

# **Men's Health Initiative – Year End**

I have officially been in the position as coordinator of the Men's Health Initiative in the West Kootenays now for just over a year. In that time, as I juggled schoolwork and building up a food forest on the property I share with my partner, I have been working on building up programs within the MHI.

The Prick! STI and HIV testing clinics, which I facilitate with the help of Robin our Health Outreach Nurse who does the actual testing, occur on a quarterly basis. We have consistently managed to draw in at least six participants per event, singling out the West Kootenay Prick! event as one of the most successful in the province. After much deliberation with other members of MHI and HIM, Prick! was rebranded in March of this year to PLUS! which now encourages and welcomesGBTQ2s identified men AND nonbinary folks. Our hope is to draw in more members of the Queer community to get tested on a regular basis and spread the message throughout the community that sexual health is a vital part of promoting a healthy community. Additionally, we hope to reduce the stigma around HIV and normalize sexual health and prevention.

# **PRICK!** **KOOTENAYS**

## **STI Testing Event**

For guys who like guys and  
the rainbow community

**January 24 – 5pm to 730pm**  
**ANKORS Nelson – 101 Baker**  
**Street**

**Drop in's welcome or**  
**call 1-800-421-2437 or 250-505-5506 to**  
**book**  
**an appointment.**  
**Safe and Confidential.**

**HiM** | HEALTH  
INITIATIVE  
FOR MEN

**ANKORS**

Find out more at  
[interior.checkhimout.ca](http://interior.checkhimout.ca)

I started up a support group for Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, and two-spirit identified men and nonbinary folks in February of this year. It began as an online zoom meeting with six folks looking to connect with their community and break out of the isolation from two years of pandemic-related fatigue. At the beginning of April, I switched formats for the support

group from online to in-person and ended up with eight participants joining. Common themes of loneliness, isolation, disconnection from the queer community, and anxiety/depression arose from our discussions but the group which I had planned for an hour and a half ended up stretching to nearly three hours in length. This support group has now become a monthly event and I'm certain as the pandemic winds down and even more restriction lift, it will become more and more attended.

# KOTENAY QUEER MEN, 2S AND NON-BINARY SUPPORT GROUP



West Kootenay  
GBTQ2 identified  
men and  
nonbinary folks  
supporting one  
another



**MONTHLY  
MEETINGS.  
NEXT GROUP  
SATURDAY,  
JUNE 18 AT 3  
PM.  
101 BAKER ST.**



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[ankors.bc.ca](http://ankors.bc.ca) [kootenaymhi@gmail.com](mailto:kootenaymhi@gmail.com)

Near the end of April, I attended the Guythering conference in Kelowna and gave a presentation on Intimate Partner Violence in Queer relationships. This was a very heartfelt and personal topic for me as I have the lived experience and spoke openly about my experiences. While not well attended, the conference and the presentation were great opportunities to make some connections and begin to beef up my public speaking presence. As I rapidly approach the end of my schooling and gain my degree, supporting victims of IPV and working with perpetrators to support and rehabilitate them is where I want to transition as part of my work.

Finally, I am beginning to initiate some coffee social groups and hiking groups as part of the physical and social health facets of the MHI program. I am also hoping to bring the support group in an online format to the East Kootenays soon. In the end what I would like to see are a wide range of programs under the MHI umbrella focusing on helping and supporting GBTQ2S men and nonbinary folks.