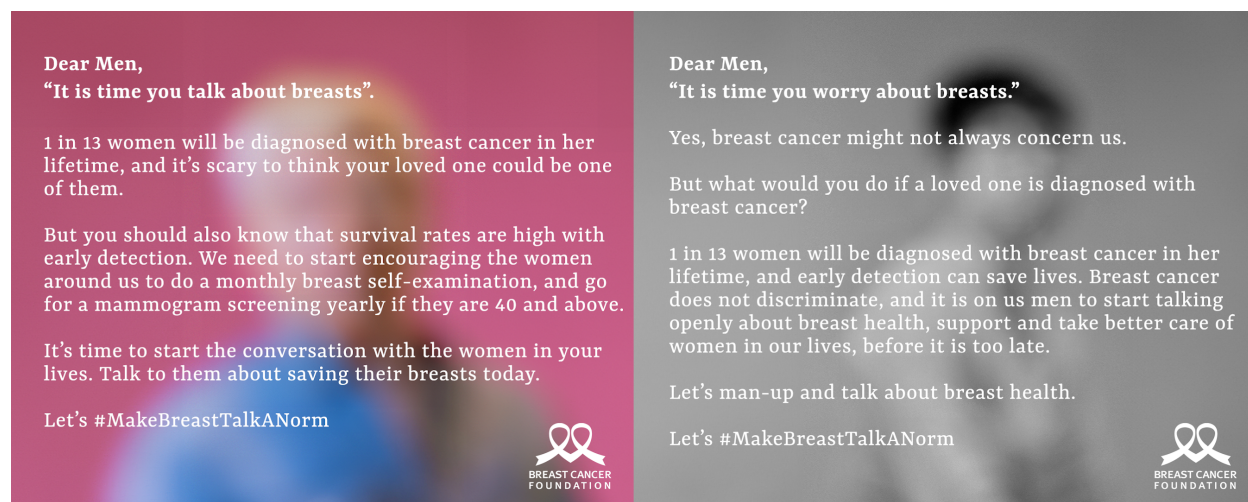


MEDIA RELEASE



“Dear Men, It’s Time To Talk About Breasts.” **BCF Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2023**

29 September 2023

(All figures stated in this media release are true & accurate as of 21 Sep 2023)

- *Despite knowing that early detection significantly reduces mortality, fewer than 40% of Singapore women get their mammograms done*.*
- *A study by Singapore Cancer Registry found that an average of 6 women are diagnosed with Breast Cancer daily.”*
- *Based on a study in 2016-2020 by the National Registry of Diseases, breast cancer was the leading cancer diagnosed among females across all 3 ethnic groups, which accounted for about 29%-36% within each ethnic group.”*

SINGAPORE, 29 SEPTEMBER 2023 - In line with Breast Cancer Month (BCAM) 2023, Breast Cancer Foundation is proud to introduce its inspirational callout ‘Dear Men’, in line with the national Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM) campaign theme ‘Keeping Her In The Picture’.

‘Dear Men’ by BCF aims to redefine the role of men in getting women to go for early detection by asking men to talk about breast health, and that saving lives through early detection should not be women alone, but a collaborative effort by looking out for their loved ones.

*“For years, breast cancer has been perceived as mainly a woman’s issue and having little or nothing to do with men. In line with this year’s national campaign theme “Keeping Her In The Picture”, the role of men takes on a newfound significance in the fight against breast cancer. The resounding, heartfelt call of ‘Dear Men’ serves to encourage men to talk about breast health and remind the women they hold dear - mothers, sisters, daughters and other loved ones - to prioritize breast cancer screening”, said **Natalie LAU, BCF Head of Advocacy & Communications.***

She continues, “BCF is committed to advocate to both men and women through our outreach and education for awareness, early detection and support for the breast cancer community. With signature events like Pink Ribbon Walk, we are rallying the community around her. Women battling breast cancer should feel unwavering support and strength from the men in their lives: partners, dads, brothers and sons. The goal is for breast cancer to be merely words, not a life sentence. Support and saving lives via early detection should be a collective effort by men, the community, and women alike.”

Social Support For Women

A recent study by the Singapore Academy of Medicine revealed that women who perceived themselves to be important to family members, and who were encouraged by their loved ones to be screened were more likely to go for early detection*.

Another focus group study by DDB Worldwide, creative agency for BCF, revealed the following: *“If, like a partner, my husband would encourage me, I feel that he is vested to know that my health is at a clear state. I think that is going to be very encouraging as well.”**

“As a man myself, it’s scary knowing that someone I love could be diagnosed with breast cancer. Breast cancer does not only affect the diagnosed, but the people around them too. So I think it’s important that we men don’t shy away from the conversation of breasts, but rather, start encouraging our mums, wives, sisters, relatives, and friends to get their breasts regularly checked.”

- Thomas Yang,
Executive Creative Director, DDB Worldwide

Breast Cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in women, Singapore and worldwide, yet less than 40% of Singapore women get their mammograms done. Top reasons include lack of social support, fear of painful procedures, negative results & perceived lack of necessity.

This time, to urge more women to go for mammograms, BCF adopts an innovative approach, in amplifying breast cancer awareness, by focusing on an often overlooked and underexplored group: Men.

Empowering Men

“Dear men, it’s time to talk about breasts.”

For too long, the role and impact that men have in advocating breast cancer awareness and influencing women has been underestimated.

With the “Dear Men” campaign, the call for men to become more informed about breast health grows louder.

At the same time, a separate study revealed that men also have an added barrier of awkwardness that stops them from talking about it with their loved ones on the topic*.

Over the years, BCF has been actively raising public awareness of breast cancer, early detection through awareness talks and outreach at corporate, community and signature events like Pink Ribbon Walk.

BCF presents the following key approaches and initiatives for understanding and championing proactive breast health management. This fosters support and active involvement in the health journey alongside the women in their lives, in the fight against breast cancer.

- 1. Empowerment Through Knowledge:** Through awareness talks and outreach, BCF introduces male perspectives in helping men relate and understand breast cancer, early detection and in supporting the women they cherish.

“It’s time for a groundswell of change. We want more male perspectives and harness diversity and inclusion so that we can walk the talk. We hope for more men to step up, take up arms alongside their loved ones and be part of this collective community effort.”

- **Ms. Adeline Kow**

General Manager, Breast Cancer Foundation

“This is definitely a great move. More needs to be done in getting men to learn more about breast cancer and health, and understanding the BIG WHY behind. This enables men to better protect, care for and support the women they hold dear. Men, by regularly reminding, reassuring them, and ensuring they go for regular screening, can mean a timely difference in early detection and save their lives. A real man is breast-aware!”

- **Dr. Choo Bok Ai,**

Senior Consultant Clinical Oncologist at Icon Cancer Centre, Member of Medical Panel at Breast Cancer Foundation

- 2. Strength in Solidarity:** The Caregivers Support group is 1 out of the 5 support groups run by BCF which provides a safe space for carers to engage without inhibitions. New caregivers can learn from the stories and experiences shared in taking care of those affected by breast cancer, and understand the importance of self-care. Other psychosocial support provided include upcoming counselling services and Pink Talks which are focused on special-interest topics such as nutrition, mental health, will-writing, emotions and intimacy, all delivered in partnership with various experts in their professional fields.

"In most instances, men have been conditioned to suppress emotions and withhold experiences, often suffering in silence. BCF's 'Dear Men' acknowledges this struggle, shatters this invisibility and gets men to break the silence. The time has come for men to be more comfortable about more sensitive issues concerning women including breast health and better care for the women they love. This raises the importance of men in the fight against breast cancer, inspiring them to be fully present, as unwavering supporters of the women they cherish. For men taking care of women battling breast cancer, joining a member-centric support group enables them to connect and receive help and support from others. This fosters trust and offers a safe space for them to be vulnerable without fear of being judged. 'Dear Men' encompasses these ideals, bridging the gap between silence and understanding."

- Mr. Karl Desouza

Director and Lead Psychotherapist @ Listening Ear Counselling and Consultancy, Volunteer Counsellor, Breast Cancer Foundation

"The call for men is long overdue. Women are encouraged to go for mammogram screening once they're eligible. However, rather than leaving this crucial choice solely to women, as men, we should take the lead and continuously push, ensure and remind the women we cherish, to proactively take charge of their breast health and prioritise early detection. For women suffering from breast cancer: many men might tend to underestimate their capacity in helping them, because they do not know how they can truly help. In reality, the profoundly influential and effective role of men, in pushing and ensuring women to go for early screening, can prove to be highly compelling and effective. Every woman matters and every man matters!"

- Mr. Low Sie Chong

Member since 2007, Paddlers In Pink dragon boater and Breast Cancer Foundation Advocate

3. Honouring Resilience Through Signature Activities:

(a) Pink Light Up 2023

In October, Singapore will be bathed in a pink glow much like iconic locations around the world including the Singapore Flyer, Marina Bay Sands and more. At least 20 locations will be lit up in pink as a show of solidarity. To encourage active participation and spark creative expression, BCF will host a photo contest, requiring keen participants to follow map clues, locate, capture, and share

Science Direct. Attitudes and barriers to mammography screening in Singapore through the eyes of adult children. December 2022: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2667321522001305>

images of pink-illuminated buildings on social media. This yearly event will kick off with long-standing partner The Estée Lauder Companies on 30 Sep 2023 at The National Gallery.

(b) Pink Partners

In a remarkable display of solidarity, “Pink Partners”, a coalition of over 30 brands unite to support breast cancer awareness, by turning customer experiences into meaningful contributions. “Pink Partners” consist of renowned establishments like Fullerton Hotel, IHG Hotels & Resorts, Pazzion, Ralph Lauren and more contributing to a great cause in creative ways.

For a limited time, patrons can expect to indulge in unique pink shopping experiences that include Pink high-tea, specially-curated F&B offerings, wellness and lifestyle products, beauty and skincare, limited edition footwear and “Pink Pony” products. A portion of the proceeds will be generously donated to support BCF’s mission.

(c) Community Mammobus Programme

BCF remains committed in running the monthly activations at specific community locations in Singapore as part of the tripartite (NHGD-SCS-BCF) community mammobus programme for eligible Singaporeans and PRs.

Upcoming activations will be in the areas of *Sin Ming* (October 2023), *Bishan* (November 2023) and *Toa Payoh* (December 2023).

(d) Pink Ribbon Walk 2023

Presented by Income, this year’s BCF signature event will kick off in a refreshed carnival-style fashion with fun-filled fringe activities like face-painting, T-shirt decoration and a best fancy dress contest which allows for creativity and innovation in showcasing awareness and support messages.

Conventionally, Pink Ribbon Walk has always attracted more women participants than men. This year, in conjunction with BCF’s ‘Dear Men’ heartfelt callout, the Walk aspires to see greater male participation. The Walk’s route will traverse some of Singapore’s most iconic landmarks, including Marina Bay Sands and The Esplanade.

Real Stories, Real Impact: At BCF, we believe in the power of collective understanding and care, providing a network of support for everyone affected by breast cancer, where men's roles as caregivers and pillars of strength are recognized and celebrated.

BCF invites all men to step up and join in our mission as a member, volunteer, caregiver or donor. Men’s efforts matter, in collectively shaping as a community, our fight against breast cancer.

=====

About the Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF)

Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF) is a social service agency in Singapore that aims to promote early detection of breast cancer and support the breast cancer community.

Established in 1997, BCF raises breast cancer awareness through talks, outreach events, research, and publications. It also provides psychosocial programs such as Healing Through The Arts (HTTA), support groups, and befriending activities for those affected by breast cancer. Subsidies are available to women with low income for prostheses and bras through its Positive Image and Appearance Scheme, and it runs a complimentary wig loan program.

BCF is self-funded and depends on public donations to provide quality services and programs. The organization runs Singapore's first flagship Breast Cancer Centre, and the satellite Breast Cancer Support Centre @ Khoo Teck Puat hospital.

For updates on BCF's latest work and initiatives, visit <https://www.bcf.org.sg> and follow BCF on:

- Facebook: [@BreastCancerFoundationSg](#)
- Instagram: [@bcfsg](#)
- LinkedIn: [Breast Cancer Foundation](#)

=====

For media enquiries, please contact:

Natalie LAU
Head of Advocacy & Communications
Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF)
Phone: (65) 9859-0083
Email: natalie.lau@bcf.org.sg

Nicholas NG
Digital & Performance Marketing Manager
Breast Cancer Foundation (BCF)
Phone: (65) 9631-1875
Email: nicholas.ng@bcf.org.sg

=====