

+ POSITIVE DISPATCH

NEW SLETTER OF THE AIDS COALITION OF NOVA SCOTIA · SPRING 2016

Hello! Goodbye!



We are really excited to introduce our new Executive Director, Shannon Pringle. Shannon has a background in Biology, Psychology and Gender Studies but has always had a passion for working in the sexual health field. Shannon has worked at Venus Envy for many years as an educator and workshop facilitator. We are excited to have her and feel that she will be a great addition to the team! Shannon will start March 21st, 2016. Please feel free to stop in, say hello

and help us to welcome Shannon!

If you have not already heard the news Kenda Riles has left ACNS to move on to a new opportunity. She says:

“Let me first say that it’s been an absolute pleasure for me to serve as the Fund Development Coordinator for the last four years. I will miss the team, the community and the work immensely.

Thank you for your ideas, thoughts and community spirit that helped in the growth of the events already in place and in the implementation of new ones. You have all, individually and as a whole, been an inspiration to me, and I have learned things from all of you. I will take with me the fondest of memories of my time within ACNS. I especially want to thank the volunteers of ACNS with whom I have worked so closely with over the past four years.



Your eagerness to always help, your laughter, and your smiles have made my position so easy to execute at each and every event and meeting. Thank you all for being you and teaching me what it means to give back to your community.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all as individuals, as well as ACNS as a whole, all the very best in the future.”
Thank you Kenda - for all your hard work! Best Wishes!

Participate in Research

A research study of relationships where ONE PARTNER IS HIV POSITIVE & THE OTHER IS HIV NEGATIVE

Positive and Negative, have both of your voices heard.

Take the 30-minute on-line or telephone survey and receive a thank you gift card.

POSITIVE PLUS ONE

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
www.PositivePlusOne.ca
1-888-740-1166
info@positiveplusone.ca

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Positive Plus One

Are you in a relationship where one partner is HIV positive and the other person is HIV negative or have you been in a sero-discordant relationship in the past two years? Interested in participating in a 30 min survey and receive a \$20 gift card to your choice of Tim Horton’s, Walmart, Subway, or Canadian Tire. The gift card can be mailed directly to you or “in care of” you at ACNS. If you would like to participate in the study, please go to www.PositivePlusOne.ca or call 888-740-1166.

Reminder of the eligibility criteria:

1. You are currently in a relationship where one partner is HIV-positive and the other is HIV-negative and the relationship has lasted 3 months or longer, OR you were in one in the past 2 years,
2. You live in Canada, and lived in Canada during the relationship,
3. You are at least 18 years old,
4. You speak and/or read and write in English,
5. If you are HIV-positive, you have disclosed your status to your HIV-negative partner.

SEXUAL WELL BEING IN ALL COUPLES (with AND without sexual problems)

PEOPLE CAN EXPERIENCE MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF SEXUAL PROBLEMS, such as issues with...

- Sexual desire
- Sexual frequency
- Erections
- Lubrication
- Genital pain
- Orgasm

An estimated 19 to 50% of people currently experience sexual problems.

19-50%

Sexual problems can negatively impact physical, psychological, and interpersonal well-being. However, couples differ in the way they negotiate and navigate sexual problems.

Research usually focuses on individuals in mixed-gender relationships, so not much is known about the shared and unique ways that diverse couples communicate about and respond to each other during sexual interactions, but...

YOU CAN HELP Become a key contributor to RESEARCH EFFORTS

The SexLab is conducting a survey of individuals in an intimate romantic relationship (either with or without sexual problems).

With YOUR help, this research will help inform sex and couples therapists when interacting with diverse couples who are distressed by their sexual problems.

OUR SURVEY

- Our survey asks about mental and physical health, body image, sexual functioning, sexual communication, how your partner responds to concerns in your overall and sexual relationship, and sexual satisfaction.
- Time: 45-60 minutes
- Confidential and Anonymous Prize Draw

To participate in the study visit:
<http://SWB.sexlab.ca/>
or contact Sex.Lab@queensu.ca

Queens University

Sexual Health and Wellbeing Study

Participate in an online study investigating how diverse couples experience and navigate sexual problems. What are the shared and unique ways that different couple negotiate and navigate sexual problems during sexual interactions?

This study is currently recruiting English speaking participants in intimate romantic relationships who have been dating a minimum of three months for an online study on sexual problems and sexual well-being. This study is currently seeking participants in ALL relationships with any level of sexual satisfaction, with or without sexual problems or concerns.

Check it out at: www.swb.sexlab.ca or email: sex.lab@queensu.ca

Self Care – Forty Activities to Survive the Winter Blues

Winter months can often go together with feeling tired, maybe anxious or moody. Many people find the winters dark and depressing. There can be many reasons for this. Maybe the holidays are hard, your body experiences a lack of sunlight and shorter days disrupt our internal body clock. Maybe you feel isolated from friends and family. The following are forty activities that may help you feel better or help you through the winter months.

1. Pause for a moment and remind yourself that you are worth self-care
2. Try to add a little colour into your life. Eat colourful food, buy yourself one flower or an adult colouring book
3. Make a “to do” list; tick off completed tasks to release happy chemicals in your brain
4. Or make a “done” list
5. Pick up a hobby that’s only purpose is to make you feel good
6. Take up journaling
7. Try your hand at baking
8. Get enough sleep
9. Start your day off by saying something positive about yourself out loud
10. Spend some time with friends
11. Celebrate little victories more often
12. Exercise
13. Eat vegetables that will give you energy
14. Get fresh air
15. Make your bed everyday
16. Pay it forward by helping others
17. Join a community event
18. Volunteer
19. Break from stressful people; befriend positive-focused people
20. Meditate
21. Dance like nobodies watching
22. De-clutter your space
23. Laugh out loud
24. Change routines; take a different route to work or to your appointments
25. Cuddle with an animal
26. Try yoga
27. Set realistic goals and limits for yourself
28. Stretch
29. Join a community talk and learn something new
30. Cry if you need to
31. Ask for help to get what you need
32. Start a blog
33. Learn how to budget
34. Lay on the floor on your back with your eyes closed for five min (or longer) and just breath
35. Make art
36. Go to support groups
37. Sing regardless if you sound good
38. Plant something
39. Go for a walk, drive or bike ride to nowhere in particular
40. Drink more water



Looking for free or cheap activities or groups to join in the HRM? Search Halifax Area Leisure Helping Tree put together by Capital Health. If you are having difficulty finding this information or you want some assistance learning about the different programs available then please contact Liz, the Support Coordinator at (902)425-4882 ext 225 or email her at sc@acns.ns.ca

Services and PHA Programs

Help Filing your taxes?

Are you ready to file your taxes but need help? We can help. To make an appointment please contact Ned at (902)425-4882 ext 225.

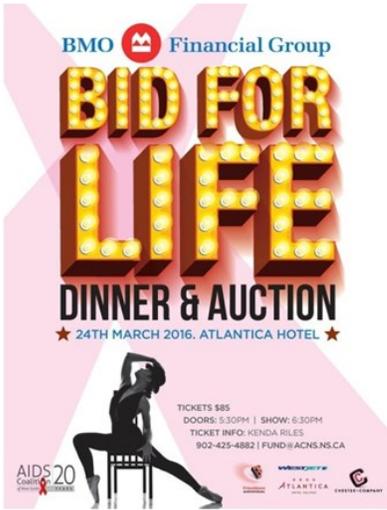
CATS Programs

What complimentary alternative therapy programs would you like to see available at ACNS? What time would be best to have a class? Would morning, afternoon or, evening work best with your schedule? If you have ideas or suggestions on programs then please contact Liz, the Support Coordinator at (902)425-4882 ext 225 or email her at sc@acns.ns.ca. We would love to hear your thoughts and create programs that you want.

Fund Development Updates

BMO Financial Group Bid for Life Dinner & Auction

The 14 Annual BMO Financial Group Bid for Life Dinner & Auction is set for Thursday, March 24th. The Atlantica Hotel will set the stage for this highly anticipated Broadway themed fundraiser! This year we have some amazing auction items to bid on from local businesses and International superstars. The evening promises to be action packed with entertainment and an amazing array of auction items. Members of ACNS are able to purchase tickets to this event 2 for 1. Regular ticket prices are \$85.00 each.



Lucky Bucks

Lucky Bucks - our newest fundraiser - is off to a great start! This is a weekly twoonie draw which costs less than a cup of coffee to play each week. Since it began mid-November, we have already given out over \$1,200 in cash prizes with the biggest pot to date of over \$600!

To play:

Register for a Lucky Bucks number at:
www.acns.ns.ca or call 902-425-4882 ext 228 or get one from one of ACNS volunteers.

Watch every Thursday on our Facebook page to see if you are the lucky number drawn and receive half the take from that week!

It's that easy!!! Anyone in Nova Scotia who is over the age of 19 may play!!!



HIV in the News

PrEP Approved in Canada

On Feb. 26, 2016, Health Canada announced that Truvada (a combination of the medications emtricitabine and tenofovir disoproxil fumarate in one pill) is the first treatment approved for the prevention of HIV in Canada. For anyone who hasn't yet heard, PrEP (Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis) is the use of a medication to prevent an infection. PrEP is NOT a vaccine, NOT a cure, and it is NOT a "morning after pill". In order for PrEP to be effective, based on the current recommended protocol, it needs to be taken on a daily basis. Although PrEP has been sort-of available within Canada before now, it has only been available as an "off label" prescription. Off label medications can be hard to get, very expensive and are usually not covered by drug plans.

Now that Truvada has been formally approved, we are hopeful that it may make it easier for it to be prescribed, and that over time drug plans may begin to cover it. However, that will not happen quickly. ACNS will continue watching to see how access to PrEP will unfold here in Nova Scotia. At this point there are still a lot of unanswered questions. Anyone interested in finding out more about PrEP is welcome to contact our offices.

ART Turns 20

Twenty years ago the lives of people who were living with HIV changed. Antiretroviral therapy (ART) provided hope for people who were HIV positive, their friends and family. In July, 1996, at an international AIDS conference in Vancouver the concept of highly effective antiretroviral therapy (HAART) was introduced. It was a combination of new medication coupled with new technology for viral load testing. Although the first antiretroviral therapy medication meant terrible side effects and strict diet restrictions, the medications have come a long way. HIV became a chronic, manageable illness if individuals had access to good care and treatment. Although there is no cure for HIV to date, we are optimistic for the future.

Organ Transplants for HIV Positive People in the US

For the first time in history, HIV-positive individuals will be able to receive organs from HIV-positive donors in the United States. In 2013, President Obama signed the HIV Organ Policy Equality Act, which legalized transplants between Poz patients. Recently, John Hopkins University has received the green light to start to perform these life saving operations. Unfortunately, there is no information about if services for organ transplants between HIV-positive individuals will be available in Canada; however, it is a step in the right direction.

What's Happening?

Ass Class in Sydney and Halifax!

This half-day workshop is travelling to Sydney for the first time on Saturday April 23rd, and will be offered again in Halifax on Saturday, May 28th. An adaption of the ground-breaking workshop from England, the *Ass Class* instructs gay / bi men (including gay / bi trans men) in some basic anatomy as a way to understand the full range of anal sexual stimulation, pleasure and health. For more info, or to get registered, contact Gay Men's Health Coordinator Chris Aucoin at 1-800-566-2437, ext. 222, or 902-425-4882, ext. 222 or email GMHC@acns.ns.ca.

Pride Volunteers Needed!

The Gay Men's Health Project needs volunteers re this year's Transgender sexual health promotion (for 2-3 hour shifts) at Halifax Pride Day - Saturday, July 23rd. Contact Chris Aucoin at 902-425-4882, ext. 222 or email GMHC@acns.ns.ca.

Check Me Out – TRANS

A sexual health checklist for transgender people based on our successful *Check Me Out* campaign for gay / bi men is now under development. If you would like to be part of the transgender consultation process for this program please contact Chris Aucoin at 1-800-566-2437, ext. 222, or 902-425-4882, ext. 222 or email GMHC@acns.ns.ca.

Int'l Day Against Homophobia & Transphobia Rally.

On or around May 17 - details TBA. If you are interested in information about this event then please contact The Gay Men's Health Coordinator, Chris Aucoin at 902-425-4882 ext. 222 or email GMHC@acns.ns.ca.

Knowledge Exchange and Health Promotion Forum

As many of you know, ACNS has had a very busy year with lots of change and transition. Unfortunately, due to these changes we will not be hosting our annual Knowledge Exchange and Health Promotion Forum this year. We are looking at the possibility of hosting some other kind of training or workshop later in the spring or early summer, and will let folks know as soon as we have more information.

Pride Health Nurse Availability

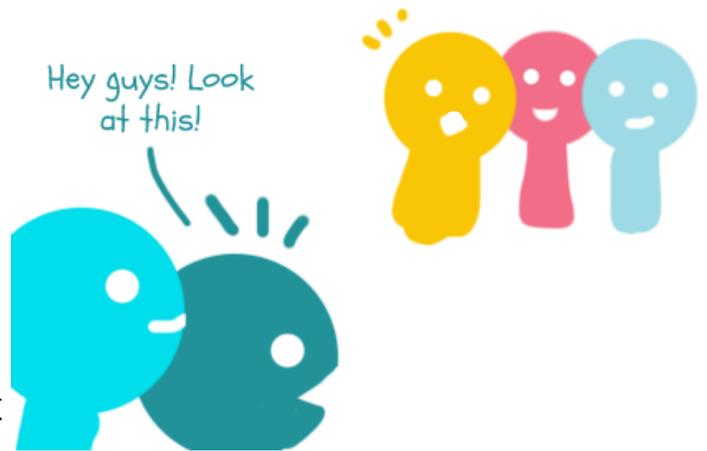
Due to increased demand for the prideHealth_nurse at the Refugee Clinic, we will be unable to provide HIV testing on site until further notice. If you do have any questions about where to get testing or other healthcare needs contact Liz, the Support Coordinator at (902)425-4882 ext 225.

Stigma Workshop for Young Gay/Bi/Queer Men

Stigma is a powerful social force that hurts and damages the lives of young gay, bi, and queer (GBQ) guys (cis or trans). It affects mental health, HIV status, race, gender identity and expression, physical health and more. On Thursday, Mar. 31, 6-8 pm ACNS is hosting an interactive workshop organized by Resist Stigma* for young gay, bi, and queer (GBQ) guys (cis or trans) about how they can empower themselves to resist stigma. Speakers include Dr. Matt Numer (Professor of Health Promotion, Dalhousie), Jake Ivany (local filmmaker and activist), and Chris Aucoin (ACNS Gay Men's Health Coordinator).

This event is: scent-free, physically accessible, and a single-stall washroom is available. Snacks will be provided. For more info, or for any accommodations or access needs, please contact Aidan Ablona at aidan@cbrc.net.

*RESIST STIGMA is a national anti-stigma initiative that empowers young GBQ guys in the fight against stigma. The Resist Stigma project is hosted by the Community-Based Research Centre for gay men's health (cbrc.net). #ResistStigma



What's Happening?

May

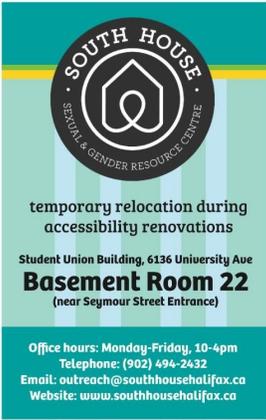
6 - Queen for a Night
12 - Poz Guys Group
17 - IDAHT Day
20-22 Bluenose Marathon
23 - Closed for Holiday
28 - Ass Class (Halifax)

June

9 - Poz Guys Group
18 - ISCAN'S Coronation

July

1 - Closed for Holiday
14 - Poz Guys Group
14-23 Halifax Pride Festival
15 - East Coast Kitchen Party



South House is Temporarily Relocated

One of our community partners, South House had recently relocated temporarily to the Dalhousie Student Union Building. This move was so that renovations to make their building more accessible could be completed. That work is almost finished, so they will soon return to their permanent location at 1443 Seymour Street, Halifax. Updates about the status of their location can be found at <http://southhousehalifax.ca> or phone 902-494-2432.

The Dalhousie School of Social Work Community Clinic has Moved

Their new office is located at 311 Veith House, 3rd floor. If you have questions or need some case management support in a student learning environment then give them a call at (902) 494-2753. They are open Monday- Thursday from 10:00am -3:00pm.

LGBT Health Line

The Fenway Institute is excited to announce a new video training series. Optimizing Transgender Health: A Core Course for Healthcare Providers is a series of six online videos on transgender health topics including Gender Affirming Surgeries, Caring for Gender Nonconforming Youth and Adolescents, and more! If you would like to check things out then following the link. <http://www.lgbthealtheducation.org/transtalks/>



Adult TRANS Support Group

A new weekly peer support group (for those 19+) for transgender or questioning folk has recently formed in the Halifax area. The *Transgender Rainbow Alliance Nova Scotia* (TRANS) may be for you if....

- You are a trans person who is comfortable with your gender and you want to offer support
- You are uncomfortable with or questioning your gender
- You want to talk and share
- You want to sit and listen
- You need a space where there is no pressure to be your assigned sex
- You want to connect with others for social activities

You identify as an adult*

*individual interpretations of adult accepted. Behaving like an adult on a regular basis not a necessary pre-requisite for group participation.

If you have any questions about the group, TRANS can be reached at TRANShfx@gmail.com

Queer Services Conference in Halifax May 12-15

The Dalhousie Student Union is hosting the 2016 Canadian University Queer Services Conference from May 12-15. For more detail on presenting or participating, check out the conference web site at: <http://dsu.ca/cuqsc>.



Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network - Trans National Project

The Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN) will be conducting focus groups in Halifax, Toronto, Winnipeg, Vancouver. These focus groups are open to the Indigenous Trans community. They will explore how current realities directly impact access to care, community supports, and a stigma-free life. These realities can include being Indigenous, gender-diverse, and HIV+ in a colonized society with ongoing trans phobia and HIV-phobia and entrenched policies and beliefs. We need your input!

Please contact Arthur Dave Miller for more information adavemiller@icloud.com or (902) 433-0900