

## MKUH Pride Network for International Women's Day

This International Women's Day we want to celebrate the women who have helped drive forward the LGBTQ+ community's struggle for equality. Lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, pansexual, asexual women, and the allies who support the community, I want to thank you on behalf of the Pride Network here at the hospital. While historically the hard work and contributions of LGBTQ+ women haven't always been made obvious or the focal point of our stories as a community, let's remember the trans women starting riots, the lesbian women caring for those dying of HIV and AIDS after their families had long abandoned them, women fighting to overturn homophobic laws against marriage. Let's look to move forwards raising the voices and successes of women in our community and everywhere.

This year International Women's Day is asking us to #BreakTheBias, challenge stereotypes, question ourselves and call out others. We as a community know that these kinds of biases and stereotypes are often not only untrue, they're actively harmful and the opposite of the facts. Stereotypes like lesbian women being tough and invulnerable, when they're suffering with long term mental health conditions at 4 to 5 times the rate of heterosexual women, with a lack of targeted mental health support available for them. Assumptions that bisexual or pansexual women have it easier because they can "just date men", while they are actually being erased and suffering from biphobia within and outside of the community, often with poorer mental health too. Extremely harmful ideas that trans women are a threat to women's spaces, even though we know that trans women are much more likely to be a victim of abuse and violence.

On behalf of myself and Annie, we will keep working with the Women's Network, as well as the other staff networks to #BreakTheBias and make MKUH a better place for staff and the local community.

