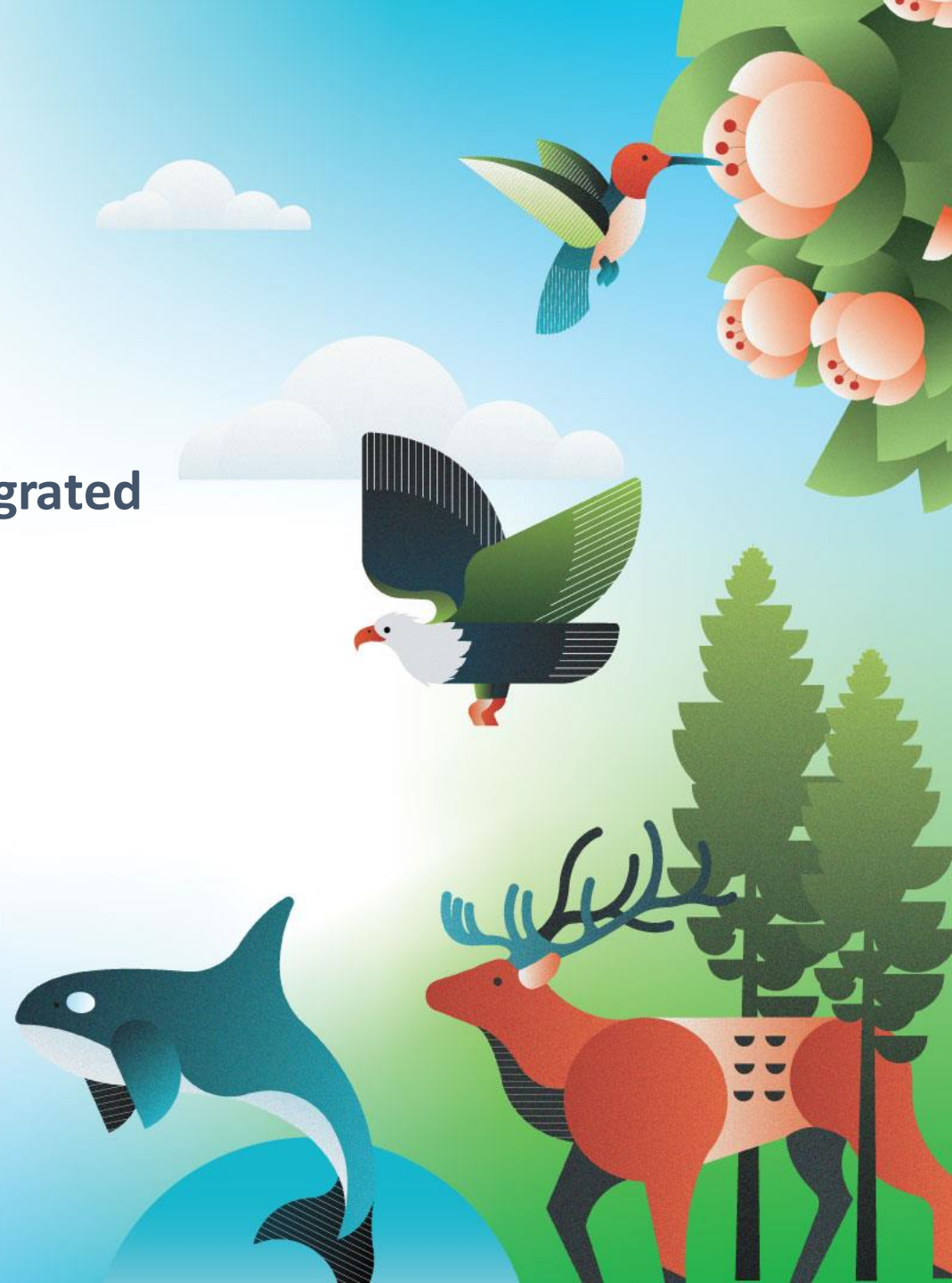# FOUNDRY

Queer Café: A 2SLGBTQIA+ Program in an Integrated Virtual Health Care Service

Bronwyn Lawrence (she/her)

Al Raimundo (they/them)

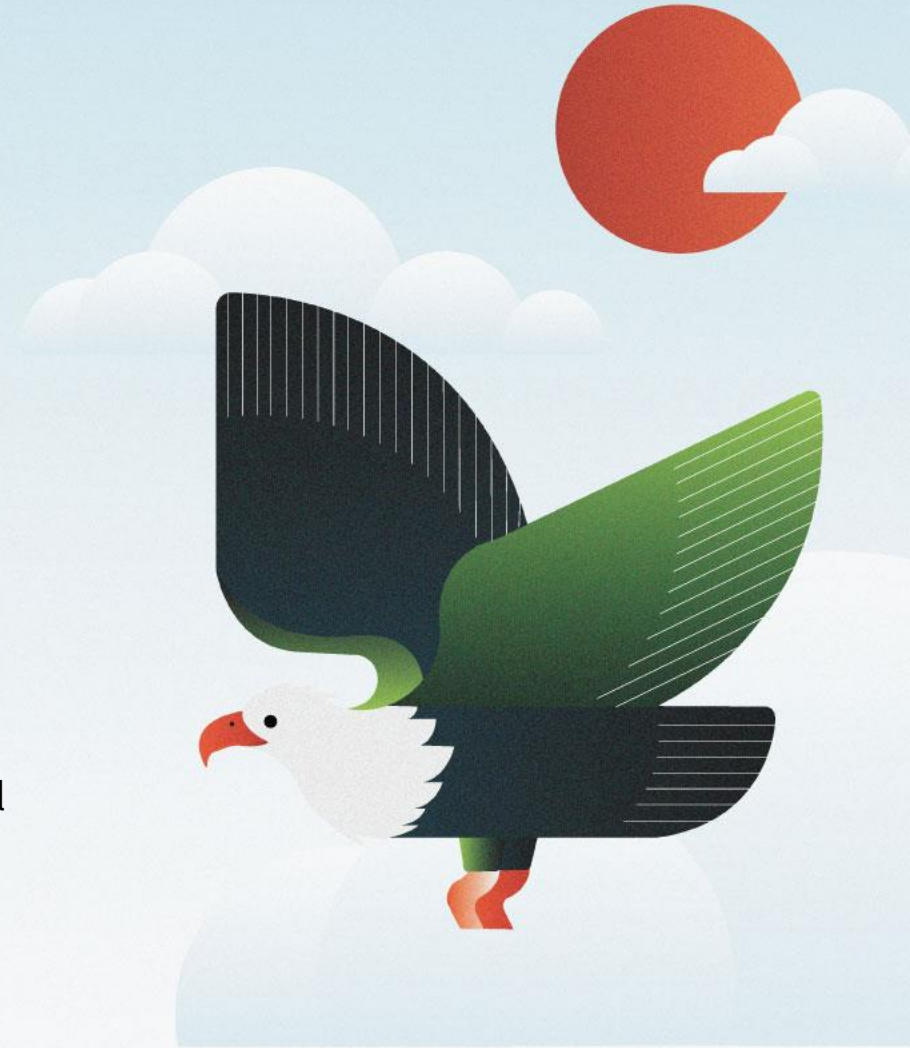IAYMH 2022
September 30, 2022

Foundry Virtual BC

Foundry is an Integrated Youth Services (IYS) organization for youth ages 12-24 in British Columbia, Canada. Foundry centres provide in-person support and Foundry Virtual BC provides online support.

Queer Café

- Youth Peer Support Workers (YPSWs) within Foundry Virtual BC identified a need for a program dedicated to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. This sparked the idea of the Queer Café program.

- Queer Café was named and co-designed with a diverse group of young people from all over BC, with a focus on young people in rural and remote communities.

- Queer Café has a mix of informative and fun topics based on the interest of the participants.

- Approximately 300 participants since launching in 2020 (including new and returning youth).

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Queer Café Programs

Community Connection

- A Night of Drag

- Art Workshops

- A feast with Indigenous Elder

Mental Health

- Burnout and Boundaries Workshop

- Q & A with a queer counsellor

Primary Health Care

- Trans Care BC presentation

- Sexual Health Q & A with a Nurse Practitioner

Photo by Aaron Hemens/IndigiNews

Daniel's Journey

- Left home at 18 after coming out as gay because he was not accepted
- Previously bullied in groups for being on the autism spectrum
- Healing from a past physical assault

- Developed connections
- Bonded with YPSWs
- Leadership role
- Learned about mental and physical wellness

- Friendships
- Confidence in identity
- Foundry counselling for trauma
- Became a Youth Advisor

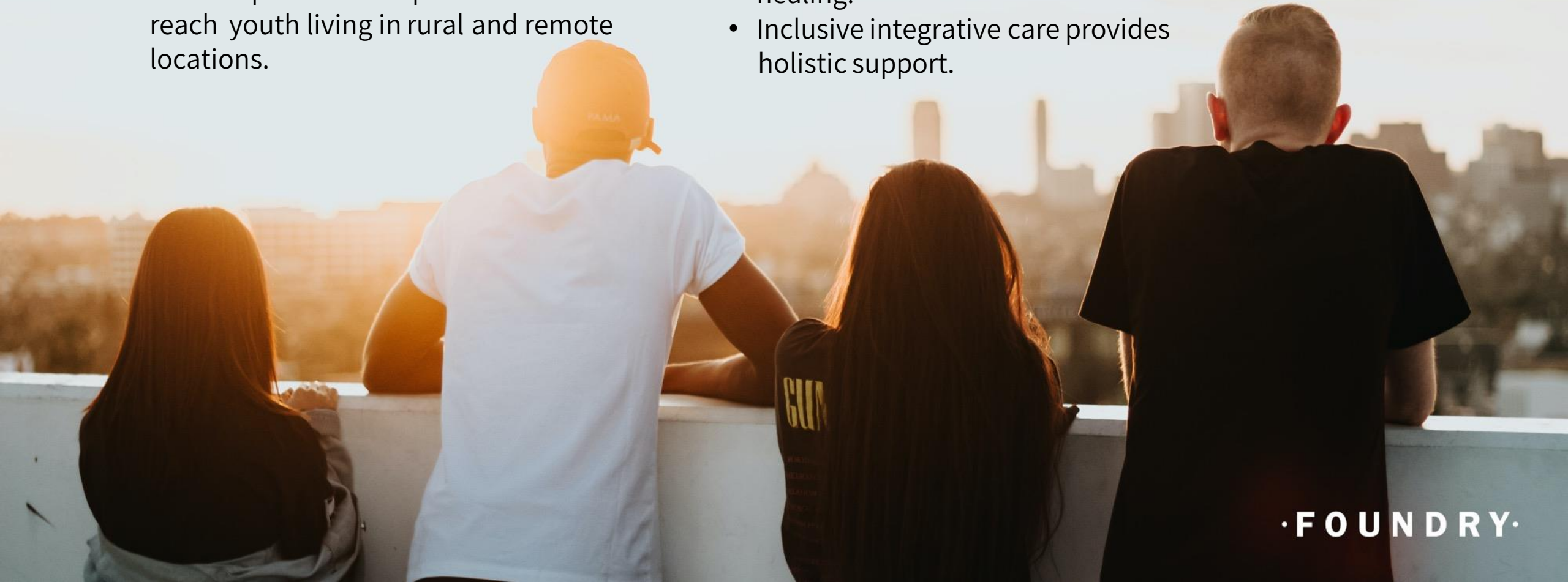"This has been one of the greatest experiences for me in coming out. I'm coming back."

– Daniel

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Direction of Future 2SLGBTQIA+ Mental Health Services

- Co-design groups with young people.
- It is impactful to have similar groups hosted by 2SLGBTQIA+ staff.
- Online options are important to reach youth living in rural and remote locations.

- Low barrier social groups can act as a gateway to other services.
- Community and self-expression can be a form of healing.
- Inclusive integrative care provides holistic support.

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Thank You

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