North African (WANA) Communities in Ontario (18-month term)

The [Community-Based Research Centre \(CBRC\)](#) is seeking 5-10 community advisors based in Ontario to support a new community-based research project focused on improving access to HIV and sexually transmitted and blood-borne infection (STBBI) prevention, testing, and care for queer West Asian and North African (WANA) communities. As Community Advisors, individuals will provide guidance for project activities and have the opportunity to learn about community-based research approaches.

### What is the Community-Based Research Centre?

CBRC promotes the health of sexual and gender minority communities through research and intervention development. CBRC’s core pillars—community-led research, knowledge exchange, network building, and leadership development—position the organization as a thought leader, transforming ideas into actions that make a difference in our communities. CBRC was incorporated in 1999 and is a non-profit charitable organization, with offices across Canada including Toronto. CBRC has documented a list of research principles that act as a framework—[you can view them here](#).

### What do we mean by West Asian and North African?

West Asia and North Africa (WANA) is a postcolonial term that refers to the geographical area otherwise known as the Middle East and North Africa. The region has no standard definition, with different organizations including differing countries typically ranging from 18 to 24 countries across Central and West Asia and North Africa sharing commonalities in socio-political history, language, religion, and/or culture. For the purposes of this research, we adopt a broad understanding of the term WANA to include any individuals who self-identify as being part of this diverse region.

### Who is the Research Team?

This project is led by **Dr. Jad Sinno** (Director of Research, CBRC, [jad.sinno@cbrc.net](mailto:jad.sinno@cbrc.net)), in collaboration with a multidisciplinary team of researchers, clinicians, and community partners. Dr. Jad Sinno is a queer, non-binary, and Shami Arab with expertise in the social and cultural causes of health for queer populations. The complete research team includes:

Name	Institution
Dr. Daniel Grace	University of Toronto
Dr. Roula Kteily-Hawa	Western University
Dr. Mouna Loutfy	Women’s College Hospital
Dr. Nathan Lachowsky	University of Northern British Columbia

Liane Khoury	Queer Arabs Halifax
Praney Anand	Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention
Michael Kwag	Community-Based Research Centre

The project centres queer WANA voices and includes researchers and collaborators with lived and professional experience in HIV, migration, and sexual health.

**Who funded this project?**

This research is supported by the [Ontario HIV Treatment Network](#) (OHTN) HIV Endgame Program. Specifically, this project is part of the Community-Based Project and Participatory Evaluation Program Stream.

**What is this project about?**

Queer WANA communities in Ontario experience substantial barriers to accessing HIV and STBBI prevention, testing, and care.

These barriers are shaped by intersecting systems of oppression, including racism, Islamophobia, migration precarity, language barriers, and cis- and heteronormative healthcare systems. As a result, queer WANA individuals may experience:

- Reduced access to culturally safe sexual health services
- Delayed HIV/STBBI testing and diagnosis
- Lower uptake of prevention tools such as PrEP
- Challenges in accessing ongoing care and support

Despite these inequities, there is limited Ontario-specific research focused on the sexual health experiences and care pathways of queer WANA communities.

To address this gap, CBRC and collaborators are leading a community-based research project that will work closely with community members to identify barriers and facilitators to care, and co-develop practical, culturally relevant recommendations for improving services across Ontario.

**What is the role of Community Advisors?**

Community Advisors will play a key role in guiding the project. Advisors will work closely with the research team to ensure the project is community-driven, relevant, and grounded in lived experience. The project includes a strong focus on capacity building, co-learning, and collaborative decision-making.

Community Advisors will:

- Provide feedback on research questions and priorities
- Inform recruitment strategies and outreach approaches
- Review and provide input on interview guides and study materials
- Participate in collaborative data interpretation and analysis

- Help shape how findings are shared (e.g., community reports, tools, recommendations)

Time commitment:

- Approximately 1–2 hours per month over 18 months
- Attend a CAB meeting once every 3 months (4 times per year, 6 meetings total).
- Includes:
  - Orientation and training
  - Regular virtual meetings (Zoom or phone)
  - Occasional document review between meetings

**Who can be a Community Advisor?**

We are seeking individuals who:

- Identify as a sexual and/or gender diverse person
- Identify as a West Asian and North African
- Are 18 years of age or older
- Live in Ontario, Canada
- Have an interest in or experience with HIV/STBBI prevention, testing, or care
- Are able to communicate in English (French, Arabic, Farsi, and other WANA languages are considered an asset)
- Are available for the duration of the project (approximately 18 months)

We are especially interested in hearing from women (cis and trans), and trans and/or non-binary people within queer WANA communities, as well as individuals with lived experience of:

- Immigration, refugee, or newcomer experiences
- Individuals living in rural and remote areas
- Language barriers accessing healthcare
- Experiences navigating sexual health services in Ontario
- Living with HIV
- HIV prevention (e.g., PrEP), testing, or care
- Experiences of stigma or discrimination in healthcare settings

We are interested in diverse voices and lived experiences. The research team will aim to select 5-10 individuals who represent differing gender identities, sexual orientations, locations in Ontario, HIV status, immigration status, and languages spoken.

Please note: you will never be asked to disclose sensitive personal information that you are not comfortable sharing.

**What are the benefits to Community Advisors?**

- Honorarium \$50 per meeting for a total of \$300
- Opportunity to connect with other queer WANA community members
- Opportunity to contribute to a meaningful, community-led research project
- Capacity-building experience in community-based research
- A reference letter upon request

- Opportunity (if desired) to be acknowledged in public-facing outputs (e.g., community reports, presentations)

### **How to apply:**

Please send a short statement of interest to Malek Yalaoui (they/them) Research Coordinator at [malek.yalaoui@cbrc.net](mailto:malek.yalaoui@cbrc.net). Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, and positions will be filled as suitable candidates are identified. **Interested individuals are encouraged to submit by Monday, May 11, 2026, for priority consideration.**

Your statement can include:

- Your lived experiences
- Why you are interested in this project
- Any relevant experience in community, advocacy, or research settings
- Anything else you would like us to know

You may submit your application in any of the following formats:

- Written (2–3 paragraphs, maximum 500 words)
- Short video (maximum 3 minutes)
- Audio recording (maximum 3 minutes)

If this process presents barriers, please reach out to discuss alternative ways of applying.

### **What happens after I apply?**

The research team will review your statement and invite you to a brief 15-minute call to learn about you and your interests. Please note that we will be selecting individuals to represent diverse lived experiences. The research team will notify all interested individuals about the outcome of their individuals once decisions are made. All individuals will be notified of the outcome of their application once the selection process is complete.