

# AGM REPORT – West Kootenay Prevention, and Harm Reduction Education Coordinator AND the Men’s Health Initiative – Kootenay Outreach Worker

## West Kootenay Prevention and Harm Reduction Education Coordinator

A challenging, yet humbling element, of being one of the ANKORS Prevention and Harm Reduction Education Coordinator’s, is the ability to be versatile and well informed on a plethora of subjects, while maintaining an open demeanor, as to meet individuals on whatever level they wish to interact with you on. Nowhere are these skills more tested and utilized then in classroom and community outreach scenarios.

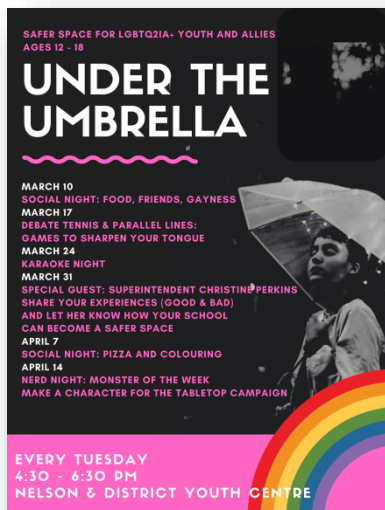
ANKORS continues to foster excellent working relationships with all area school districts and this has been an integral part of seeing an increase in the number of school based presentations this year. Classroom invitations continue to play a critical link in our ability to reach youth. This year I saw an increase in the number of requests for both Sexual Health related workshops and Naloxone/ Drug Awareness/ Party Safe presentations, with some high schools allowing Naloxone training demonstrations in classrooms.



Within community settings, and while conducting outreach with Persons Who Use Drugs (PWUD) the key topic of interest was information pertaining to Naloxone, or Drug and Overdose related questions. I was honored to speak at a number of community forms, fairs, and community based meetings this year. In my capacity with ANKORS, I’ve continued to maintain a supportive and engaged presence with the Nelson, Castlegar, and Grand Forks Fentanyl Task Force interagency meetings. The coloration/ increased interest in Naloxone and Drug Awareness educational programming, across all segments of our communities, reminds me that we are still in the grip of an Overdose Health Crisis in this country. However, outreach efforts and informational messaging on all platforms is helping to inform everyone and get Naloxone kits in to the hands that need them.

## Men’s Health Initiative - Kootenay Outreach Worker

Continuing to hold a dual role in both Prevention Education and working as the Men’s Health Initiative – Kootenay Outreach Worker, has been a critical element in staying connected to the needs and varying health concerns ofGBTQ2 men who have sex with other men. In this role, I have the distinction of being a resource person, within a marginalized segment of our community, of which, I myself am a member. Being a proud gay man has given me deep insights and the ability to empathize and connect with others in these often hidden segments of our larger communities. I continue to enjoy a close working relationship with Milo Leraar the coordinator of ANKORS TransConnect Program. This year we were invited to co-facilitate a queer youth group called Under the Umbrella, operated out of the Nelson and District Youth Center, with the



support of Nelson Youth Action Network (NYAN). Each week Milo and I bring educational, informative, artistic, creative, and sometimes goofy activities to the groups' attendees. This space is held as a safe, inclusive, queer friendly space, where youth aged 12 – 18 are welcome to attend, in an effort to better connect them resources and members of their queer community. Throughout the COVID pandemic Milo and I have continued to offer this group, using a virtual platform.

To date we've had the opportunity to present together numerous times on topics ranging from Trans 101 Basics and Gender Equity, to working collaboratively to support Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) alliance groups in schools across the East and West Kootenay region. We continue to collaborate on expanding the reach of the Rainbow and PRICK Clinics to include/ attract those in hidden segments of our rural communities. The number of connections established with Kootenay residents who identify on the LGBTQ2IA+ spectrum, has seen a substantial increase over this past year. Outreach at yearly PRIDE events throughout the basin, helps to maintain the visibility of our services and is instrumental in forging new interpersonal connections and or partnerships with allied services.

As I look to what's on the horizon, I feel it import to mention the effects the COVID-19 pandemic is having on all citizens at this current time in history. From my prospective as a regional educator, it's been a surreal experience to navigate and collaborate with colleagues as we find ways to adapt service provision to meet the essential needs in social and mental health front line services around the West Kootenay region.

I do believe it is our creative solutions, as we embrace virtual platforms and technologies, which will allow us to continue providing needed educational and social connections though these challenging times. This unprecedented global pandemic has shown us new ways of collaboration as we strive to continue to provide services to our most marginalized citizens. I foresee much of the educational content I provide being offered through online platforms and I'm currently working with my colleagues to better understand ways we can utilize technologies to meet the needs of Kootenay residents.

We will meet again in person when it is safe to do so, ideas and experiences will be shared, and knowledge gained. The resiliency of the human spirit is an undeniable force; let us remain resolute in our desire to work collaboratively to overcome this repertory disease, as we are indeed all in this together.

**JOE'S 2019/2020 STATS;**

<u>PROGRAM/ INITIATIVE OR DEMOGRAPHIC REACHED:</u>	<u># OF EVENTS</u>	<u>TOTAL CONTACTS MADE:</u>
LGBTQ2+ OUTREACH WITH BASIN YOUTH – VARIOUS PROGRAMS	32	484
EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS ON SEXUAL HEALTH - WITHIN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY	34	1202
NALOXONE/ OVERDOSE & DRUG AWARENESS TRAININGS	44	675
1TO1 CONSULTATIONS – ALL TOPICS	9	9
OUTREACH WITH PERSONS WHO USE DRUGS	14	202
NUMBER OF MEETING ATTENDED IN SUPPORT OF VARIOUS INITIATIVES AFFILIATED WITH	84	178
Respectfully Submitted By; Joseph Reiner	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>2750</b>