

2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations

2-SPIRITS THE GATHERING

2024 MENTAL HEALTH EDITION
TORONTO, ON



THE GATHERING

Welcome to the 2-Spirits
The Gathering with a focus on
Mental Health and Wellness

March 25-28, 2024
The Chelsea Hotel
Toronto, Ontario

www.2spirits.org

WHO WE ARE

Our Vision

We see a strong, healthy, and self-determining 2-Spirit community in Ontario where 2-Spirit peoples live with pride in their Indigenous heritages, values and roles in our communities.

We see 2-Spirit peoples as continuing to celebrate our strengths and supporting community members to live with physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Our Mission

We will continue to nurture and grow within our sacred roles and celebrate our strengths as 2-Spirit peoples to provide physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual advocacy. We support 2-Spirit peoples and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community members who are at risk of or living with HIV, hepatitis C, and related co-infections; and we will continue to support community members who are facing the effects of historic and ongoing colonial violence so that we may thrive within our communities and nations.

WELCOME NOTE FROM 2-SPIRITS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: KEITH MCCRADY

Dear 2-Spirit Community Members,

We welcome you to the Second 2-Spirits Gathering, 2024 hosted by the 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, focusing this year on Mental Health and Wellness. As we convene in Toronto from March 25th to 28th, we are united in our journey toward better mental health, wellness, and community solidarity.

This gathering is a special place for 2-Spirit, Indigenous Queer, and Transgender communities, particularly those who are impacted by ongoing colonialism, systematic racism, residential schools, impact of missing and murdered, 2-Spirits, Indigenous Women and Girls (MM2SIWG) intergenerational trauma that led to substance abuse, addiction, mental health, houselessness, and the complexities of HIV/AIDS & STBBI. It's also a welcoming space for community leaders and knowledge Keepers in enhancing 2-Spirits and the Indigenous queer community's well-being and understanding the unique experiences of our community. Borrowing Mikmaw Elder Albert Marshal's term, Two-Eyed Seeing, we aim to create an inclusive environment that marries the wisdom of traditional Indigenous practices with modern approaches to mental health and healing. This year, we delve into the interconnectedness of our emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental well-being, guided by our diverse communities' rich traditions and contemporary experiences. You will find opportunities to share, learn, and heal throughout this gathering. Whether you're here to share your journey, listen and learn from others, or find new paths to wellness, you belong here. Our program includes workshops, discussions, and creative sessions to foster healing, understanding, and mutual support. We honour the traditions of our ancestors while embracing the challenges and opportunities of the present. Our sessions will explore the significance of Indigenous ceremonies, sacred medicines, and land-based teachings and how they contribute to our mental health and overall well-being today.

This conference is more than an event; it's a sacred ceremony where community coming together to support each other in our individual and collective journeys of healing and reclaiming our role in the circle. It's about acknowledging the importance of mental health, the strength found in asking for help, and the power of community in overcoming challenges. We are thrilled to have you join us for these four days of learning, sharing, and growing together. Let this gathering be a place where every voice is heard, every story is valued, and every individual can find pathways to healing and strength.

Welcome to our family, where your presence and contributions make a difference. Let's embrace this opportunity to learn from each other and move forward together, stronger, and more connected.

With warmest regards,

Keith McCrady

Executive Director
The 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations



AGENDA

MARCH 25, 2024

9:00AM-10:00AM	Breakfast in the Churchill room
10:00AM-10:30AM	Opening by Elder Blu , Welcoming by Keith McCrady & Saige McMahon
10:30AM-11:15AM	Icebreaker with Cherish Blood
11:15AM-12:00PM	“If you don’t see it, be it!” with Ash Moreau
12:00PM-1:00PM	Lunch with special performance by SHA SHA
1:00PM-2:30PM	Connecting Our Children to the Land with EarlyON Team from Native Canadian Centre of Toronto and Ojibiikaan
2:30PM-2:45PM	Break
2:45PM-3:30PM	Grieving and Healing through community and love with Rain
3:30PM--4:15PM	ME = ME: A Story of self-discovery, with Trevor Stratton
8:00PM-11:00PM	Karaoke in the Bb33 Bistro & Brasserie with Surprise Guests

AGENDA

MARCH 26, 2024

9:00AM-10:00AM	Breakfast in the Mountbatten Salon room
10:00AM-10:30AM	Creating Space for Reclaiming Bodies, Sexuality and Sensuality, with Denise McLeod
10:30AM-11:15AM	Through the Eyes of Our Knowledge Keepers: Understanding the Mental Health Effects of 'Pretendian' Controversies on the 2-Spirit Communities with Keith McCrady
11:15AM-12:00PM	Janelle Niles, Comedian in Mountbatten Room Healing Circle in Seymour Room
12:00PM-1:00PM	Lunch, with performance by the Red Bear Singers
1:00PM-1:45PM	Welcoming joy and the wellness of Trans, Non Binary relatives back into the circle, with Dr. Percy Lezard
1:45PM-2:30PM	Mental Health Healing through the Arts and Ceremony, with Janet Day
2:30PM-2:45PM	Health Break
2:45PM-3:30PM	Two-Spirit Resilience & Punk's Renaissance: The Journey of KenBarb, with Tehatsironkwas (KenBarb)
3:30PM-4:00PM	Creating Culturally Safe Trauma Informed Care Pathways and Cultural Supports for Indigenous Patients at Unity Health, with the Unity Health Indigenous Wellness and Care Team

AGENDA

MARCH 27, 2024

9:00AM-10:00AM

Breakfast in the Mountbatten Salon room

10:00AM-11:30AM

Open Lead Panel discussion with Monica, Bella, Shaneequa and Lou. Moderated by Tatiana and Megh

11:30AM-12:00PM

Final remarks by Keith McCrady,
Closing by Elder Blu

MARCH 28, 2024 BY INVITATION

9:00AM-10:00AM

Breakfast

10:00AM-11:00AM

2-Spirited Community Leaders meeting - Keith McCrady

11:00AM-11:15AM

Snack

11:15AM-12:30PM

Final remarks and way forward

ELDER BLU

Blu's family is from Big River Saskatchewan, Star Blanket Reserve and Bra'dor Lake, Eskasoni First Nations, Cape Breton Nova Scotia, and the Red River. Blu grew up with their grandmother and learned about traditional medicines, learning healing methods and care of the sick. Their grandmother also shared her knowledge of the great teachings.

Blu is currently working at Seneca College as an Elder on campus providing traditional teachings and one-to-one counselling.

Blu spent 2.5 years working for the National Inquiry for Murdered and Missing Women as a Grandmother to Commissioner Brian Eyelfson and sits on the Grandmother Circle.

Blu sits on the Thunder Women Healing Lodge as a Director of the Board.

Blu also sits as the Ontario representative for Metis people with 2 Spirits In Motion Board.

Blu also provides ceremony, teaching, and counselling for 2 Spirited People of the First Nations, in Toronto.

Blu was also the national caucus representative for the Toronto Urban Aboriginal strategies for five years working with the community of Toronto and the government. They are also a graduate of DeVry Institute of Technology receiving their business software micro-computer architecture and A+ certification.

Blu's gifts include: Traditional teachings, giving traditional spirit names, hand drumming, song writer, creative writings, full moon conductor, pipe ceremonies sweat lodge ceremonies and Traditional counselling.

Blu is a 2 spirit person, a mother of 5, a grandmother of 3, a sun dancer, and a pipe carrier.

LAUREEN BLU WATERS (They/Them)

Laureen (Blu) Waters: Istchii Nikamoon: Earth Song, Wolf clan. Cree/Metis/Micmac, Blu is a member of the Metis Nation of Ontario.



LEADS

ASH MOREAU (THEY/THEM)

Ash Moreau is a Two Spirited Michif maker of things, originally from the Treaty 3 / region 1 in Eagle River, Ontario. They've lived in Thunder Bay, since 2005 and since living in the city have been able to grow and learn more about themselves, their culture and share some of their creativity and passion with the community. Ashley first served on the Two Spirited people of Thunder Bay board as president in 2006 and from there has continued these conversations regionally, and also nationally. They have committed their focus and path to helping bring awareness and visibility to our rainbow community by raising awareness and pollinating Two Spirit Teachings and Stories.



CHERISH BLOOD (SHE/HER)

Actor, storyteller, and activist, Cherish Violet Blood is a proud Blackfoot woman whom hails from the Kainai Nation, or Blood Tribe Reserve #148 in Treaty 7 territory located in southern Alberta. Currently residing in Toronto, Ontario, Cherish is a professionally trained and well recognized performing artist with active followings in the national Indigenous and international theatre communities. Cherish has performed all over North America, Australia, New Zealand, and Scotland. Select credits include creator/performer in Material Witness (Spiderwoman Theatre La Mama, NYC), creator/performer in Making Treaty 7 directed by Michelle Thrush in Calgary, AB. The lead role in Deer Woman, a new play that has been touring internationally by Tara Beagan, and most recently, awarded the Canadian Screen Award for actress in supporting role for her role in Scarborough. As a natural comedian Cherish has hosted many album release parties for artists such as Iskwe, LAL, and Fiver, as well as for community events and numerous fundraisers.



LEADS

DENISE B. MCLEOD (SHE/HER)

Denise B. McLeod is a proud 2 Spirited Urban Anishinaabekwe, who's home territory is Sagamok Anishnawbek F.N located on the north shore of Lake Huron. Denise was Scooped as a child and raised largely in the North West end of Toronto.

Denise has been an active member and worked continuously in Toronto's urban Indigenous community. She is committed to creating safer positive spaces that break down stereotypes and barriers where Indigenous peoples can be proud to identify their Nationhood. This especially flows through her work as an Educator and Artist. Denise teaches and shares her knowledge about Gender Based Violence, Anti oppression/Anti Racism and Indigenous content. When Denise is not teaching, she is taking the stage as a stand up comedian and sketch comedy writer, or in her alter-ego Madame Ode'Miin Surprise Mother of the House of IndigiBabes Burlesque.

Denise is a proud mom to two mostly adultish humans, and a 2 year old potcake pup named Etta. Her children also remind her, that she has two "Grandcats" named Babs and P. Iggy Smalls.



JANET DAY (SHE/HER)

Aanii Boozhoo Hello My name is Niigaani Ogawanimkii Benise Kwe, my English name is Janet Day I am very excited to be part of your gathering I am member of Serpent River First Nation community; I am a grandmother to 8, a Mother and a Helper in my greater community. I have a degree in sociology in conflict theory and my heart was in ethnographic research as well healing through the Arts. I as well run a fasting camp and hold a water gathering annually. Culture is our core to all aspects of our well-being and being well human beings. In this aspect of as an indigenous artist in group leading, it is inspiring to teach and reach artists, and captivate them., through our culture, ceremony, and contemporary arts. Creativity that ignites their artistic abilities and talents to naturally lead their gifts and naturally mentor their expressions. Its diversity and many cultures of through the healing arts to a whole other level and land base teachings with cultural appropriation, an artistic integrity that invites' diversity, and a wide scope of genres and mediums to integrate great capacity in creating memories, and revitalizing our culture through language, ethnographic research methods and healing through the Arts of the past present and future. Elders and other Artists that have great contribution towards a concept of teachings and learning and healing through Inter Arts, I would like to share about this and how it deals with mental health and 2 spirits, I Identify as Two spirits her and she.



LEADS

LUCILLE “LOU” ATLOOKAN (SHE/THEY)

Lucille “Lou” Atlookan is a 2Spirit Anishinaabe artist from Eabametoong First Nation, and resides in Thunder Bay, ON. Atlookan works predominately in beadwork and illustration. They are a founder and program coordinator of Neechee Studio, a free art & cultural program for Indigenous youth in Thunder Bay. Atlookan co-leads a collective to coordinate and facilitate workshops.



MAYBELLA REYNOLDS (SHE/HER)

Maybella Reynolds is an Anishinabek person, a 2-Spirit Trans Kwe, Ojibway person and her home territory is that of the Potawatomi people. She is from Moose Deer Point First Nations on the Northern shores of Georgian Bay. She carries two Spirit names - Thunderbird of the South and Walks with Medicine. Her clan is Eagle and her Spirit helper is Bear.



LEADS

MONICA FORRESTER

Monica Forrester is a Program and Outreach coordinator for Maggie's Toronto Sex Workers Action Project. Since 1999, she has worked in various agencies to educate and make services accessible for trans* folks and actively works to promote awareness and visibility of trans women.



DR. PERCY LEZARD

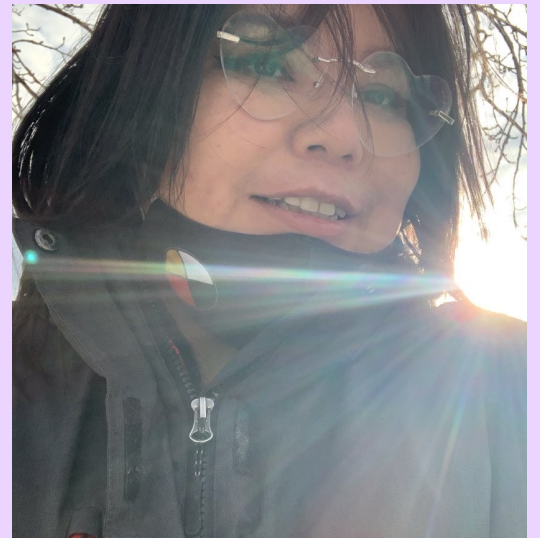
Wai, iskwis (my name is) Percy Lezard. I am xatma sqilxw, and my relations are the Lezard's in Sn'pinkton, the Kruger's from Arrow Lakes and the Baptiste's from Chopka. As part of my sqilxw cultural practice, I want to begin my introduction with an acknowledgement of my positionality and responsibilities, in an era across the Academic Industrial complex of race shifters and pretendians it's important to identify "who I am, who are my people and who claims me." My family and I are all full status and registered members under the Indian Act and under OUR nations custom membership code, we/I are members of the Penticton Indian Band my people, the sqilxw, have lived on the territory known as the Okanagan Valley since the beginning of people on those lands. Our traditional territories stretch from Mica Creek, just north of modern-day Revelstoke, BC and east to Kootenay Lake, south to Washington state and west into the Nicola Valley. I continue to live as an invited guest on the lands of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples for the past twenty-five years and am responsible to upholding the Dish with One Spoon treaty in my nation-to-nation relations with the caretakers of these territories. I am an Assistant Professor in the Indigenous Studies Program at Wilfrid Laurier University. I have been an academic for 15 years and helper for 37 years. I am the lead writer for the 2SLGBTQQIA+ Sub-Working Group MMIWG2SLGBTQQIA+ National Action Plan Final report.



LEADS

RAIN (THEY/THEM)

Rain is a 2-Spirit Annishinabe and Anisinew multimedia artist based out of Thunder Bay. They have been a Program Coordinator for Neechee Studio for a year, as well as a facilitator for The Indigenous Youth Residency Program in Thunder Bay. Their work focuses on celebrating Indigenous Resistance and Indigenous Joy.



SHANEEQUA (HE/HER)

Shane Potts
Shaneequa (nickname)
Kakako (Raven) is my traditional name.
I'm a 2 Spirit Trans HIV Mental Health Advocate from Maskwacis Alberta, who once made their home Toronto for 21 years.
Recently moved back to my First Nation to be with Family.



LEADS

TEHATSIRONKWAS AKA KENBARB (HE/HIM/THEY/THEM)

KenBarb, a determined and passionate young Mohawk 2spirit individual, has emerged as a beacon of leadership and creativity within his community. Born and raised on the traditional lands of Six Nations, Grand River territory, has been living in Hamilton since 2010. Despite facing numerous challenges, he remains resilient, and committed to driving social change for his community. As a youth leader in both Hamilton and Toronto, he inspires others across Ontario with his dedication to revitalizing his language skills and preserving his cultural heritage. Through expressive arts, he draws from his multimedia lenses of collage work & then his poetry and documents his life experiences. KenBarb finds solace in creative writing and storytelling, finding joy in life's simple pleasures he's been up every morning reciting the Ohenda Kaiywatehkwa (thanksgiving address) while enjoying tea outdoors. His journey is one of self-discovery, empowerment, and leaving a positive impact on his community and the future 7 generations.



TREVOR STRATTON (HE/HIM/THEY/THEM)

Trevor Stratton, a citizen of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, is a prominent figure in the fight against HIV and AIDS, particularly within Indigenous communities. Diagnosed with HIV in 1990, Stratton has been a resilient advocate and leader in this field. He has been involved with the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network, now known as CAAN Communities, Alliances and Networks for over 20 years. His work has extended to various roles including serving as the Board President of 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, and Board director and National Advocate for the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research (CANFAR). He has also been a professional consultant since 2005 and has maintained active involvement in the Two-Spirit and HIV/AIDS community.

Stratton's work includes coordinating the International Indigenous Working Group on HIV and AIDS (IIWGHA) for 11 years and participating in global research projects addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights for Indigenous women and girls. His efforts have contributed significantly to community mobilization and the broader understanding of HIV and AIDS in Indigenous communities. Trevor Stratton's story is one of turning a personal challenge into a lifelong mission to support others and advocate for change in public health and awareness regarding HIV and AIDS. His journey and contributions illustrate the importance of community support, resilience, and advocacy in addressing public health issues.



AGENCY LEADS

**UNITY HEALTH
INDIGENOUS
WELLNESS AND
CARE TEAM**



OJIBIHKANN

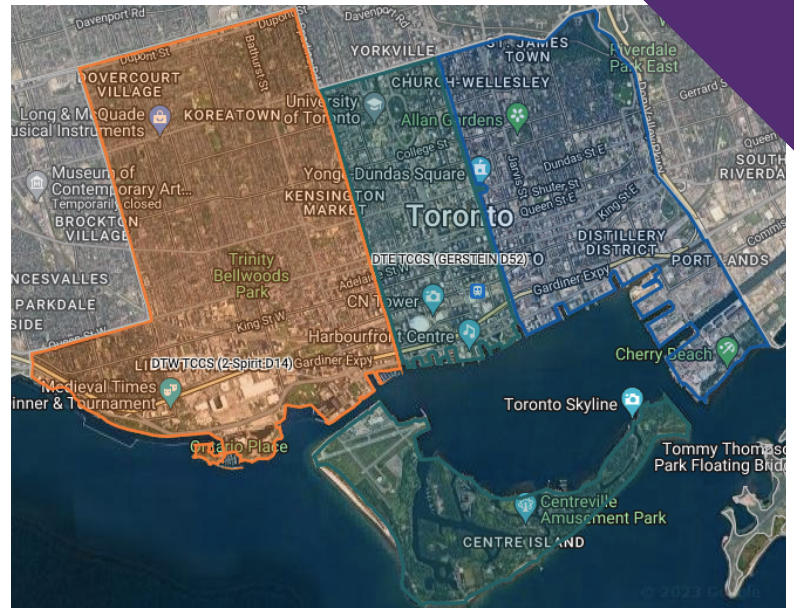


**NATIVE CANADIAN
CENTRE TORONTO-
EARLY ON**



CRISIS PILOT

Indigenous peoples in Toronto have historically been, and continue to be, disproportionately negatively affected by police intervention in crisis situations. There is a need to create an alternative framework for crisis response. This is fundamental to protecting our community from harm and continued forms of colonization and trauma.



SERVICES AVAILABLE

- Crisis support
- Harm reduction
- System navigation
- Referral support
- Individualized support
- Follow up support
- Housing referrals
- Primary health care referrals
- Child and family support

PILOT VISION

Indigenous Led Crisis Response: grounded in an understanding of historical, social and justice inequalities.

We serve both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Division 14. The team also responds to Indigenous people in Divisions 51 and 52. We provide greater access to traditional ways of doing in times of crisis through ceremonies, access to medicines, and land-based programming.

How to Access: Call 211

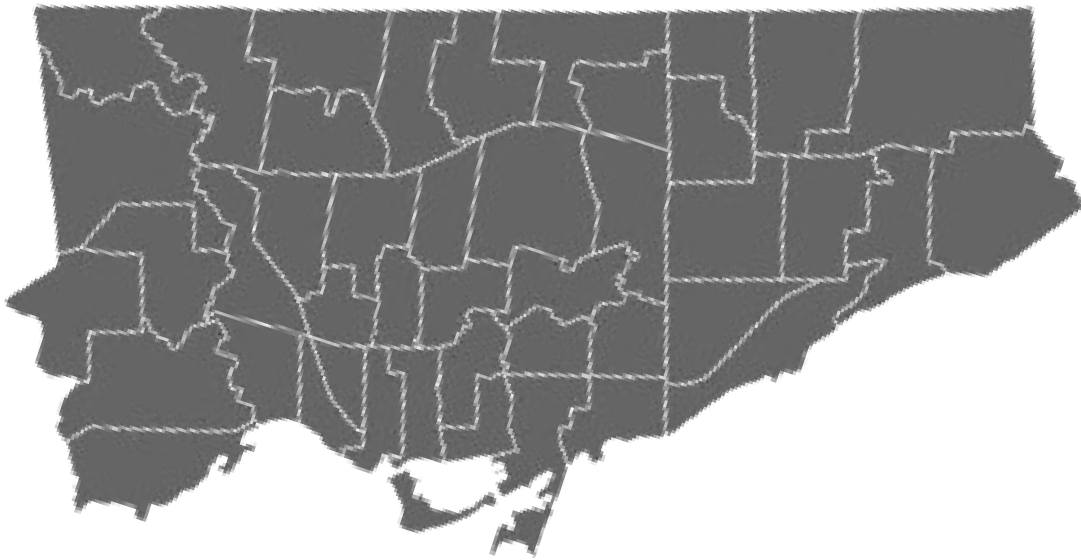
CRISIS PILOT

The indigenous Mental Health Crisis Line operates from 2PM to 2AM Daily. This provides access to a Mental Health Support Worker who is able to provide support over the phone and, depending on location of the caller, they are able to dispatch a mobile team to their location.
This is accessed by calling (416) 363-2999

INDIGENOUS MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS LINE

Launching Summer 2024!

The 2-Spirits Crisis Team will be expanding to cover the entire city of Toronto!



EXPANSION INCLUDES

- 2 New Hubs
- All Locations will include Case Management
- 24/7 Crisis Response for Indigenous Identifying Callers
- Individualized Voluntary Care
- Immediate Crisis Management and Harm Reduction
- Referrals to Services

How to Access: Call 211

2-SPIRIT BURSARY PROGRAM

This Bursary Program was started to give 2-Spirit Community Members access to low-barrier bursaries. The funds are to be self-determined for whatever needs the members have, and however they prioritize the spending of funds as well will require little or no reporting back. It is also a way for those who can give funds, a space to demonstrate their own philanthropy in hopes they inspire others to do the same. Take what you need, give what you can.

Visit the 2-Spirits info booth to find out how you can sponsor a bursary today

2-SPIRITED PEOPLE OF
THE 1ST NATIONS

Help support a bursary for a youth who has experienced Gender Based Violence

**\$25.00
DONATION**

ALL PROFITS WILL BE DEDICATED TO FUNDING A BURSARY AIMED AT SUPPORTING A YOUTH AFFECTED BY GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE. THIS INITIATIVE UNDERSCORES A COMMITMENT TO ADDRESSING THIS PRESSING ISSUE AND PROVIDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THOSE IMPACTED, FOSTERING A PATHWAY TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

Double Sided



with a zipper



2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, expresses their heartfelt gratitude to Anishnawbe Health Toronto for generously facilitating the transfer of financial resources to contribute to the success of this conference.



Anishnawbe Health Toronto

HARM REDUCTION & SELF TESTING

On Site Support

Tina Copenance

Dr. Percy Lezar

Elder Blu

Janet Day

If you wish to access one on one support with any of the above, please visit our support table and one of our staff will be able to connect you

Naloxone Training

Naloxone is a lifesaving medication that can stop/temporarily reverse an opioid overdose. Naloxone can save a life in case of an opioid overdose. Be prepared and carry a kit.

Did you know we offer free Naloxone training? Find our Harm Reduction table to see how you can get trained today.



Harm Reduction

Harm Reduction is an evidence-based approach that seeks to reduce the health and social harms associated with addiction and substance use without necessarily requiring people who use substances from abstaining or stopping. 2-Spirits provides harm reduction with a wholistic Indigenous lens to those folks living within Toronto.

If you are in need of harm reduction supplies or would like to find out more, our harm reduction team will be happy to help.

VACCINE CLINIC

In partnership with Auduzhe Mino NeseWINong, we will be offering a vaccine clinic and STI testing on March 26, 2024 at The Chelsea hotel during The Gathering. Please ask a 2-Spirit staff member how you can take part in this clinic.

Vaccines and services being offered:

- Covid -19 vaccines
- Flu vaccines
- HPV
- Meningococcal to those eligible
- On site STI AND HIV Testing



2-SPIRITED PEOPLE OF THE 1ST NATIONS

KARAOKE NIGHT SOCIAL



MARCH 25, 2024
8:00PM-11:00PM

IN THE BISTRO
ROOM AT THE
CHELSEA HOTEL

THE HEALING SPACE

The Healing Space will be held in a smaller room at The Gathering and will offer a serene place for decompression and emotional support. Participants are invited to come relax and find some quiet and connection with Elders, Grandmothers and Knowledge Carriers, drums, songs and medicines.

Through connection, mindfulness, and spiritual practices attendees are encouraged to reconnect with themselves, their ancestors, and the natural world, fostering inner peace and collective healing.

This space will be open on Monday, March 25, 2024 from 11am – 4pm and on Tuesday, March 26, 2024 from 10am – 4pm

Event: Healing Circle

Date: Tuesday March 26, 2024

Time: 11:15am – 12:00pm

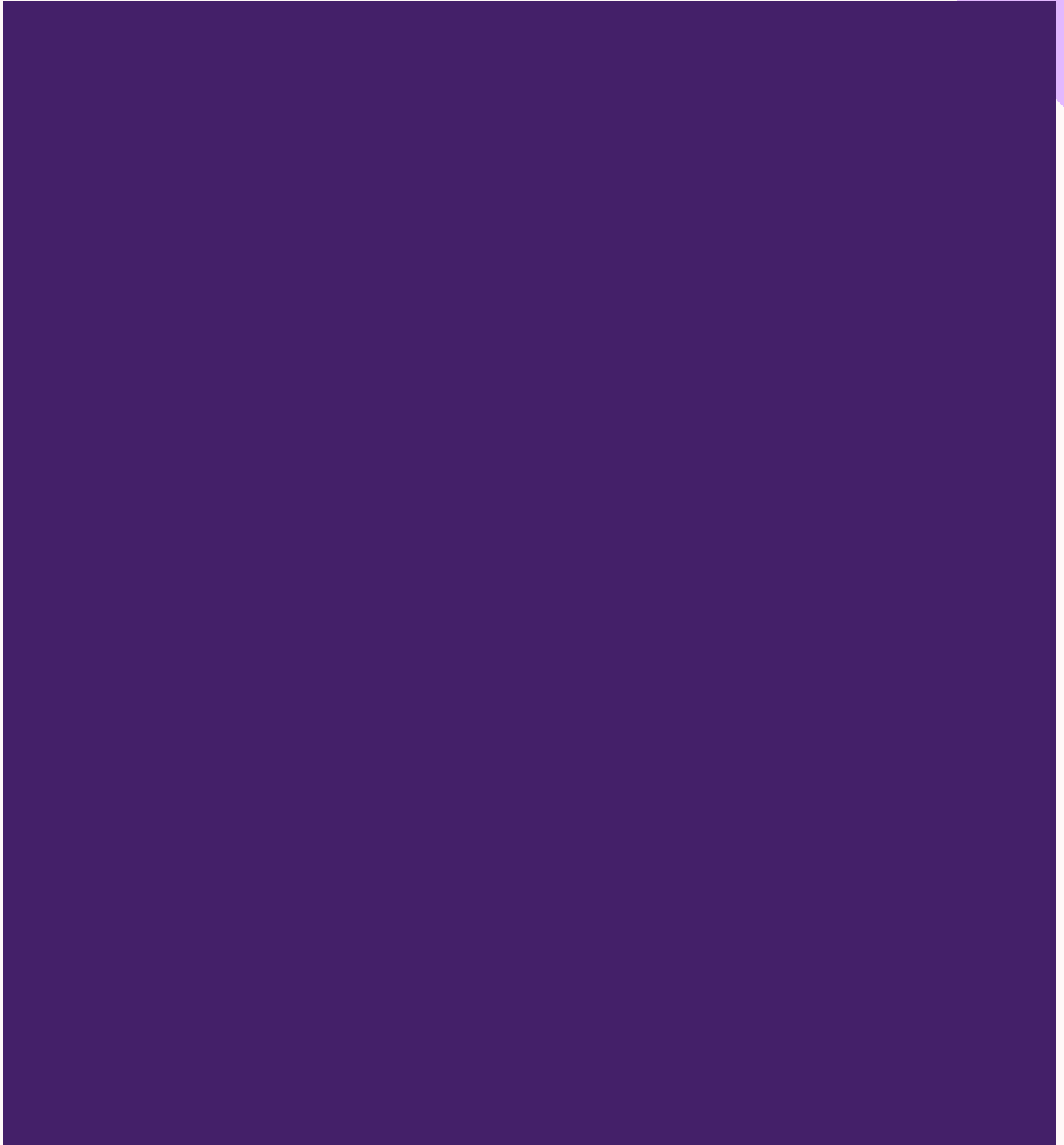
Location: Seymour room

The Healing Circle is dedicated to individuals who have encountered violence, trauma, or are simply seeking solace. It provides a safe space for holistic healing, addressing emotional, spiritual, psychological, and physical health with respect and understanding.

We encourage you to take this opportunity to prioritize your well-being and embrace the healing journey alongside fellow participants. Whether you seek solace, guidance, or simply wish to offer support to others, your presence is valued and welcomed.

*This space is supported by funding from Women and Gender Equality Canada

NOTES



2-SPIRITED PEOPLE OF THE 1ST NATIONS

SAVE THE DATE

**3RD ANNUAL
2-SPIRIT
POWWOW**

**SATURDAY JUNE 1, 2024
DOWNSVIEW PARK, TORONTO**



**EMAILPRIDESUPPORT@2SPIRITS.ORG
FOR MORE INFORMATION**

