



[www.ankorstransconnect.com](http://www.ankorstransconnect.com)

As the Trans Connect Program Coordinator I provide regular personalized and 1:1 peer support and health navigation for trans, gender diverse and questioning individuals. These forms of support can include things like: providing emotional support during social/relational transition, access to gender affirming gear (like bras, breast forms and binders) support with preparing documents and applications, navigating the legal name change process, or referrals to community based supports and health care providers.

### Peer Groups

Trans Connect runs a weekly drop in group for 2S LGBTQIA+ youth aged 12-18 in partnership with the Nelson and District Youth Centre. We saw attendance grow to between 12-16 young people each week and in both school semesters a practicum student from the Kootenay Art Therapy institute joined us and co-facilitated a variety of art therapy based approaches to art activities and group work. Youth group activities included nail art, lino cut block printing, queer world building, makeup skills, button making, slime making, and facilitated discussions on relationships & health, local resources and queer/trans history.



(above & below) artwork from the 2SLGBTQIA+ youth group

The **Gender Outlaws** group has been running since 2002 in Nelson. Today we run regular monthly groups in both Nelson and online as well as occasional groups in Trail, Castlegar and Cranbrook based on client need and program coordinator capacity. The online group sees participation from individuals throughout the East and West Kootenay Boundary region. We also run a once yearly peer campout event. Peer groups offer participants an opportunity to meet and connect with other gender diverse, trans and questioning individuals. The program coordinator provides programming updates, answers questions about local resources and facilitates a discussion on gender journeys, milestones and social issues facing the trans community.

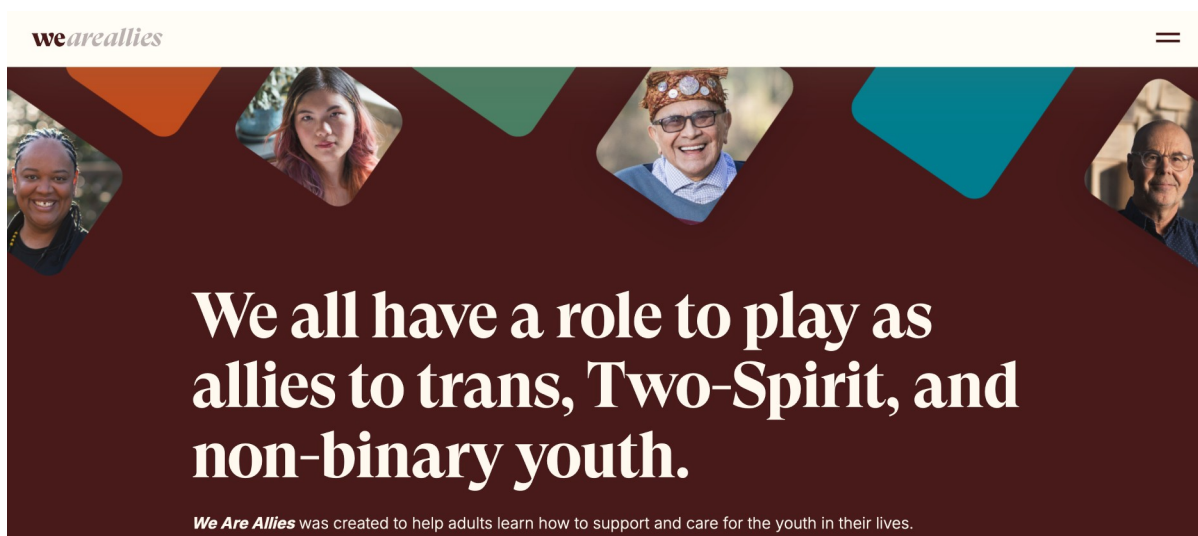


## Workshops and Presentations

Trans Connect offers workshops and professional development opportunities in communities across the East and West Kootenays. At these events we share content on trans identity, allyship, 2S LGBTQ+ terminology, and best practices for supporting the transgender community in workplaces, community and for service providers. This fiscal year we lead seminars for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year nursing students at Selkirk College, and massage therapy students at the Kootenay Columbia College. We offered a training for the Nelson Women's Centre - Rooted in Community program, and facilitated a workshop and discussion for the ANKORS Support Recovery program participants. We made visits to the pride/gay straight alliance clubs at local high schools and middle schools.

We gave an online presentation to 3 separate cohorts of pharmacy tech students from Selkirk College and two other partner institutions. We delivered two separate workshop/presentations for the Child and Youth Mental Health team at the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

We attended a virtual consultation forum held by CASN, (the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing). The forum was aimed at developing guidelines for building equitable, affirming and inclusive environments for 2S LGBTQAI+ nursing students. This was a meaningful opportunity to share from our personal experiences and knowledge of this work.



## The We Are Allies Campaign

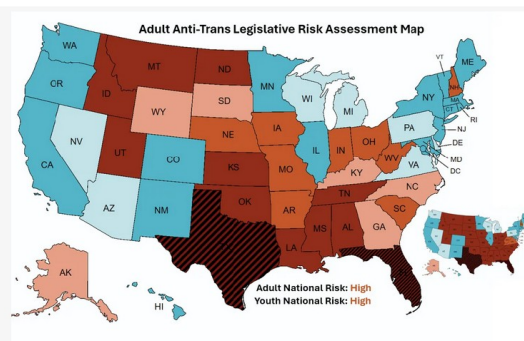
[www.weareallies.ca](http://www.weareallies.ca)

In 2024 British Columbia's [Provincial Health Services Authority](#) launched [We Are Allies](#) in partnership with community organizations across Canada. The campaign aims to share advocacy information and stories, and to support trans, Two-Spirit, and non-binary youth in accessing gender-affirming care.

**Growing rhetoric and anti-trans legislative attacks have implications for trans people living in the Kootenays** In 2024 Governments in a number of Canadian provinces including Alberta, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick announced or passed legislation that limits or bans trans and gender diverse people's access to healthcare and/or various aspects of public life. These attacks impact access to gender affirming health care, washrooms, and sport environments among other things.

For Trans Connect the We Are Allies campaign has been a valuable resource in the education work we do in community and in being able to respond to the requests for resources to understand more about the issues trans people face socially in this time. The campaign includes a free, three-part media literacy course on the spread of health misinformation.

Bill 26 the Name Amendment Act (No 2) 2024 was passed by the BC legislative Assembly in May of 2024. Gender justice groups including the SAGAH, CWHWC, West Coast LEAF, PACE & QMUNITY are calling on the BC Government to repeal recent changes to the name act which restrict access to legal name changes for many British Columbians.



Trans Connect supports Trans and gender diverse people living in the Kootenays with preparing applications for changes to their name and gender marker.

for more information on changes to the BC name act see:  
<https://cwhwc.com/2024/11/gender-justice-groups-urge-bc-government-to-repeal-harmful-name-change-ban/>