

# Family Health History



**PREFER CHW  
TRAINING**

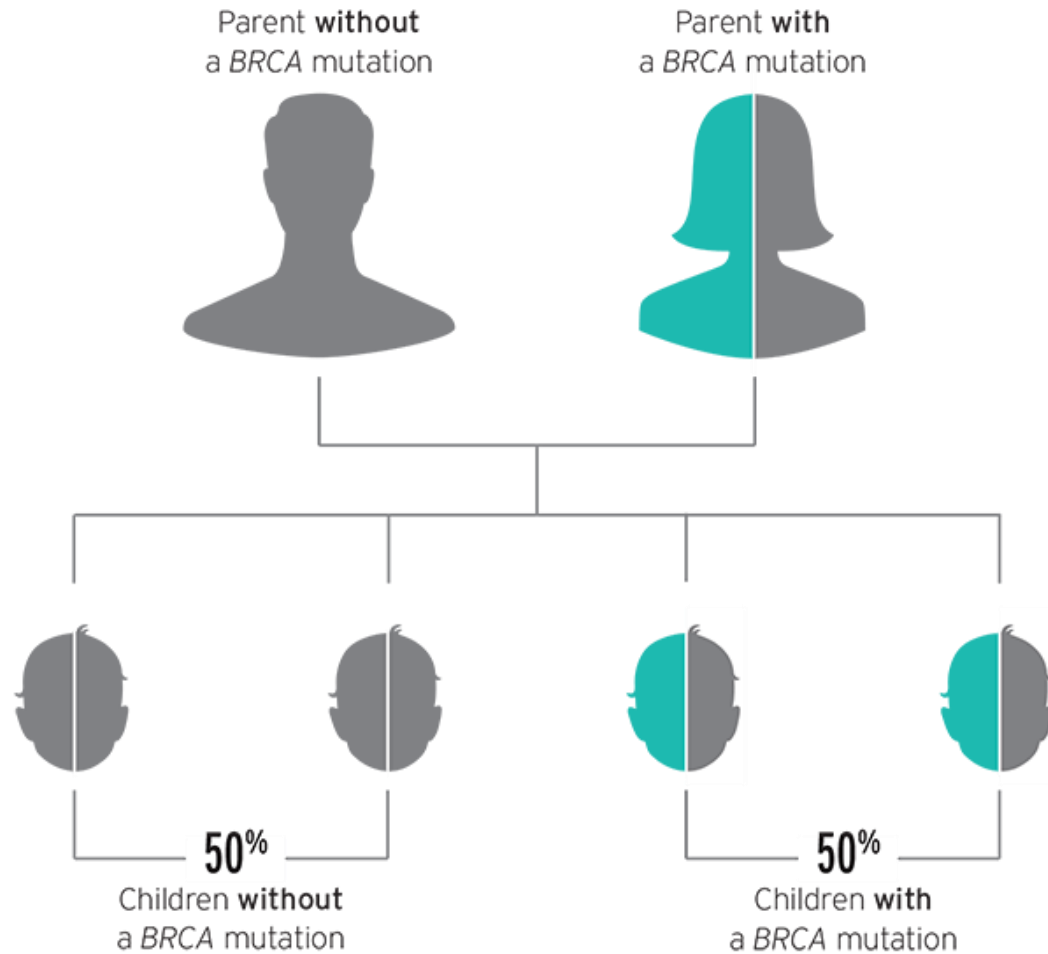
Empowering Communities through  
Genomics Education



# Learning Objectives

- Share the importance of knowing family history in identifying genetic risk and guiding preventive care.
- Describe strategies to help individuals collect and document their family health history.
- Name ways to support patients in creating and using a family health history to inform healthcare decisions and discussions with providers.

# Family Pedigree



- BRCA= BReast Cancer gene.
- Includes both BRCA1 and BRCA2.
- Significantly increase the risk of:
  - breast cancer
  - Ovarian cancer
  - Pancreatic, and prostate cancers.

# Importance of Family History

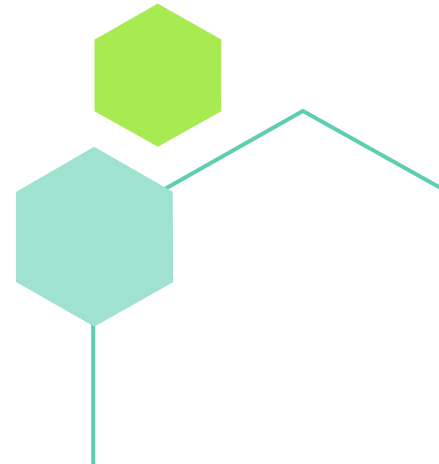
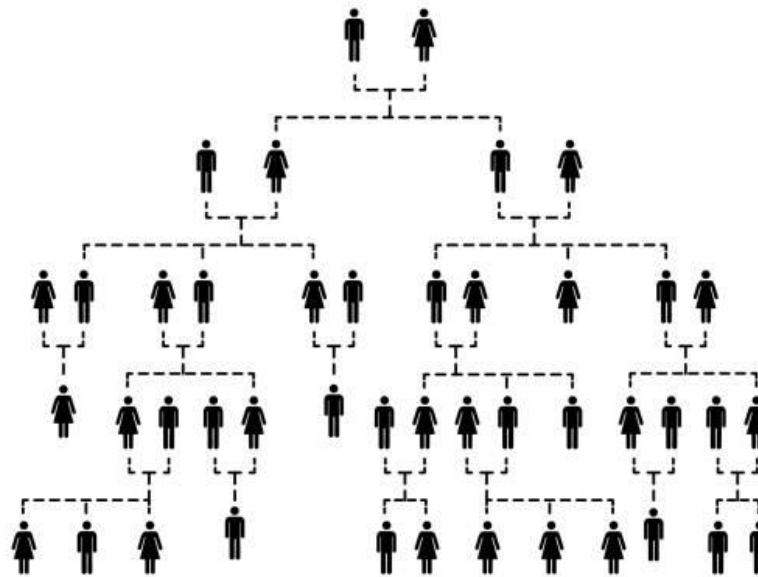
Information is power!

- Shares if genetic mutations have been passed down
- Helps you **understand your chances** of getting certain diseases
- Tells you your **risk** and how to **protect your health**
- Supports **early detection**, so you can find problems early and **prevent serious illness**



# So, what is exactly is family health history?

- Record of diseases and health conditions in your family
- Includes: parents, siblings, children, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, etc.



# First-, Second-, and Third-Degree Relatives

## First-Degree Relatives:

- Closest family members — one generation away from you.
- Examples: Parents, brothers and sisters, children.

## Second-Degree Relatives:

- Family members who are two generations apart from you.
- Examples: Grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews.

## Third-Degree Relatives:

- More distant relatives, three generations apart.
- Examples: First cousins, great-grandparents, great-grandchildren.



# What's Included in Family History?

First, second, and third-degree relatives' information

Age at death (if a family member has passed away)

Ethnicity or background

- Some health conditions are more common in certain ethnic or geographic groups

Chronic health problems

- *Examples:* High blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, Parkinson's disease

Risks for conditions that run in families

Age when someone in your family got sick

- (i.e. when they were first diagnosed with a condition)

Health behaviors and habits

- *Examples:* Smoking, exercise, eating habits



# Family History Collection



- Talk with your family early
- Include age, type of cancer or medical condition, age of diagnosis, cause of/age at death (if relevant)
- Include biological mother AND father's side
- Update on a regular basis
- Family history can be a part of a risk assessment

*What challenges do you anticipate when asking about family history?*





# Challenges to Obtaining Family History

## Knowing which relatives to ask:

- Only blood relatives (parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins).

## Not all records are available:

- Some information may be missing or incomplete

## Some family members are hard to reach:

- They may live far away or may not be in contact.
- Having at least some information is better than no information.



# Challenges to Obtaining Family History

## Adoption:

- People who are adopted may not have access to their biological family history.

## Different beliefs about sharing health information:

- Some family members may think it's not important or feel uncomfortable talking about it.

## People may forget or not want to talk about it:

- Be respectful and patient. Remind them that **any small detail can help.**

# Keeping Family History up to Date

- Regularly and promptly update with new diagnoses and information.
- Designate someone in the family to oversee health information.
- Share information with providers
- Consider genetic evaluation if many people in the family have had the same disease
- Have an organizational system:
  - Notebook or filing system.
  - Computer software.
  - Applications such as:
    - "FamGenix"
    - Surgeon General's Family Health History tool



# Workbook Activity #3

Use the following checklist to create your own family health history. Put a check in the columns for breast, ovarian, any other cancer, and cardiac events for each family member. For those with a check, try to include additional details if possible. If you are unsure put a "?"

Family Member	Breast Cancer	Ovarian Cancer	Any Other Cancer	Cardiac Events
<b>Yourself</b>				
<b>Parents</b>				
<b>Siblings</b>				
<b>Children</b>				
<b>Grandparents (mother's side)</b>				
<b>Aunt/Uncle (mother's side)</b>				
<b>Grandparents (father's side)</b>				
<b>Aunt/Uncle (father's side)</b>				
<b>2 or more cases of cancer after age 50 on same side of family</b>				
<b>Any relative with coronary artery disease or heart attack before 50</b>				

# Workbook Activity #4

Download the FamGenix app (or a similar app used to track family health history) from the Google Play store or Apple app store.

- *Try entering your family health history.*
  1. What are some pros and cons of utilizing this technology?
  2. How might this technology be used by your community members?
  3. What other strategies could be used to keep track of family history (e.g., notes app in phone, notes section on person's contact card, sending patient portal message)