

## **Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities**

### **Introduction**

*Maiesha Zarin (pronouns they/them/theirs, e.g. they are running from zombies vs. she is running from zombies, they love cheesecake vs. she loves cheesecake)*

I am a project coordinator for the TransFormed Project at METRAC. I was a PLG (Peer Leadership Group) member, and joined on as a coordinator in early February. I'm trying to share more about who I am for others who share my same intersections. I am nonbinary, I use they/them pronouns, bisexual, Bengali, working class, Muslim, and an IPV and DV survivor. I am a filmmaker and writer. I am excited to be here.

### **Land Acknowledgement**

METRAC's Board of Directors and staff are committed to upholding the spirit and intent of the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, and call to action. To this end, at the beginning of all METRAC meetings, we make a statement through which we hope to raise awareness, understanding and respect for the traditional Indigenous territories of Ontario.

We recognize the traditional Indigenous territories on which our organization is located, and on which our programs and trainings take place. We recognize the failure of settlers to uphold Indigenous sovereignty of this land, and we commit on an ongoing basis to decolonize our organization and bring this history to light.

For thousands of years, this land has been the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, Haudenosaunee, and most recently, the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. This territory is also covered by Upper Canada Treaties.

Today, the meeting place of Toronto (as in the Haudenosaunee word, "Tkaronto") is still home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on this land. We want to express gratitude to Mother Earth and for the resources we are using, and honour all the First Nation, Metis and Inuit people who have been living on this land.

We are aware that our settler acknowledgement using language that may differ, but language is fluid and living. We respect that diversity. We are aware that not all First

## **Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities**

Nations, Inuit, and Metis refer to themselves in the same way. Some may use regional names or religious terms.

### **About METRAC and the TransFormed Project**

METRAC is a not-for-profit agency that was formed in 1984. METRAC has historically been devoted to advancing safety, justice and equity for women and youth. With the introduction and creation of the TransFormed Project, METRAC has expanded its inclusivity efforts by putting time, energy and research into understanding the long existing rate of intimate partner violence that has happened and continues to happen within Two Spirit, nonbinary and trans communities. METRAC is committed to partnering with individuals, communities and institutions to change ideas, actions and policies towards ending gender-based violence.

The TransFormed Project is a bilingual community-based research project led by METRAC in partnership with Centre de Francophone. The project seeks to increase access to health and social supports for Two Spirit, nonbinary and trans people affected by intimate partner violence.

Our overall goal is to increase the capacity of service providers and community leaders by equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge they need to either start or continue their journey of better supporting community members through research and online education like this.

### **Funders**

We would like to thank our partner Centre de Francophone, the TransFormed Peer Leadership Group and all twenty organizations on our TransFormed Advisory Council who helped to ensure the success of our research activities and inform the development of this training. And METRAC staff.

We also thank the Knowledge Hub and Violence Against Women Learning Network for helping to promote the webinar with services providers around Canada.

Additionally, we would like to thank the Public Health Agency of Canada for their generous contributions which enabled us to engage various community members and stakeholders within the GTA and the City of Toronto.

## **Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities**

### **Overview and Objective**

This webinar is part two of a two-part series on supporting Two Spirit, nonbinary and trans people. In part one of this series we focused on what intimate partner violence looks like in Two Spirit nonbinary and trans communities, the barriers these communities experience when seeking support and what service providers can do to create more inclusive and well-rounded affirming services and supports.

In this webinar, we will discuss what peer led programming can look like for community members. Starting off with a brief introduction of our research survey, focus groups and individual interviews, we will continue forward by exploring what survey and focus group participants recommended when creating peer led programming.

We will look at what models or efforts currently exist, important things to consider when developing a peer led intervention, the potential for future programming recommendations and the key importance of having an ongoing evaluation of your programming and team.

There is a growing collection of content that is available regarding peer led training, but our intention is to focus specifically on what considerations need to take place and be discussed if you are creating supports or programs specifically for Two Spirit, nonbinary and trans community members. This is information that community members in the GTA have requested that they want to see more of, whether that is in the content of programming or the practice itself.

It's important to keep in mind why we need specific considerations for this community in the first place. We know that historically Two Spirit, nonbinary and trans community members have had a lot of trouble accessing supports and services due to barriers, whether that is institutional, financial, emotional, physical and so on. Within those barriers, there is a big realization that a lot of programming or services are just not ready to take on the concerns and realities that community members present. This gap can be filled over time when we take the time to listen to community members directly about what it is that they want to see more of, and when we work together to make sure the proper steps are taken to help our programming succeed. So collaboration and open sharing to make sure proper options are in place to address challenges as they arise.

### **Peer Led Programming**

Since peer led programming means that peers with lived experiences of similar issues,

## **Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities**

there are certain strengths and advantages that automatically come with those peers entering these spaces where they are in a leadership position. This is why peer work is so effective, why so many participants talked about staff representation and having their peers take leadership positions, and strengthening those communities.

Peer led means peers with lived experience of similar issues who are involved as much as possible. And we encourage peers to move up into higher leadership positions.

### **Introduction to Survey, Focus Group, Individual Interviews and Participants**

The suggestions that we have today to help us understand what approach is best for this project would not have been possible without information and guidance from a number of people, such as the Peer Leadership Group, the Advisory Council and of course community members who completed the survey, participated in our focus groups or attended our individual interview sessions.

The Peer Leadership Group (PLG) consists of 6 individuals from diverse intersections that fall within the communities this project aims to help. Since this project had a peer-led approach, the PLG members were very important and crucial to a lot of the feedback that we were working with and for each step of the process. The group provided consultations and support from the start of this project 2.5 to 3 years ago.

The Advisory Council (AC) is made up of 20 organizations, 28 individuals, that operate within the GTA who generously provided their feedback, input and assistance through many sections of this project.

The participants of our research study included those who completed our online surveys, which were available as physical copies as well. They really showed that they felt heard. This survey was created by METRAC with guidance from the PLG and from the AC council. The survey was fairly lengthy and focussed on abuse prevention and intervention. It asked questions about the individual's personal experience but also about their thoughts and opinions on the issue within the greater community. Alongside the survey, we were able to host focus groups where we did a roundtable style answering of certain questions. The sessions were recorded with permission and similarly, the individual interviews we held were recorded as well.

During these sessions, PLG members were present to facilitate and Carolina Gana was there to oversee. Something rare and unique, although we hope in future projects it will become more common, was Carolina's expertise and experience in counselling which

## **Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities**

enabled her to supervise our sessions, but also enabled her to be available to PLG members in case they ever needed decompressing or de-stressing from the work they did on this project. Content and themes of a project like this are very intense and emotional, especially when members have lived experience and are in the community they are working to help, so having Carolina on board for these roles was incredibly beneficial. After the sessions the PLG also gained skills on how to code and analyze the sessions, which Carolina led.

In total, including the surveys, focus groups and individual sessions, we reached around 150 people, which is a lot more than the initial 70 people that the project's work plan hoped to engage.

The focus groups we were able to host included:

- Trans Femmes and Women of Colour Trans and Nonbinary Group
- Newcomer (Francophone and Arabic)
- Two Spirit Group.

These were intimate groups, and the total number of people who attended were 18 people. A total of 4 people attended our individual interviews. All the participants came from diverse walks of life and from diverse, multiple intersections, which we are incredibly grateful and thankful for. Grateful not only for their openness towards us about sharing details about their lives, but also about us being able to engage with a diverse group of people.

### **Glossary of Terms**

We do have a glossary available for you to access later should you choose to that goes over some terms that are mentioned in this webinar with regards to gender identities, sexual orientations and some concepts.

These specific identities we will be referring to:

- Trans femme or trans feminine refers to someone who is a woman or identifies strongly with their femininity and lives their life as such. Trans feminine can include trans women, multi-gendered people who identify with their feminine side a lot more than masculinity, nonbinary people who identify with their feminine side more often than not. Trans feminine people also don't always adhere to typical stereotypes that are expected of feminine folks either. This is important to keep in mind.
- Women of colour refer to people who are women and are from various race or ethnic groups.

## **Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities**

- Trans is short form for transgender, which is an umbrella term referring to people with diverse gender identities and expressions that differ from stereotypical gender norms.
- Nonbinary is a gender identity that does not exist rigidly or exclusively on the gender binary. Nonbinary identities are really varied and can include people who identify with some aspects of the binary identity, while others reject them entirely.
- Newcomer refers to someone who has recently arrived in a place or group, being new to the area, activity or situation.
- Two Spirit is used by some Indigenous folks, though not all, to describe their sexual, gender and/or spiritual identity. It is a person who has both a masculine and feminine spirit. Some may use the term, some not, as everyone explains identity differently.

I encourage you to think about all the different ways people are able to describe themselves.

### **Things to Consider - Intersectionality, Cultural Sensitivity, Diverse Options, Trauma Informed Practice, Safety Planning, Practicality**

These are elements within your programming that should be explored and understood by all staff when you are in the planning phase (grant writing, after receiving funding, pre-grant writing, even if you are not applying because you don't need to or you can't access it) or the pilot testing phase. It's the work that takes place before the programming is actually launched to the public. These considerations are good to include in your process and directly reflects on and responds to what community members asked for in our research study.

To begin with, many participants mentioned a need for providing a trauma informed practice. Many participants come from backgrounds where they are living with trauma and mental health worries from various forms of abuse that they have faced due to their gender identity, gender expression and experiences of IPV. They need spaces and people who are informed about what trauma is, what it looks like, how it functions, what kind of impact it has, and specifically, the history and current state of trauma within 2SLGBTQA+ and Two Spirit, nonbinary and trans communities.

While many marginalized folks come from places in their life where they have to deal with mental health concerns and trauma, there are specific, deep-rooted challenges that Two Spirit, nonbinary and trans folks face due to their gender and due to almost invisible intimate partner violence concerns (due to a lack of data collected, lack of prioritizing, or a combination of both). That needs to be kept in mind as programming is

## Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities

being created, guidelines are being constructed and policies are being formatted.

Similarly, the IPV challenges that these community members face come with background issues related to gender identity and expression. So you cannot prepare to service these communities without understanding where they are coming from and what exactly they need.

Trauma informed practice is about knowing the links between various causes of trauma, such as barriers faced when trying to access healthcare, substance use, abuse (intimate partner violence) and making sure that someone is not re-traumatized or further traumatized when they are accessing a service or support.

When someone is already marginalized, the last thing you want to do is further marginalize them, especially when they are seeking support at an event or program that is meant to provide support and healing. Peer support can help create a safer environment where community members feel that staff value building trust, empowerment, collaboration and acknowledge the importance of having knowledge and continuous learning about institutional issues that affect people who are attending their programs (e.g. historical gender barriers).

Being trauma informed helps providers be culturally sensitive to the specific needs of individuals and where they are coming from in terms of their life experience and background, if there are certain things they have been through, if they come from certain ethnic backgrounds or cultures. We had participants who self identified as Asian, South Asian, Indigenous, Black and so forth. Having cultural sensitivity means creating another layer of trust. When community members are able to tell that they can come to a group where they don't have to explain or justify parts of themselves, or if they do want to explain something, it is in a safe and trustworthy space. It makes them feel like less of an outsider.

A participant said, "I was trying to disclose my abuse and felt people looked at me like I was from outer space." Being in a nonbinary-focused group as a nonbinary person means that you get to just enter the group as a person the same way that being in a gender-diverse Black-focused group or a gender-diverse South Asian or gender-diverse Indigenous-focused group means those aspects of an individual's identity become the norm in that space. They don't feel like an outsider.

But even within those categories there are so many more specific and individual communities, neighborhoods, countries and so on, and therefore there are many possibilities and room for different kinds of specific programming that get very deep and

## **Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities**

specific, which are what people are requesting.

The final three considerations to make when planning for peer led interventions are having diverse options, practicality in programming content and safety planning.

When creating programming for TwoSpirit, nonbinary and trans communities, it is important to remember that each of these identities comes with their own historical challenges and current day progress and successes. It is more effective to have individual programming for Two Spirit communities rather than lumping it all together with other communities. Issues that are specific to the Two Spirit community will be easier to explore, to help community members heal from or discuss, if they are able to be in a program that is focused on the specific institutional barriers that their community faces or solutions that their community has asked for. These conversations deserve the time and space to be properly explored away from being grouped together with non Two Spirit or non-Indigenous programming.

Yes, there will be nonbinary Two Spirit folks or transgender Two Spirit folks, or even Indigenous community members who don't use the term Two Spirit at all, but it is important to provide them with a space where they can be with their own community. People are saying they love and trust their community, and need to be in spaces with those traditional approaches.

This is similar to nonbinary community members benefitting from being with other nonbinary folks in a space that is dedicated to their community's programming. Trans women deserve spaces that are dedicated to their unique challenges; trans men deserve spaces that are curated and made for their specific histories and concerns.

I read an article saying, "to be able to say I am a queer man instead of a queer trans man..." There's such an impact in being able to fully say who you are, to not have your identity negotiated at the door. Having diverse options is a strength. It means listening to our community members when they say they need spaces where they can freely speak about their identities and focus on just that.

Another important element is having practical content in your programming. Community members in our survey and focus groups stated that they want a mix of programming that tackles skills like anger management, learning to create boundaries, self confidence, healing/counselling and practical life lessons with skills such as financial knowledge, housing information, shelter information, and job search help. So having a good mix of programming that aims to explore various aspects of the community's lives is a way to make sure there is a well rounded intention in that programming.



## **Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities**

Safety planning is a final example of something that is important to include or consider within programming should someone ever require additional assistance. There are two directions that safety planning can go towards. It is useful to take into consideration when planning how a group will function what kind of specific safety planning you may need for that group. For example, having resources available for further support, having a professional trauma counsellor available to debrief with folks after the group is completed and so on. Another example is having guidelines and steps if it is deemed that someone is in danger either from someone else or from themselves.

Set aside time to talk to an individual about what support they need, such as having a safety contact list, things to keep on hand or pack away over time. You want to hear from the individual rather than assuming what kind of support they need. There is no one way to create a safety plan and the needs of the individual are what should be considered as you draft or brainstorm ideas because what works for one person is not going to always work for another.

### **Current GTA Peer Led Programming and What We Can Learn**

As briefly mentioned before, there are quite a few examples of peer led programming and efforts in the GTA, but there is still a lot of room to grow and to create programming that is specific to Two Spirit, nonbinary and trans communities. Using research from some organizations has been helpful and we wanted to include that alongside recommendations based on our research study, PLG suggestions and AC suggestions.

We spoke to two organizations for more details around their suggestions for peer led programming and for some information on their past experiences of what has worked or has not worked:

- Marianne Park, the founder of Network of Women with Disabilities
- Chris Leonard, who is the former Health Promotion Director at the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black CAP)

My conversation with both of them echoed a lot of what was already mentioned by participants within our survey and at our focus groups. We spoke a lot about specific considerations and thoughts they had on what is important in peer led programming, what challenges to consider and how to set clear intentions early on in the planning process.

When speaking to Marianne, we focused on having disability awareness and that privilege is a very shifting thing. Attitude of accessibility as a skill within peer workers is

## Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities

something that really impacts a program and the way participants experience it. Marianne said, "It's not what someone says, it's how they say it". Learning to facilitate someone's experience is the key to effectively engaging community members because it is based on their specific needs, which is something we heard in the survey.

A direct quote received that really stood out to me from a community member in relation to the question, "What can be done to bring more awareness about IPV?" was, "who cares, nobody cares about us anyway". A really sad but powerful, impactful thing for us to hear. We need to hear the reality of how community members are feeling.

Facilitating someone's specific experience based on their abilities and traumas means asking everyone about their needs before you are asked. For example, someone may have low vision, visual impairment or be blind. While one person may need a fair amount of light, some people might be light sensitive. Being aware of things like that and transportation help, scheduled medication times and how it impacts a participant's mood, the physical placement of people and things, how you speak in relation to your tone, speed and volume, food accessibility at your meetings and programs. Disability considerations in safety planning include being mindful of all these details, being able to make individual and specific plans for participants depending on their needs, ability and capacity.

It is important to note the unique ways people get abused that mainstream people don't recognize or see. For example, participants may experience someone refusing to take them to the store to get essentials and telling them to take the transit when they've never done that alone. Marianne said, "The mechanisms to marginalize people might be different but how we feel in the end is all the same". These are all important conversations to factor in during the program development process. I recognize it's a very difficult conversation to have, but it's something you should be keeping in mind. We're hearing that there's such a lack of disability consideration in a full rounded way, and that really needs to change.

Balancing out the program development and peer training process is important as putting more weight on one versus the other can create issues in the other department. Unconscious bias is a huge part of this field that still needs to be talked about more often. Respecting and acknowledging that everyone comes with their individual habits and biases, including participants and peer educators, is important for peers to remember. They don't get checked at the door. If you make a mistake as a peer educator or program developer, it is much more beneficial to your participants if you own it. We had some of our PLG members mention this as well.

## Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities

The last thing we want is for marginalized folks to go to a program or service and feel even further marginalized all over again. So it is really important to have a nonjudgmental attitude and inquisitive mind. Marianne describes this as being open, free to answer, free to be asked and free to reject. Reflecting on what you want to see in a facilitator directly impacts the experience people leave with.

We ended our conversation agreeing that if you do it right, if you have more ambassadors and leaders who continue peer work in their own lives and circles, it will have a much more positive impact on the community than what's happening now.

My conversation with Chris at Black CAP was mostly focused on the peer educator experience and the importance of setting clear goals and intentions early in the process while also balancing the program development process along with the peer training processes.

Chris talked about Black CAP's ACB trans and nonbinary harm reduction program and some challenges they faced, which were moments for the team to learn from. He said, "Engaging the community is not done often or is rare so building relationships takes time". It's important to factor time for that and to factor in hiring the right coordinator or peer worker. Having time to really sit with the community during your programming and service sessions means having more meaningful engagement.

The work at the beginning when planning this is very important. Chris noted two very important things: 1) meaningful engagement with the community is important in the beginning and through the whole process, and 2) hiring people who bring passion and strong motivation is a strength to consider even if they don't have all the expertise. So when hiring folks for these positions, don't just focus on academic background or years of experience. Look to see if the person is really passionate and motivated to work in this position.

We will include references and more points of information aside from our own research because there were some organizations that really have great experience, research and knowledge on peer led work that we think is important to share and look into:

- Stella's Place has a WRAP program, the Ontario Peer Development Initiative "Peer Support: A lighthouse of caring connections" (which is available online)
- the Mental Health Commission of Canada's, "Making the case for peer support" (which is also online)
- the 519 which features a large amount of community led programming
- Frontiers in Public Health, which did a systematic review of peer led approaches on Indigenous Youth Peer Led Health Promotions in Canada, New Zealand,

## Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities

Australia and the US

- our own program here at METRAC uses peer-led approaches which is explorable through our resource creation and project report

Feel free to email us and we will link you those.

Barriers:

Through the focus group we heard about the fear of loneliness and isolation, the fear behind a lack of community sharing about dangers or safety issues, the lack of services available for people at different stages of their financial goals.

The main questions that were asked in our survey and in our in person group sessions were suggestions on creating awareness about IPV, what information are people looking for, what type of information would people like to receive and from whom, and why people didn't use certain resources. I believe it is important to note that people's ability to access a lot of the services mentioned or that they want to see more of is affected by things like chronic illness and mental health issues:

- 49% use substances to cope with stress/trauma
- 45% experienced transphobia often/very often
- 37% experienced discrimination very often/often
- 53% lack companionship often/very often
- 46% feel left out very often/often
- 54% feel isolated very often/often

I heard so many people say they were so lonely and isolated. They wanted to connect with more community. They wanted spaces for community members to connect. They're looking to organizers, "Can you create spaces like this?"

Why people didn't use resources:

- negative experience using resources or supports in the past, didn't trust resources or supports
- resources aren't responsive to community identity needs, aren't inclusive, aren't welcoming
- resources are white-based and not keeping racialized communities in mind, have little understanding of how to treat people of colour and especially health service providers
- there's zero understanding of intersectionality and anti-oppression

What community wants to see:

Safer spaces that they can trust. Difficulty accessing spaces, services and supports due

## **Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities**

to a lack of representation and therefore a lack of awareness of unique needs, and it makes it difficult for people to trust spaces. Trusting spaces means being able to be open and comfortable, letting your guard down and therefore being able to fully provide the information you need to express. It is not uncommon for community members to feel that they need to either negotiate their identities at the door, as in leave one out and carry one in, or constantly provide disclaimers to back up their needs. In an ideal situation, you are creating an environment where someone feels that they are not entering a space where they need to carry those disclaimers and negotiations around. The need to do this comes from a place of worry or fear or past discrimination - fear that you cannot be served or helped without hiding parts of yourself or minimizing parts of your experience. Community members deserve to be able to express themselves and to have access to trustworthy spaces and to not have to worry about these things when all they really want is to be supported.

Types of programming requested:

This is one of the many themes that came out of our survey and group results. Community members want programming and spaces where the people in charge are aware of their intersections, the trauma and trouble that they come with, the positivity and potential for success that comes with overcoming those traumas or from building positive life skills. Programming that is suited for folks at different stages of their life whether they are just starting out with exploring skills or their identity, whether they are struggling or are now in a place where they want to access programming or skill building for those who are more comfortable and confident in their day to day lives. There really is a gap of programming holes that can be filled if different folks' needs are being met depending on where they are in their lives.

We heard in the surveys that there needs to be more general skill building programming for gender-diverse community members. Ranging from managing emotions to finances all the way to having trauma focused art groups, counselling groups, campaigns that they can be a part of through programming, workshops for young adults or adults. They want to be involved in campaigns and help organizations set up that space.

There were an incredible amount of suggestions made on the type of peer programming people want to see: community events, advocacy and ad campaigns, video campaigns, workshops and community support groups, community events centering a justice and abolitionist framing, workshops on what healthy relationships look like, prevention programming (building skills for healthy relationships and combatting unhealthy relationship behaviours), community led programming, mentorship/social support groups, financial help, cafe discussions, self esteem boosting classes, practical solutions (information about shelters, finances).

## **Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities**

They want to see a community accountability process. When things go wrong, what can they do? They want to see staff who are trans competent.

What type of information on healthy relationships, unhealthy relationships, abuse in relations or dating are community members looking for?

- specific to identities (Black, Indigenous, POC, trans, nonbinary, relationship dynamics, transmisogyny)
- how to set boundaries in a relationship
- attachment styles - avoidant, anxious, secure
- shame and stigma attached to their partner
- resources in French
- on disclosing gender
- meeting and becoming sexual for the first time
- how to mitigate not disclosing trans identity
- how to navigate relationships
- how to improve relationships
- recognizing signs of abuse, where to go for help
- being kind to partners
- parent and family abuse advice
- resources for those who cause harm to unlearn and heal outside of the prison industrial complex (as coined and discussed by Angela Davis)
- assisting LGBTQ patients to find safe spaces
- how to manage C-PTSD
- helping friends recognize signs of abuse
- how to be informed about different intersections

What other recommendations and suggestions did participants share?

- ongoing trans 101 training and or information sessions for shelter users and shelter workers
- Deaf/ASL video counselling and crisis line to access immediate support
- talking circles
- art Therapy and community spaces
- support groups for trans people and partners

Community members are looking for ways to support by giving back, living and working as a peer and giving back to people.

### **Potential for Future Programming**

## **Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities**

Innovation in terms of ideas and possibilities, many models exist, many values and intentions, lots of potential for creativity not just in terms of content but in terms of outreach and inclusion. There were so many suggestions made for the types of programming that participants wanted to see and many of this programming does not exist and has never really existed, so there is room to think outside the box in terms of how you collaborate with your teams or external teams to make this possible.

We talked a lot about open sharing: collaborating and sharing with other organizations, getting info from others, increasing collaborations, being open about your own research and results. We can build each other up and create a community that fosters and values open sharing because we see the benefits of unity through strengthening our ties with each other. We heard about the lack of cooperation between organizations, so working together to create programming.

Open accountability in terms of caring for your participants, caring for your staff, having a process for when challenges or issues come up so that it can be equitably solved, and creating that opportunity through your programming and at the end when you are evaluating and looking for improvements. I really want to stress that - open accountability not just with participants, but for your staff as well.

We see the impact made through all levels: supervisors and managers, coordinators, peer leaders, participants and community members. It is important to create programming that takes everybody into consideration and isn't just made to suit one person in this cycle of people involved.

### **Importance of Ongoing Evaluations**

Having an ongoing evaluation model, method or process is really important. You want to be able to analyze how your programming is going so far, what improvements can be made, what things need to have more time spent on them or what you can cut back on, how the content needs to change, how certain challenges can be approached, what risks can occur or have occurred. I really believe that practicing this in an ongoing way helps with keeping your efforts and research up to date rather than waiting until the end to solve issues or make adjustments.

There are many ways to be involved in the planning process for this. For example, some people use incentive-based evaluations while others may use a purpose model. It's up to you to discover what works for you and your agency.

If you can prep this part of the process ahead of time as much as possible, it really

## Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities

makes a difference because then you are prepared. But it is unavoidable that you will have issues in the midst of things. You get to decide what that evaluation process looks like in the ongoing model and at the end when you are looking back on your participants, your content and what that means for the future of your programming, you can trust you took that time to really build that evaluation model.

We had so many amazing recommendations. We touched on a couple. I want to stress the open sharing and evaluation model. Diverse programming, yes, but you want to be as prepared as possible, and we've provided what community members really need. It's a good starting point on this journey into the details.

### **Evaluation**

We've stressed the importance of evaluation. We'll email registrants to be sure, because this feedback is important. It's part of our evaluation model to better serve you and community members, better share information, things to consider differently next time or the same. We can hear from you and your experience, and of some of the resources we touched on. Please take the time if you can.

<https://forms.gle/aFxMQGGnwYSy7Q6R8>

Question: Have you heard of the gender and sexuality galaxy created by Action Canada? I'd be interested in your feedback on this resource. It uses a galaxy so there's no "end" and is constantly expanding.

<https://www.actioncanadashr.org/beyond-basics-sneak-peek-gender-galaxy>

Answer: It sounds like an incredible way of understanding gender. I see it as a constantly expanding, infinite thing.

Question: any tips on how to introduce trans inclusion in a residential VAW shelter in more rural ontario, where basically half the staff are still in the 1990's...?

Answer: Heavy question. What we said earlier about introducing resources and materials in a space where that doesn't exist. Look at what your position is and how much of an impact and power you have. For spaces like that, where staff are very set in past ways, look for resources and materials supported by large funders. I find it can be helpful to email people and bring it up and say, "Look, so-and-so are involved in funding this project." That's a good starting place, in my opinion. The way you phrase it is important in spaces like that. For example, "I came across these resources, being



## Webinar 2 - Peer Led Programming for Two Spirit, Nonbinary and Trans Communities

funded by these folks. Great if you took a look.” Stress who is behind it. Although that shouldn’t be a way to talk about its value, for a lot of people, the funders behind it create a light in their head for, “Oh, I should look into this.” If you have any other ideas, I would like you to email me and we can assist you in getting further into that.

Question: Any tips on how individual social service workers can make their space more LGBTQ inclusive if it's not necessarily a space specifically designed for LGBTQ people?

Answer: Great question. If the space isn’t specific to LGBTQ people, I think starting with a general introduction into why you need to have that conversation is important. You can present materials and resources to folks, but often they need to hear a specific why. Who needs this resource and material? Why are you introducing this? Who specifically will this help in our space? Maybe framing it in that way might help. If you already have a lot of research on that and what to share, I encourage you to talk first to individuals in your organisation you trust, and hopefully more can get involved.

I think it’s also that small steps are important. There are so many barriers and issues, we can get overwhelmed with so much to do. It’s okay to start with small steps. Whoever you’re working with, if you want to start introducing step by step what you’re knowledgeable and what you’re able to provide, the example you set is really valuable.

If you have additional questions that we weren’t able to get to, please don’t hesitate to contact us. And don’t forget that the resources are up on the webpage. You can download them individually or together as one zip file.