

The CBRC update

Friend,

In this month's newsletter: Summit 2025 recap, CBRC's new strategic plan, chronic pain in 2S/LGBTQIA+ communities, joining our Board of Directors, and more.

THE LATEST

1. **Nearly 600 people attended Summit 2025: Convergence & Emergence in Montreal**, making it our largest gathering yet. Summit 2025 took place November 20-22, following the Two-Spirit Symposium held November 18-19. If you were involved in this year's conference, whether as a presenter, moderator, volunteer, or attendee — thank you! We could not have done it without you.

And mark your calendars for next year! **Summit 2026 will take place in Toronto from October 29 - November 1.** Stay tuned for more information in the coming months.



Photo: Steve Gerrard

2. We are excited to share [Strategy 2030](#), our first-ever, public-facing strategic plan on sustaining and enriching CBRC's core work. The plan provides a way forward in a time of uncertainty and change — but also one of promise and opportunity for the 2S/LGBTQIA+ community. Grounded in community voices and a shared vision, Strategy 2030 is built on feedback and consultation with community members, partners, staff, board members, and other valued

collaborators who shape and sustain our work. Learn more about how it was developed and discover the three priorities we've identified to strengthen and guide our work moving forward.

3. **December 1 marked World AIDS Day**, a time to remember those we've lost, honour those who've fought, and stand behind all people living with and affected by HIV. Here's how we commemorated World AIDS Day this year:

- Once again, CBRC [participated](#) in CANFAR's annual World AIDS Day campaign, "[See the Person, Not the Status.](#)"
- The [Canadian guideline on HIV pre- and postexposure prophylaxis: 2025 update](#) was published. These guidelines include 31 recommendations and 10 good practice statements to support clinical decision making. Led by [CTN+](#)'s Dr. Darrell Tan, CBRC helped to co-author this clinical practice guideline in collaboration with others from St. Michael's Hospital, University of British Columbia, CATIE, Clinique médicale du Quartier Latin, Memorial University, and more. The team also created [this social media shareable](#).
- In Toronto, CBRC's Research Director Jad Sinno was a panelist on [Defining Your Role in Ending AIDS](#), presented by Pride at Work Canada. The event brought together leaders at municipal, national, and international levels of the HIV response to talk about what it will take to end AIDS in our lifetime.



Photo: From left to right: Meg French (Executive Director, Stephen Lewis Foundation); Jad Sinno (Research Director, CBRC); Carol Thames (Executive Director, Fife House); Colin Druhan (Executive Director, Pride at Work Canada)

THE READ

Why is it important to understand **chronic pain in 2S/LGBTQIA+ communities**? Guest blogger Codie Primeau, who lives with chronic lumbopelvic pain, writes about his experience with chronic pain and how it intersects with queerness. “When you are not sure if a provider sees you for who you are, accessing affirming care becomes a calculation,” he writes. “Many people from 2S/LGBTQIA+ communities know this feeling. Avoiding care can feel safer in the moment, but waiting often allows symptoms to grow and become harder to manage.” Codie says that we need to **hear directly from community** to better understand experiences of chronic pain for 2S/LGBTQIA+ people: “Research created *by and with* 2S/LGBTQIA+ communities gives us the best chance at building solutions that actually support people.” This is why Codie is part of the [SHAPE+ study](#), a community-led project centering the experiences of 2S/LGBTQIA+ people in Canada living with chronic pain. Read more about Codie’s experience, and find out how you can participate, in [our latest blog post](#).

OUR COMMUNITY: Kate Fish

Kate Fish (she/her) is the Peer Support Coordinator for [Smoke Break](#), CBRC’s newest tobacco harm reduction program. Kate has also been a Registered Social Worker for 12 years, having worked across British Columbia in direct service, education, and leadership roles related to substance use, sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (such as HIV and Hepatitis C), poverty, and the toxic drug crisis.

Growing up in a small coastal community on the north coast of British Columbia, Kate began smoking at age 14. Having been a smoker for a decade before stopping—and being queer—she was on the community advisory committee for the Smoke Break program, contributing her unique perspectives to help guide the development of the program. Now the Peer Support Coordinator of the program, Kate manages referrals and provides a warm welcome when people start the program. She connects them to one of the peer supporters that provide one-on-one and group support to 2S/LGBTQIA+ people looking to quit or reduce their smoking and vaping use. The program also mails nicotine replacement therapy kits to participants, and offers education on how to use them.

“Smoke Break allows 2S/LGBTQIA+ folks to explore their relationship with smoking commercial tobacco or vaping without the pressure to quit,” Kate says. “Quitting is totally on the table, but the program is expansive in that people have the flexibility in how and when they participate, what their goals are, and how they meet them.” The program is non-judgemental and non-coercive, and involves sharing information and options so that people can choose what works best for them to reduce harm and/or to quit. “If someone’s goal is to quit smoking, great! If not, also fine!”

In many traditional smoking cessation programs, the focus and language is almost always around quitting smoking. This works for some people, but not everyone—especially when an intersectional lens is not used. “We’ve heard from folks that if this program was not specifically geared towards 2S/LGBTQIA+ people, they wouldn’t participate,” Kate explains. “When health and social services—like cessation programs—lack 2S/LGBTQIA+ competence and are unsafe, our communities are then disproportionately affected by delayed access to prevention, diagnosis, and treatment for tobacco-related illnesses.”

Smoke Break is harm reduction by queer people, for queer people. The term “harm reduction” is not often associated with tobacco, and many people assume that it doesn’t support people who want to quit smoking entirely. “It’s seen as a binary—either you’re smoking, or you quit, but that’s not true. There is a grey area where shame and stigma often live,” Kate says.

Kate wants to see a shift in how we talk about nicotine use and harm reduction. “A harm reduction approach to tobacco use asks questions, is curious, and is focused on the individual. Where are you at right now? Where do you want to be? What do you need to get there? It’s about sharing information and options so that people can choose what’s best for them.”

To learn more about Smoke Break, and sign up, please visit mysmokebreak.ca.



Photo: Kate Fish

"Harm reduction is a set of principles that support wellbeing no matter where someone is on the continuum of substance use. It asks, 'Where are you at right now, and what do you need?'"

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

- Last month, we released the **final report in our [series](#) of COVID-19 Community Reports**. This report on [Indigenous 2S/LGBTQQIA+ People](#) highlights some impacts of the pandemic on Indigenous 2S/LGBTQQIA+ communities in what is currently called Canada.
- We collaborated with [Script Health](#) to produce the first episode in their Ask a Sexpert series, featuring Jaylene McRae, CBRC’s Two-Spirit Research Coordinator. [In this video](#), Jaylene answers the question, “What is long-acting

PrEP?”

CBRC in the Media:

- [Summit 2025 was featured on CityNews](#). Marie Geoffroy, CBRC’s Associate Director of Research, and presenter Douglas Judson were interviewed.
- Global News also [spoke to panelist Celeste Trianon](#) at Summit 2025 for a larger story on the closure of Montreal’s Clinique L’Agora.

COMING UP

More videos in Script Health’s Ask a Sexpert series are coming in the New Year, featuring CBRC staff members. Make sure to follow [Script](#) and CBRC on social media to be the first to catch them.

CBRC's office will be closed from December 25 - January 1. We wish you a restful holiday season and a happy New Year!

GET INVOLVED

CBRC is currently looking to recruit new board members to join the organization by the spring of 2026. Help make a difference in the lives of Two-Spirit, queer, and trans people in Canada by lending your time and skills to a dynamic, growing and passionate team. Find full details [here](#).

CBRC is also looking for a [Human Resources Specialist](#) to join our Operations / Administration Department. Deadline to apply is December 30.

Tis’ the season for a [Smoke Break](#)! Give yourself the gift of 2S/LGBTQIA+ peer support and free NRT kits this holiday through our new virtual, peer-led program to help queer and trans people across Canada quit or reduce smoking through a harm reduction approach.

CBRC, Ribbon Community, and Dignity Seniors Society are pleased to introduce the **Queer, Wise, and Inquisitive Collective (QWIC)**. This program is for **2S/ LGBTQIA+ people age 55+ to learn community-based research skills**. We are looking for 20 2S/LGBTQIA+ people to meet weekly on Tuesday nights, starting in January. Find full details [here](#), and sign up [here](#).



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