

Trans Connect Program Report

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I joined Trans Connect as Program Coordinator in November of 2021 having previously hosted the Gender Outlaws peer support group during the 2017-2018 time period and worked for ANKORS during that time in the front desk and related roles.

Throughout the month of November, departing program coordinator Milo Leraar and I made local, rural outreach, peer support and education related visits throughout the East & West Kootenay region. Working closely with Milo and learning the many parts of the coordinator role put me through a time period of intense, but positive growth and learning. I continue to appreciate the people I'm working with and the ways I'm inspired to continue on a path of learning and change.

PEER GROUPS

Gender Outlaws

Our peer support group Gender Outlaws has continued to run online on a weekly basis during this time. Trans, gender diverse and questioning folks from throughout the East and West Kootenays join together in casual, facilitated group conversations with on average 8 people attending each week. We focus on identity, social justice, and mental health, with occasional guest speakers, activities, and special topic discussions. Peers regularly attend from the communities of Nelson, Castlegar, Trail, Slocan Valley, Kaslo, Cranbrook, and Invermere.

Some participants shared that the online meeting format has been more accessible due to geographic isolation or stealth status and being unwilling to attend an in person group. We intend to keep running the online support group which wasn't a program offering pre-covid. Other peers have expressed struggle with technology issues as well as navigating the group culture of online space, following group agreements, and respecting the experience of other participants. This peer group showed enthusiastically for the restart of in person group meetings in May – which were held in Trail & Nelson.



Parents & Pre-Teen Groups

Under the Umbrella

A **weekly LGBTQ+ youth group** in Nelson (partnered with NYAN and the NDYC). This group has a focus on social activities like role-playing games, movie nights, art & textiles, drag character development, and occasionally has a guest speaker or presenter. There is an average attendance of 8 -12 youth between the ages 13 - 18.

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... GSA & Youth Groups Support

Trans Connect has done regular outreach to LGBTQ+ and ally youth through **lunchtime and afterschool groups** in school district 20, and at the Warfield, Salmo, Kaslo and Nelson Youth Action Network youth groups.

Themes of interest expressed by youth: sexual health education for trans/nb folks, bullying and harassment, sexual assault,

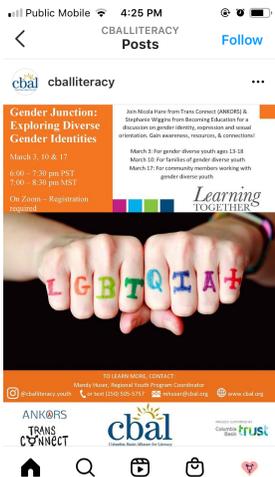


TRANS 101 WORKSHOPS

From October 1 2021 to March 2022 Trans Connect presented **17 workshops** on gender identity, sexual orientation and gender diversity to **243 people** in communities throughout the East & West Kootenay Boundary region, including: Nelson, Castlegar, Trail, New Denver, Nakusp, Creston, Grand Forks, Golden, & Invermere. Workshops were mainly online but included a number of in person and hybrid presentations. In the April-June time period in person presentations and events have grown, especially with the demand for in school visits during pride month.

In this time period Trans Connect has participated in ongoing collaborations with: the Nelson & District Youth Centre (where *Under the Umbrella* is hosted), Freedom Quest Youth Services (for GSA supports in schools and support of gender diverse youth), CBAL-The Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy as a part of a series of workshops called “Gender Junction”, Becoming Education – a sexual health education, consulting and advocacy business, the West Kootenay EcoSociety queer caucus group, Womens College Hospital- transLINK Network, West Kootenay Divisions of Family Practice - Shared Care Project, East Kootenay Divisions of Family Practice - Shared Care Project, Foundry East Kootenay, Green Team Solutions Inc, ANKORS Programs: Walk With Me, Support Recovery, West Kootenay SW Support Working Group.

In Feb/March Transconnect partnered with CBAL (the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy) on a series of online workshops for youth, parents and service providers. These events were well attended and participants had great questions for Nicola and guest presenter Steph Wiggins from Becoming Education.



... An EcoSociety/Trans Connect cooperation in June saw two pride drinks social events occur in Nelson & Castlegar. As an extra curricular activity in December, I joined the West Kootenay EcoSociety Director in a day of “deep canvassing outreach” in Trail. This exposed me to the “deep canvassing method” and it’s initial utilization as a means of engaging with people in rural areas of Montana, and California around trans inclusion and human rights and laws around discrimination. Seeing motivational interviewing at work lead me to exploring it’s methods during a month long course offered by CCMI institute in February & March of 2022. I’ve since been able to apply that learning in the work I do with gender diverse people in the region.

That intense period of positive growth that I described experiencing in November has expanded into a practices of ongoing learning maintained through a number of online conferences, modules and weekly clinical mentorship calls from Trans Care BC. This experience of ongoing growth and learning is no doubt also connect with the time I am privileged to spend with transgender peers, gender creative children and youth - who themselves are in some process of change, growth and discovery.

- Trans Connect program website www.ankorstransconnect.com
- [Trans Connect's Facebook page](#)
- [Kootenay Transgender Facebook Group](#)
- On IG @transkootenays