

32nd International Conference on
ONCOLOGY NURSING AND CANCER CARE
September 13-14, 2017 Singapore

Re-constructing the concept of reconstruction for women with breast cancer

Victoria Reid-de Jong
University of Victoria, Canada

What is a woman? This is part of the question and I suggest, motivation that currently has some women enduring lengthy reconstructive procedures post mastectomy. Nurses play an important role in women's health and have an opportunity to explore, within this population of women, ideas about beauty, femininity, sexuality and being a woman, as well as the meaning they attach to their breasts and how these might be embodied post-mastectomy. This presentation will provide an overview of how the female breast has been conceptualized in the West, followed by sections on how aesthetics, beauty and appearance are fundamental to reconstructive practices for women post mastectomy in contemporary society. Current reconstructive options for women post mastectomy will be discussed, emphasizing the invasiveness that women are willing to endure, in order to attain or maintain, that which is considered normal or ideal by society's heteronormative standards. Lastly, the concepts of body image, femininity and sexual identity will be explored, contemplating alternative options such as choosing to adorn the mastectomy site with a tattoo. Threaded throughout are some personal reflections and experiences I have had as a woman treated for breast cancer.

vreidej@uvic.ca