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Gilbert Centre and New Horizons

- What does this partnership entail?
- Who is involved?
- What programs and services do we offer?
- COVID-19: challenges, victories, and technology
- Pressures faced in supporting seniors
- New opportunities and ways to provide support
- Q&A

What is New Horizons?

- Gilbert Centre is the backbone agency in the New Horizons for 2S-LGBTQ+ Older Adults program
- Largest partnership in Canada to provide programming to this population
- Guaranteed 5 year funding provided by federal government
- Goal is to reduce social isolation, and increase a sense of personal well-being in participants
- Indigenous inclusion and cultural safety are integral to our program

Who is involved?

- Partner agencies involved in New Horizons:



HIV/Hepatitis Health and Social Services
Services sociaux et de santé pour l'hépatite et vih



Oahas
ONTARIO ABORIGINAL
HIV/AIDS STRATEGY

Programs and Services

- 2 weekly social and support groups - virtual
- Monthly bingo/game nights - virtual
- Bi-monthly educational webinars - virtual
- Book club events - virtual
- Walk & Talk group – in person, local, monthly
- Advisory committee in process, peer leadership opportunities
- One-on-one support – both in person and virtual
- Referrals to outside agencies
- Indigenous-modelled sharing circles

Programs and Services (cont'd)

- Planned for 2022: a return to our “All Bodies Swim” program in partnership with the City of Barrie, monthly grilled cheese lunches, storytelling workshop series
- Technology lending program currently being created

COVID-19 and New Horizons Programming

- Move to virtual programming
- Challenges include reduced participation numbers due to technology barriers and lower rates of population being on social media, increased isolation
- Victories have included the ability to reach many participants across regions, creating a network for community, including engagement from outside of Ontario; the ability to work collaboratively with the New Horizons team to create more robust programming
- Technology has also presented a challenge in the form of “Zoom fatigue”, causing decreased engagement throughout the course of COVID

Pressures faced in supporting seniors

- Push from community to return to in-person meetings
- Building of community resources and referrals
- Direct outreach has become more crucial to capacity building

New Opportunities

- COVID-19 provided a chance to reimagine program delivery as a collaborative team, allowing for an increase in opportunities for participants to engage virtually
- The “Zoom revolution” has meant a collective move towards reimagining programming, creating new partnerships, and engaging remote communities
- Highlighting the value of community care, peer engagement
- Opportunity to provide virtual programming IN ADDITION to in person, something we might not have considered pre-COVID