



# Strengthening Community Capacity for Inclusion in BC's Elk Valley Report August 2021

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# Table of Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Table of Contents .....   | 2         |
| <b>A. Project Objectives and Deliverables .....</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>B. Environmental Scan .....</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>1. Current Situation – Fernie Pride Society .....</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| i. Mission and Vision .....   | 4         |
| ii. Programs .....  | 4         |
| iii. Society’s current funding: .....   | 4         |
| iv. Current leadership .....  | 4         |
| <b>2. Identified Stakeholders .....</b>   | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>3. History of the Fernie Pride Society .....</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| i. Why was the society formed, motivation and needs identified? .....   | 6         |
| ii. When was the society established? .....   | 6         |
| iii. By whom? .....   | 6         |
| iv. What have been the biggest milestones of the organization? .....  | 6         |
| v. How has the organization grown since founding? .....   | 7         |
| <b>C. Research and Analysis .....</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>1. SLEPT Analysis (Socio-Cultural, Legal, Economic, Political, Technological) .....</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>2. Elk Valley Diversity and Inclusion Needs Assessment Survey .....</b>  | <b>11</b> |
| <b>D. Recommendations .....</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| <b>1. Programs and Services .....</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| i. Celebrate Sexual Fluidity .....  | 12        |
| ii. Extend to Elk Valley (and Beyond) .....   | 12        |
| iii. Launch a Community Resource Centre .....   | 12        |
| iv. Create a Support Network for Healthcare and Education Professionals .....   | 12        |
| v. Take it outdoors .....   | 12        |
| <b>2. Advocacy .....</b>  | <b>13</b> |
| i. Launch a Wellness Taskforce (Mental, Sexual, Medical) .....  | 13        |
| ii. Collaborate for Success .....   | 13        |
| iii. Meet with stakeholders to discuss research findings and share recommendations for creating and supporting diverse and inclusive environments and communities. .... | 13        |
| <b>E. Appendix A-Needs Assessment Survey, Respondent Comments and Open-ended Question Responses: .....</b>  | <b>14</b> |

## A. Project Objectives and Deliverables

The Fernie Pride Society works to support and connect the LGBTQ2+ community throughout BC's Elk Valley from Elkford to the South Country. Its vision is to transform the Elk Valley into a safe, inclusive community for LGBTQ2+ people, celebrating uniqueness and diversity.

To improve inclusivity, Fernie Pride seeks to strengthen its capacity, allowing it to create advocacy campaigns and develop and implement sustainable, regionally appropriate solutions to local LGBTQ2+ issues. As the next step in these efforts, the Fernie Pride Society is consulting its constituency and other community stakeholders to understand its LGBTQ2+ members' needs and the local barriers to increasing inclusivity.

The project's ultimate objective is to provide the Fernie Pride Society with:

- Strong recommendations for program activities to strengthen inclusivity in the Elk Valley; and,
- The evidence that those program activities in the level of detail that funding organizations are likely to require to support such initiatives.

At project completion, Fernie Pride desires to have the required information to develop appropriate community interventions and seek the funding and resources needed to deliver them. Specifically, the consulting team will provide:

- An environmental scan that provides a situational analysis for the LGBTQ2+ community and the Fernie Pride Society and gives a local context to the community and its unique needs.
- A needs assessment that identifies its members' needs and the community barriers to fulfilling those needs. The needs assessment should also consider the needs of other community stakeholders who may be required to change their mindset, habits, or even organizational practices as a means of reducing those barriers.
- Recommendations on programs and other interventions to improve the Elk Valley's inclusivity and the organizational capacity-building required to deliver those interventions. Recommendations are expected to include but are not limited to public policy development and advocacy efforts and regional network development with other LGBTQ2+ support organizations and with relevant stakeholder organizations, including employers, local governments, community groups, and schools and youth organizations.

## B. Environmental Scan

The following information has been prepared through a review of current available information and evaluation of Fernie Pride Society's activities.

### 1. Current Situation – Fernie Pride Society

#### i. Mission and Vision

**Vision** - Our vision is that the Elk Valley will be a safe, inclusive community for LGBTQ2+ people celebrating our uniqueness and diversity.

**Mission** - Our mission is to support and connect the LGBTQ community in the Elk Valley.

#### ii. Programs

- Elk Valley Pride Festival
- Ears for Peers
- Rainbow Connections
- Elk Valley Youth Pride

#### iii. Society's current funding:

- Grants festival 45%
- Grants other 26%
- Sponsorship's festival 14%
- Sponsorships other 4%
- Festival revenue 3%
- Membership 2%
- Merchandise sales 2%
- Donations 4%

#### iv. Current leadership

Board of Directors - 10-person board

Staff – 1 part-time administration and communications staff person

Volunteers – volunteers are recruited annually to support the Elk Valley Pride Festival

### 2. Identified Stakeholders

LGBTQ2+ Community – all self-identifying individuals both out and not out

Membership – LGBTQ2+ community and allies

Board members

Public Health Providers / Health and Wellness Community

- Interior Health Authority
- Healthcare professionals
- Facilities in the Fernie Local Health Area
- East Kootenay Addiction Services
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Ankors (Cranbrook)
- Fernie Opt Clinic

#### Local Educators

- K-12 schools
- College of the Rockies

#### Pride Partners – organizations that actively promote Pride mission and festival partners

- Vancouver Pride Society
- Columbia Basin Trust
- TD Canada
- Park Place Lodge
- The Arts Station
- The Royal
- Fernie Heritage Library
- Fernie Alpine Resort

#### Other non-profit organizations

- Fernie Heritage Library
- Fernie Women’s Resource Center
- Fernie and District Heritage Society
- Fernie and District Arts Council
- Kootenay Pride
- Fernie Chamber of Commerce
- Sparwood Chamber of Commerce
- Elkford Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism Fernie

#### Municipal and regional governments – elected officials and staff

- District of Elkford
- District of Sparwood
- City of Fernie
- RDEK Electoral Area A
- RDEK Electoral Area B
- Ktunaxa Nation
- Tobacco Plains Indian Band

#### Affirming Churches

- Knox United (Fernie)
- Christ Church Anglican (Fernie)

#### Businesses – organizations that have an ability to influence through diversity and inclusion policies and through funding/sponsorship opportunities.

- Larger Employers (more than 50 employees)
  - Teck
  - Mining Suppliers
    - SMS
    - Finning
    - Komatsu
    - Etc.
  - Canfor
  - Fernie Alpine Resort
  - Municipalities
  - School District 5
- Smaller Employers (less than 50 employees)
- Local trade unions

#### Non-supporters – those who actively promote trans and homophobia

### 3. History of the Fernie Pride Society

The project team interviewed Fernie Pride Society founding members Sara Funk and Kevin Allen, who provided insights on how the society was established. The following is a brief history of the organization's origins.

#### i. Why was the society formed, motivation and needs identified?

The society was started when two individuals came together and agreed the community was ready and there was a need.

One was a parent of a trans child who found a desert of information in the area on how to help her child. The other was a queer activist from Calgary who is living in Fernie.

There were a few events that had occurred that spurred the launch of the Fernie Pride Society. One was a parent seeking information to support her child. The second was a barbecue party hosted by an LGBTQ2+ couple that highlighted the size of the community and how unknown everyone was to each other. The third was a drag show that was accepted and embraced by the larger community through sponsorship support from local businesses and a large attendance.

#### ii. When was the society established?

Discussion about launching a society started in the fall of 2016. This included conversations about potential board members and ideas about what the society could do. In December of 2016, seven people were invited to a co-founder's living room and they started the society that night. The board was voted in and together they created the society's mission and vision.

Founding board members had diverse reasons for wanting to start the society. The reasons ranged from being sure the area had the resources for and access to services so they could stay here, to creating awareness and connectivity of the LGBTQ2+ community.

#### iii. By whom?

Two individuals, Sara Funk and Kevin Allen, launched the idea and invited five others to join them as the founding board members of the Fernie Pride Society.

#### iv. What have been the biggest milestones of the organization?

Elk Valley Pride Festival was the first major undertaking for the Fernie Pride Society. It was launched with support from a CBT grant that was received under the umbrella of the Fernie Women's Resource Centre. The festival was, and is still, a major fundraising event for the society. Although, 2020's modified COVID-19 version meant the society was limited in its fundraising abilities.

Originally a completely volunteer-run organization, in 2019 the Society secured enough grant funding to hire a part-time coordinator. Around the same time the society was described as hitting a tipping point where board recruitment was easier, and they were able to elect a full slate of board members. This was accredited to the society having proved itself to the underserved, under-represented LGTBQ2+ community.

Programming has evolved from predominantly public-facing events like the Pride Festival and Beers for Queers events to including more LGBTQ2+ support programming like Ears for Peers.

**v. How has the organization grown since its founding?**

The society continues to seek grant funding to support initiatives relevant to the needs of the local LGBTQ2+ community. The membership is holding steady at around 40 individuals. The society does not know if the is a fair representation of the LGBTQ2+ living in the Elk Valley and is doing research to learn more. A challenge noted is that many LGBTQ2+ people do not stay in the Elk Valley either because of lack of resources or access to resources, small dating pool, or transient nature of the young people in the area (seasonal workers in tourism).

## C. Research and Analysis

Capasiti established an advisory group to support the research team in the development of the needs assessment survey. This group was recruited to include human resource professionals from a variety of industries and LGBTQ2+ individuals. The group met three times prior to the survey being launched to provide input on survey questions and audience. Additionally, an advisory group member representing Teck Resources coordinated the distribution of the survey to their workforce of more than 7,000 individuals. Survey top-line results were shared with advisory group members for review and input.

Advisory Group participants:

Wayde Bosman, Mining Engineer - Teck Resources

Kim Carter, VP Human Resources - Blue Earth Renewables

Melissa Creelman, Teachers Assistant – Isabella Dicken School

Blair Crosby, Owner – Fernie Fitness

Creighton Globber, Superintendent HR, Elkview Operations – Teck Resources

Doris Silva, Director of Student Affairs – College of the Rockies

### **Fernie Pride Society Participation**

The Fernie Pride Board provided input on the needs assessment question set and distributed the survey to members and through their social media channels.

**Needs Assessment Survey Results** - Details regarding the needs assessment survey distribution and responses are included in the Survey Top-line results, presented as a PowerPoint Presentation, titled *Elk Valley Diversity and Inclusion Needs Assessment Results July 2021*.



# 1. SLEPT Analysis (Socio-Cultural, Legal, Economic, Political, Technological)

A SLEPT analysis was completed with the Fernie Pride Society Board and Advisory Committee to assist in developing the needs assessment survey and collecting further insight into the current context. The objective of the analysis was to review the current situation as well as current trends for the Elk Valley's LGBTQ2+ community as related to five main factors: socio-cultural, legal, economic, political, and technological.

## Socio-Cultural Factors

1. What is the growth rate and age profile of the Elk Valley LGBTQ2+ community? How is this likely to change?
2. Are generational shifts in attitude likely to affect the LGBTQ2+ community? If so, how?
3. What levels of health, education, and social mobility is experienced by the LGBTQ2+ community? Are these changing, and what is the impact?
4. What employment patterns, job market trends, and attitudes toward work can you observe? Are these different for different age groups?
5. What social attitudes and social taboos could affect you or your business? Have there been recent socio-cultural changes that might affect this?
6. How do religious beliefs and lifestyle choices affect the LGBTQ2+ community?
7. Are any other socio-cultural factors likely to drive change for the LGBTQ2+ community?

|  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
|  | <b>Negative Factor (Threat)</b>      |
|  | <b>Neutral Factor (Unknown)</b>      |
|  | <b>Positive Factor (Opportunity)</b> |

|   |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| Growth rate increase, specifically in the # of millennials. | Dating pool is too small  | Youth Action Network in Elkford?                                  |  |  |
| Visibility of the community wasn't present pre-FPS          | Global Perspectives are affecting change                        | Accepted addition of preferred pronouns to signatures             | ELK Valley is accepting and welcoming  | Broaden engagement of Elkford community                            |
| Health and fitness is a high priority                       | Local schools becoming more open to community needs.            | Presence of Homophobic and Transphobic attitude in the Elk Valley | Diversity of the community with respect to job opportunities   | Lack of LGBTQ-friendly health benefits                             |
| Addition of gender-neutral bathrooms at some workplaces     | Concerted effort to attract diverse workforce at Teck           | Discussions re: Inclusion and Diversity becoming mainstream       | Job titles becoming more incl  | Increased openness in hiring practices in COTR hiring              |
| Work policies re: Inclusion & Diversity becoming mainstream | Repercussions due to the negative public opinion of coal mining | Further work to be done in hiring a diverse, inclusive workforce  | 'Hyper-masculine' reputation of mining job creates reluctance of applicants from the LGBTQ2+ community | Employment - Remote work, Gig economy, Many in Tourism/Hospitality |

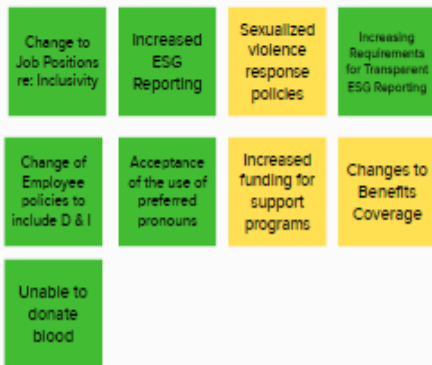
## Legal Factors

This section refers to the laws made by the government that organizations/businesses must follow. For example:

- Business Laws
- Environment Laws and Guides
- Health and Safety Guidelines
- International Trade Agreements and Treaties
- Regional/Local Laws

1. Are any laws or regulations (provincial or federal) changing that might affect citizens in the LGBTQ2+ community?
2. Are any laws or regulations (provincial or federal) changing that might businesses and other organizations as they relate to employing or serving citizens in the LGBTQ2+ community?

If so, what laws and/or regulations are changing, and what will be the impact?



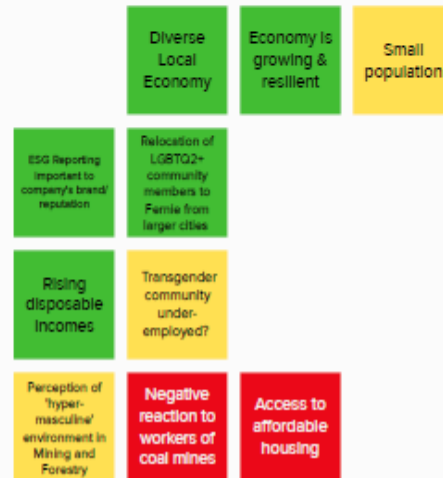
## Political Factors

1. How likely is it that the current governments (federal, provincial and municipal) will change leadership and how might this change affect government policy?
2. Who are the most likely contenders for power? What are their views on business policy, and on other policies that affect your organization?
3. Could any pending legislation or taxation changes affect you, your business, or the Elk Valley either positively or negatively?
4. How will business regulation, along with any planned changes to it, affect your business? And is there a trend towards regulation or deregulation?
5. How do you feel the government approaches corporate policy, corporate social responsibility, environmental issues, and customer protection legislation? What impact does this have, and is it likely to change?
6. Are there any other political factors that are likely to change?



## Economic Factors

1. Is the Elk Valley economy growing, stagnating, or declining?
2. How are national and global economic trends affecting the Elk Valley economy?
3. Is the level of disposable income rising or falling in the Elk Valley? How is this likely to change in the next 3-5 years?
4. Is the Elk Valley LGBTQ2+ community affected differently than the rest of the Elk Valley population as it relates to economic factors including, but not limited to income, disposable income, or employment rates?
5. Are there any other economic factors that might be affecting the LGBTQ2+ community that should be considered?



## Technological Factors

1. How are technological trends affecting the LGBTQ2+ community?
2. What technologies are used today by the LGBTQ2+ community? Are these changing, and what is the impact?
3. Have technological changes affected work patterns (for example, levels of remote working) in the Elk Valley? Has the LGBTQ2+ community been similarly affected? Or is it differently affected?
4. What social media does members of the Elk Valley LGBTQ2+ community use to communicate?



## 2. Elk Valley Diversity and Inclusion Needs Assessment Survey

Survey methodology and top-line results are presented as a PowerPoint Presentation, titled ***Elk Valley Diversity and Inclusion Needs Assessment Results July 2021***.

The slide deck contains all the results, and the society should review and modify the slide deck to meet the needs of its audience.

See ‘Appendix A’ of this report for all Open-ended question responses and respondents’ additional comments. Please note that all answers have been edited to ensure the anonymity of the respondent.

## D. Recommendations

### 1. Programs and Services

#### i. Celebrate Sexual Fluidity

- A majority of respondents identified as something other than gay or lesbian, develop programs and services to support this significant group of individuals.

#### ii. Extend to Elk Valley (and Beyond)

- While most respondents live and/or work in Fernie, there is a role for the Fernie Pride Society to extend its reach throughout the Elk Valley.
- Consider extending the community's reach to the rest of the Kootenay's and possibly to SW Alberta and NW Montana. (Providing support to those more at ease attending activities outside of their home community.)

#### iii. Launch a Community Resource Centre

- Develop a repository of resources to support individuals and service providers, including but not limited to municipal employees, support services, libraries, schools, service groups, sports groups, health and wellness professionals, etc.
- Connect employers to Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) to access materials and guides to support their D & I policy development and implementation.
- Develop tools and programs for use by the education system to support those who identify, those questioning and straight kids.

#### iv. Create a Support Network for Healthcare and Education Professionals

- Create a network of advisors and mentors to guide and coach healthcare and education professionals.
- Coordinate a Peer Group where medical and education professionals can meet to share information, challenges, and connections.

#### v. Take it outdoors

- Offer events and gatherings that are as diverse as the community.
- Not every event needs to be large and spectacular. Help kickstart small-group activities. I.e., Queer hikers or bikers' groups.

## 2. Advocacy

It is recommended the Fernie Pride Society leverage the strong voice provided by the respondents of the study to drive advocacy efforts. Recommended actions/activities include, but are not limited to:

### i. **Launch a Wellness Taskforce (Mental, Sexual, Medical)**

- Work with the Education and Medical Professions to better understand the needs of their industries and the resources needed.
- Develop appropriate advocacy messaging and funding requests to support the identified needs.

### ii. **Collaborate for Success**

- Align with local health and education bodies when developing advocacy messaging or preparing funding proposals. Working as ‘a unified voice’ shows government and funders the community is aligned and brings greater validity to any requests delivered.
- Collaborate with regional and provincial groups to carry advocacy efforts forward.
- Work with Elk Valley municipal offices to develop community D & I policies, messaging, and programming.

### iii. **Meet with stakeholders to discuss research findings and share recommendations for creating and supporting diverse and inclusive environments and communities.**

Suggested stakeholders include, but are not limited to:

- Employers (of all sizes)
- Municipal Offices
- Wellness and Healthcare Systems
- Education and Childcare Facilities
- Regional, Provincial and Federal elected officials

## E. Appendix A-Needs Assessment Survey, Respondent Comments and Open-ended Question Responses:

### i. *What does creating a more diverse and inclusive Elk Valley mean to you? Open-ended question.*

- A Community that is whole, and accepts all who want to live and play in the Elk Valley.
- A community where all people are accepted regardless of their sexual orientation
- A community where everyone could call home, feel accepted, respected, and safe in, and where nobody ever has to experience and/or be fearful of experiencing discrimination for being themselves.
- A place that is respectful and accepting of various sexual orientations and gender identities in various workplaces and recreational centres.
- A safer and more accepting environment for all members of our community, especially our LGBTQ youth.
- Acceptance and ability to be open. There are many groups that are against and still think that they forced conversion into heterosexuality.
- Acceptance and inclusion of everyone in our Valley. Creating a safe and open environment for every person who lives, works and visits our beautiful home.
- acceptance and understanding
- Acceptance peace happiness. I want all sexuality to not be considered normal part of our world
- Acceptance, creating space for LGBTQ2+, visibility, and honoring that diversity and inclusion come in different shapes and sizes (ie. abilities, age, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs etc.)
- All genders and sexual orientations are celebrated, accepted and safe to openly present as.
- Being accepting of and including all humans equally.
- Creating a more diverse and inclusive Elk Valley means everyone feeling welcome, accepted, safe, and thriving in our community. By increasing the exposure of "minority" voices, we can promote creativity, adaptability, and innovation.
- Education and awareness of the LGBT+ community and creating accepting and comfortable community to visit and live.
- Elk Valley needs to be open and accept all people, regardless.
- Equality and unconditional acceptance.
- Equality, acceptance
- Everyone is accepted, loved, free from discrimination and hate no matter what
- Feeling connected to community, speaking more openly of LGBTQ+, promoting acceptance
- Freedom and acceptance
- helping others be more accepting so EVERYONE feels safe & protected
- I believe it would make it a better place. I find living in the ELK VALLEY not to be the most inclusive or accepting to the LGBTQ+ community.
- I want my kids to grow up in an environment where everyone is accepted, feels welcome, and can be their true selves.
- It means everyone being accepted for who they are, and people who are residents here not feeling the need to move to bigger centres because they can't find partners, meaningful relationships, friends, allies and support in their community.
- It means everyone feels accepted for who they are in a safe environment.

- It means my child and friends who identify will feel more accepted and welcomed into the community.
- Learning opportunities to develop acceptance of historically othered groups (e.g. seminars, film festivals, etc.)
- Learning opportunities to develop acceptance of historically othered groups (e.g. seminars, film festivals, etc.)
- Less hatred, more inclusion, a future where people don't NEED to "come out" because it is just accepted and common as anything else, kids not feeling so alone that they think suicide is their only way to cope
- More acceptance, outreach
- More residents are accepting of EVERYone
- People are accepted unconditionally regardless of their orientation and there are no barriers to those folks in terms of access to athletics and recreation, work, or other services
- People feel comfortable bringing their entire self to work and play without any worries or concerns about being accepted, valued, and safe
- To create a community in which everyone feels safe, accepted and welcome to live life as they truly are. A diverse community that provides support for individuals and families.
- Where everyone feels they can bring their whole self to work or in the community. Everyone feels accepted and included for who they are.
- Where everyone is accepted for who they are.
- Where people can be accepted openly for who they are
- Everyone is feels welcome and safe to be their authentic selves in the community
- Everyone is welcomed
- It means equal opportunity for everyone. It means every person feels welcome and that there is representation.
- It means everyone is welcome and can achieve what they want to
- It means having representation for everyone and make everyone feel welcome and supported
- Making sure everyone is safe and welcome. Ending hate.
- Means that everyone feels welcome to be themselves at home, at work and with friends.
- A community where everyone feels included and safe, and can freely pursue their interests and identity.
- A more welcoming vibe towards the LGBTQ+ community. And easy access to everyday needs like healthcare for trans people.
- A safer community for all residents
- A safer, more understanding environment
- Being welcoming of anyone from any background.
- A kinder and more tolerable place. Though you work at a coal mine shouldn't mean you can't be inclusive.
- A more diverse and inclusive Elk Valley means that people can be comfortable and happy being whoever they want to be, and also be more inclusive towards others.
- A region where safety for all people is not questioned and inclusivity initiatives are not an afterthought but rather at the forefront when planning community projects and businesses. Diversity in welcoming all gender and sexualities as well as BIPOC people. Equality,
- Actionable change that is measurable in order to ensure meaningful inclusion of LGTBQI+ people

- Building culture, understanding and empathy around diversity and inclusivity in the Elk Valley where everyone feels safe and included.
- Creating a more diverse and inclusive Elk Valley means improving the health of our society. It's essential for the well-being of our residents and visitors that the Elk Valley is truly inclusive.
- Diverse culture that celebrates all people and how they choose to show up in this world. No safety concerns for those who identify as LGBTQ2SIA+. Welcoming and celebrating diversity and inclusion without making it seem as though LGBTQ2SIA+ is abnormal or outside of the ordinary. Leadership in government, schools, healthcare, and social services that models and normalizes these values.
- Diversity is great for getting a wide variety of opinions on things. Inclusivity is so important because people should have the freedom to be themselves and not be afraid.
- Educating people on the queer community, especially Trans issues. That will lead to greater inclusion. Diversity, I suppose creating safe spaces, especially for men in the Valley, so they feel comfortable being out and visible. There are a lot of out lesbians, especially in Fernie, but not a lot of out men.
- Everybody matters, everybody deserves an equal chance. Having a more inclusive Elk Valley is a start to a better world; creating a path or stepping stones for other communities to follow.
- Feeling safe and respected in public spaces and in workplaces. Inclusive language, facilities, and opportunities. Education in schools geared towards diversity of students (e.g. inclusive sex education) and education for workplaces to reduce homophobia and "jokes".
- Having events that are inclusive. Educating people without forcing them to have to align with the perspective of ally's.
- Having safe inclusive places for all in all 3 communities. Creating events for all 3 communities!
- I think there need to be supports for teenagers who identify as lgbtq2s+ or are questioning this. There is a lot of misinformation out there and teenagers are easily influenced which can lead to bullying and exclusion. Diverse and inclusive should also encompass our BIPOC community members as I have personally witnessed cis straight white parents behave inappropriately toward their children's friends (racist, homophobic, transphobic). The adults of this community need to be held accountable for this.
- I would like to see more representation from the LGTBQ2+ community at both work and in community groups that I am a part of. A diverse and inclusive Elk Valley means to me that all people feel welcome at all times, in all places.
- In the workplace, it means creating a workplace that reflects the diversity of the world. In the community, it means creating a community that is known to be welcoming to people from all walks of life, with support programs available and a town that proudly conveys its diversity and inclusivity.
- Inclusion for all and a place to feel safe as a queer/bisexual and for all lgbtq+
- Inclusion is important. Everyone should be given equal opportunity to excel.
- Increased transparency towards inclusion; I believe that everyone should have equal opportunities to enjoy, participate, and contribute in our valley, free of discrimination. I do not believe we should give one group preferential treatment over another, including enforcing diversity standards.
- Increasing awareness about what diversity and inclusivity really means and appreciating how unique we each are. Normalizing language around identity
- Increasing visibility of minorities and their positive impacts in the community. This should help with the inclusion part.
- It is so important to me. We have come a long way, but there is a lot of work to be done. I want my children to grow up in a community that truly values diversity and inclusion where everyone is accepted and embraced for who they are, and a community that is willing to put in the work to make things more equitable for everyone. As diversity is promoted and lived as a core value in a community, great things happen economically, culturally, and socially.
- It means being inclusive without all the politics.



- It means creating awareness and providing education about LGBTQ individuals to nurture understanding, empathy, tolerance, safety, support and inclusion of all kinds in communities throughout the valley.
- Making it known that the valley supports inclusion. Signs, posters, events. Not just saying we do but showing we do
- More communication and community awareness of pride inclusion
- More diversity and inclusion in the mines! Females, LGBTQ+, different cultures! No more Valley Boys mentality...
- More inviting. Inclusiveness
- More openly queer spaces, more pride representation, having more inclusive entertainment, and generally having safer spaces for LGBT people to be open about themselves
- Respect, awareness, welcoming (inclusion), understanding within the Elk Valley communities.
- Respectful of sexual orientation Language and text in documents that is inclusive No signs of violence toward sexual orientation and gender identity Literature represented in schools and public libraries
- So many things - creating an inclusive community is exactly what my job entails as a student services teacher. I believe that all people should feel safe, valued, and respected and by creating a space that embodies those ideals for all is integral.
- Very important for me personally to support and promote inclusivity and diversity in our valley
- Visible inclusion, education on language and inclusiveness for employers and tourism providers'
- Visible safe spaces, psychological safety, building community around inclusivity
- To me, diverse and inclusive communities allow everyone to be themselves without judgement. My brother is gay and we've lived through the evolution of society's values, which is so refreshing. Ultimately, we all deserve peace and the ability to live our lives how we want. This is a universal truth and allows everyone to thrive.
- Allowing everyone to freely be them! Regardless of what that is, and for everyone to act with kindness.
- Allowing someone to exist in the Elk Valley just as anyone else would, despite their sexual orientation, gender, race, or beliefs.
- Allowing those with different sexual orientations, beliefs, and genders to coexist as if they were no different than anyone else.
- Allows people to express themselves without fear. A welcoming environment for all people of all race and gender identity.
- A community safe for everyone to be comfortable in their own skin, where they can be who they are and shine without fear of judgement or hate.
- A place where it is inconsequential what sex or sexual orientation one is.
- A place where no one feels segregated based on their gender or sexual preference.
- To allow people to be them selves.
- To me, it means allowing so many people to wake up every day with one less worry; and a more positive outlook on life!
- A safe place where people can be true to themselves and kind to each other.
- A safe, kind, non judgemental place to raise my children
- Creating a safe place for people to express themselves without fear of retribution from their community
- Creating an environment where everyone feels like they belong and they can be themselves wholly and completely. Everyone is valued, understood, heard and respected.

- Differences are celebrated while at the same time aren't a big deal. An individual can express their difference without seeing someone flinch.
- Everyone feels safe to live their lives. Our young people are exposed to varied ideas, nationalities, sexual orientations, etc to know that everyone is worthy. Adequate access to support resources exist for all people questioning their identity and suffering mental health issues.
- Happier residents that don't feel they have to hide who they truly are
- It means creating a community where everyone is free to be who they are.
- It means creating a safe place where all can live/work/play together with no bias's
- It means I can be myself without worry of threats, physical violence, bullying, etc. It also means the next generation will hopefully have less backlash to deal with than I myself had growing up.
- It means making our communities safe and welcoming for everyone, regardless of who they love and what their background is. I want this Valley to be more welcoming to the newer generations than it was to the LGBTQ kids that I went to school with (who felt like it wasn't safe to come out until after they left the area for post-secondary school in a larger center). The reality is that the diversity is here, whether people want to see it or not. No one should have to hide who they are.
- It means people being comfortable to exist as they wish to be without feeling excluded or singled-out.
- It's important to feel like I would be understood
- It's incredibly important. I want my son to grow up in a community where he feels included no matter who he decides to become.
- Letting people be who they want to be without judgement
- Means everyone is free to be who there are wherever they are.
- Not being scared to be myself around people I don't know
- People able to be who they are and be supported
- People can be comfortable being honest about their lives without fear of repercussion.
- People will be free to be themselves and not be harassed. Our community will support all individuals to attain their best self
- Somewhere where it feels safer to be myself
- Support for people who need it in order to live their true life, whatever that may be
- Those who identify can be open and feel confident as themselves and expect the same rights and treatment as everyone else.
- It would mean that I don't need to worry about alienating people or getting kicked out (or cold-shouldered out) of clubs or groups because I am LGBTQ2+. I wouldn't need to be careful about how I present myself to avoid offending people.
- A place where people see more LGBTQ events, people, information etc so that it becomes more "normal" to those who are ignorant or uncomfortable with differences. Also, it would be nice for the LGBTQ community to Elkford to have more support. Many students have never met any other young people like themselves outside of their community. They only know adults who come in to do presentations.
- Increasing our knowledge of on the spectrum of possibilities and seeing all treating differences as normal and with respect
- Whatever it takes to make them comfortable, feel normal and shut out and silence the hateful noise.
- Celebrating and supporting the expression of all orientations and gender identities. Public displays like the rainbow walks are a great example.
- Continues rainbow posters in stores, painted xwalks, flags

- Drag! Public presentations! Educational talks in schools to create a norm. Creating a comfortable environment for people to express themselves.
- More queer media: i.e. advertisements featuring diverse families, more queer literature in the library/bookstore, more films at the theatre or Arts Station featuring queer characters. I love the drag shows! Also Dan Savage's "Hump Film Fest" would be great - incredible amateur porn featuring diverse bodies, trans people, BIPOC people, LGBTQ+ pop, etc. Also, queer specific sex education is great. I think you already do some of those, but more would be great! There are also some great queer sex ed resources you could acquire and give out for free. Look at Erika Moen's book "Lets Talk About It".
- Raising awareness and understanding for the presence of the LGBTQ+ group in all its colours, like a rainbow crosswalk, naming trails after "gay" movies, celebrating pride month. Not having to be scared of falling out of the community, but knowing that we have a part in it.
- Difficult question. More queer community events, social gatherings, supportive networking.
- Equity, openness, kindness, safety. A welcoming and loving community. Diversity leads to a better place to live - different views, businesses, groups, events, people, conversations. This makes a community a great place.
- Events and opportunities for LGBTQ+ community members as well as policies across business, school and recreational groups that make it clear diversity is welcomed and protected.
- Events that educate, and having health care professionals (including pharmacists etc) request preferred name and pronouns along with secondary school teachers requesting such on a survey sheet on the first day of class. (What's your preferred name and pronouns, can I use these in class, with parents, etc.)
- Have more pride events
- Having all events available to everyone. No more special nights in town at public establishments for only one gender / orientation.
- Having more accessibility to LGBTQ2+ events and spaces (ie 'gay' nights at bars, or other events happening geared towards it)
- Increasing awareness, increasing safe spaces and events, ensuring safety
- Making LGBTQ youth feel comfortable being who they are. More queer spaces and social events would be nice.
- More events and visibility
- More SOGI education, I think the more people see events the less they will oppose them. More support for schools in working on educational events. Also creating safe spaces, I visited a place that did a sticker campaign for businesses and they put a safe space sticker on the door.
- More visibility and lgbtq2+ events. Not sure what that'd look like though!
- Openly diverse activities and events.
- The assumption that everyone is cisgender and straight is removed to create a more welcoming space. People introduce themselves and include their pronouns, gender neutral bathrooms become the norm, homophobic and transphobic narratives are called out in a way that educates people, and when an individual comes out othering them is reduced (a bathroom or change room dedicated to them, is extremely othering for example). This change is rooted in a paradigm shift that is actively occurring, and so the changes will be slow. Part of supporting this transition is supporting those who are influenced by the current status quo. Systems should be in place to support LGBTQIA+ youth in the event that they are not welcome at home, medical professionals should be educated in transitioning and safe sex methodologies for LGBTQIA, and the community should reach out to see what they could be doing better (kudos!).
- Give the proper information about sexual orientation to kids, as soon they know, as sexual education, they will ask more and us, as society must be ready to answer those questions without judgement

- Educating people
- Education and celebration of diverse identities
- Education, awareness, conversation, safe spaces, visibility
- Proper education is a huge factor.
- A place for everyone to live without fear of discrimination
- considerations, and respect are a priority.
- Addressing the diversity in communities outside the central Fernie area as well (including Sparwood and Elkford) - events, groups, etc
- all people feel like they belong as members of our community, regardless of how they identify
- Biggest of all would be to incorporate pride parade (in accordance to covid protocols) leading to more awareness among people about the existence of LGBTQIA+ community.
- I would love to see more gender-neutral bathrooms. Where to pee is a HUGE issue for trans people. We have a lot of places with single stall bathrooms that would be perfect.
- More gender-neutral bathrooms
- More obvious support like gender neutral bathrooms everywhere.
- Caring for others in the community
- Creating a place where all people feel comfortable and valued as unique individuals.
- Diverse stories being giving voice, current stories of privilege listening
- Everyone belongs / we are all equal
- Everyone deserves a safe comfortable life, free of hate.
- Everyone should have a choice how they live. Fuck everyone else
- Fair and equal representation of gender, sexuality and race.
- Feeling safe and included by the community
- Flags, banners, posters... anything that would acknowledge Pride.
- Getting more boys to date
- It would mean a lot if there were more ways to connect to other lgbtq+ people easier here
- Happiness, community feeling, welcoming and more cooperating in the valley
- Harmony, all that is right, no prejudices, biases or stereotypes. Equality for all.
- Having companies and organizations talk about this all year not just pride month
- Having the tough conversations, being able to spread information comfortably. Everyone feeling safe.
- Healthier community, more resilient. Caring for the people who need it most.
- I have never thought about the sexuality of my friends or co-workers.
- I think changing the language and how we address and identify individuals/groups. Shifting from the binary to the non-binary verbiage at workplaces and in the community. Creating barrier-free spaces for all (such as bathrooms, change rooms, etc).
- I would like people to feel safe in this community.
- I'm not sure. I feel pretty comfortable here in Fernie. Although at times it's difficult to relate to others. I just don't have a sense of belonging. My friendship and social network are all heterosexual families with kids. They are all loving and accepting. No issues there
- It is so important to create a welcoming space for all. Everyone should feel safe, seen/ heard and included in all communities and community spaces.
- It means creating a community where all people are respected and celebrated, regardless of their identification.

- It means educating more of its residents about the diversity within our community.
- It means hard work and building housing to ensure anyone can stay and live in this community. Without supportive housing, we can't have diversity.
- It means making it a safe, welcoming place for all individuals.
- It means more comfort, freedom and celebration of lgbtq+ people.
- It means positive change and progression, towards the welcoming community we talk about and actively promote.
- It opens so many opportunities of positive thought and ideas greatly enhancing our community
- Just give me freedom.
- Make me feel more comfortable with myself and those I spend time with. It's also nice to see less stigma and just a more welcoming community.
- Making sure that all members of the LGBTQ2S+ community are free to live and love as they please (within the same boundaries as anyone else), and never have to be concerned with bigotry, hate or prejudice.
- More awareness, and a more open-minded community
- More cultural things
- More exposure to like minded people and support them.
- More invested in LGBTQ+ people and their stories
- More love less hate
- More networks for people of the LGBTQ+ community to be able to come out in safe spaces.
- More welcoming to people of all spectrums
- Moving from a white male culture that represses others to an open culture where everyone is valued and participates as they wish.
- No judgment. No questions unless its to use appropriate pronouns. Educating younger kids about peoples differences and reminding them they're not to be used as insults. Accept people as people.
- One where sexual and gender identity are not deciding factors to live here - ie, have a job, recreate, have a social base
- More support for people who identify as LBGTQ persons. Pride sidewalks in Sparwood.
- More visibility of the LGBTQ+ community in all communities of the Elk Valley, not just Fernie.
- Removing systemic bias and discrimination from everyday life in the Elk Valley - whether it be in the workplace as an employee, or just being a general citizen.
- I think creating diversity in the Elk Valley will be a large undertaking but will make all individuals feel comfortable.
- Respecting differences, being kind to everyone and including everyone
- Room and respect for everybody
- Safety and equal opportunity for all people
- Safety and equality.
- Safety. Opportunities. A doctor who's actually had experience with trans patients.
- Support from peers.
- Supporting each other. Understanding we are all important and we need to respect each other's identity.
- The opportunity to contribute to and live within a more open-minded, more enjoyable, kinder community.

- The ability for everyone to be able to be their full selves. I understand that most LGBTQA indicate they must hide or suppress parts of who they are, so that they are not bullied or harmed, especially as youth.
- To me it means everyone gets treated with respect and kindness.
- To me it means strengthening our community's shared commitment, from community members through employers through associations and organizations, to core principles. It means a welcoming and supportive home for my kids and family, for myself, and others.
- Visibility, role modeling for young people, and celebration for 2SLGBTQ people
- Remembering to include the originals, the born and bred, the old timers, the multi generational. Remembering who made this valley.
- We are all human beings and need to treat each other respectfully. I am open to all types of people so long as they are not causing me any harm.
- I am not opposed to any gender or any sexuality preference. What I am opposed to is all the information that is constantly affecting and confusing children.
- Equality based on merit alone.
- Let them do there thing, cramming it down peoples throats fuels hate
- It's important but there are much more pressing issues that the city could be spending money on or advocating for.
- Once diversity hit the workforce, it just seems to guarantee jobs to people who are not qualified or suited for the position and the people that are capable of the work and environment are always picking up the slack even though we all get paid the same. Diversification does not work efficiently in mining.

ii. *How might the Fernie Pride Society assist the local education system to better teach and support Diversity and Inclusion in the Elk Valley?* Open-ended question.

- Be a patient ally for the school. Provide resources and support. Don't shame the schools for difficult situations with students. Offer support.
- By supporting and broadcasting queer artists! Such as drag story time!
- Have people available to come to the school and run a program to educate
- Provide guest speakers or workshop facilitators for adults to help them navigate the process of educating others.
- Provide presentations
- In services, training opportunities or classroom guest lectures
- Speakers, ProD, recommended resources
- Offer presentations, meet with schools regularly to help address issues that may arise, create safe spaces for youth in the community to gather, get support and talk
- Provide in-service for teachers during professional development days
- Keep being visible and holding supportive events!
- More events for teens. Free resources for LGBTQ2+ groups within school. I would personally love stickers or signage/flags that I could display in my classroom so that students know my space is welcoming and inclusive to everyone.
- More events for youth!
- My understanding is that they support the Fernie community very well, but I wonder if they could branch out to the other elk valley communities to help with supporting our lgbtq2s+ community members. Offering meetings or supports through the rec centre would be lovely.
- Parent support group
- Work with our school GSA next year to plan activities and learning resources. Sparwood Secondary
- They already do! The commitment to youth is amazing.

iii. *As a person who identifies as LGBTQ2+, how welcomed do you feel in each of the following communities? Additional comments.*

- Elkford while having inclusivity improving, I have received constant disregards to my identity, pronouns, and preferred name. I have been harassed for my identity in Elkford.
- FYI- MP Rob Morrison voted against banning conversion therapy this sends the message that the majority of the region wants to be able to "convert" their children if they were gay. Scary.
- I am not publicly "out" so my experiences in this category are limited
- I can mask and fit in, but if I were fully out, that's my rating to each community.
- I'm not out and my relationship passes as straight. Only my closest friends and partner know that I'm not hetero.
- I feel welcomed in most aspects in Fernie at most times. I have experienced a couple of discriminatory instances from Lesbian friend groups who called me selfish and fake for being bisexual. This hasn't happened however in 8 years. There has definitely been more acceptance the longer I live here and more I am part of the community.
- I haven't spent a lot of time in most of these places but the ones I have I inputted info
- I live and work in Fernie, visited Nelson once and go to Calgary every now and then. In both Fernie and Nelson, I feel very comfortable with being me, whereas in the bigger cities I'm more aware of being queer.
- I moved from Calgary where I feel like there was more lgbtq2+ spaces accessible
- I'm confident but others who are not might feel uncomfortable
- In the Elk Valley there are hardly any flags or business with "safe space" stickers. It feels like LGBTQ2+ are tolerated only because nobody talks about it. In Vancouver or Calgary there is a higher chance of active discrimination, but there are also lots of obvious safe havens and, in Vancouver, huge areas where LGBTQ2+ are welcomed.
- None are really applicable as I am not specifically identifying as anything.
- Not sure if it is the communities or if it is my comfort level with who I am.
- Same as I do anywhere, I am not treated any different than anyone else
- Smaller towns CAN have welcoming individuals, but often present a negative reception to those not local, especially those who look different.
- Welcomed in bigger cities like Calgary and Vancouver, but usually at the safe places.



iv. *As a person who identifies as LGBTQ2+, how welcomed do you feel in each of the following aspects of your daily life? Additional comments.*

- At family events, at local bars and restaurants, at my doctor's office.
- I am very rarely visibly queer, so many things don't directly affect me; however, there are general aspects of being around the public that stand out, ie language of clerks etc.
- I do not run around advertising my sexuality; I am very open about it but feel like a lot of the places listed it is not a topic that really comes up
- I have had no issues with my gender identity but again I do not appear "different" my comments about rudeness due to invisible physical disability in the previous question still stands
- I pass as "normal" on everything but the fat scale. So if I experience prejudice it's because of my fat not my orientation
- I think a big part of feeling welcome is the language being used and the visible signs of support (pride sticker in a window is a great safe space indicator, small act but big impact)
- If I were to hold hands with my partner at some of these locations, I think it would be a different ranking. We behave a certain way in order to limit negative comments thrown our way
- None are really applicable as I am not specifically identifying as anything.
- Not fully out in the community yet
- Shopping is always hard when roaming both the men's and women's section, no matter the location.
- Police forced me .... Complete disregard for safety and mental health and are completely incompetent to situations where family could have been pretending to accept me in front of police.
- There are a wide variety of individuals, and responses, so these are generalizations.

v. *As someone who identifies as LGBTQ2+, are there any specific places where you feel significantly more celebrated and welcomed? Open-ended question.*

- Among my friends for sure, and I'm quite confident with who I am so this makes it easy to be welcomed or celebrated in many of the places I go. "What you see is what you get!"
- Amongst other artistic, creative, LGBTQ+ Earth-minded minimalists who understand Love is an energy we can invest in other Humans; and grow rich in the process
- I feel more welcome in places that it's visible to see the owners of the establishment are inclusive. When you walk into a store or restaurant and see a pride symbol or diversity symbols, there is comfort in knowing should something arise, you would expect to be supported by the staff and/or other patrons.
- I feel more secure in places with the "accepted" signs in their windows
- anywhere that has specific representation and outward pride
- Places with the "accepted" signs in their windows
- Places with the 'you are welcome' signs
- Pride events
- Pride Month in Fernie
- PRIDE!
- The rainbow crosswalk in Fernie makes me smile and so happy. I'm so proud to live in a small town where this is possible and not questioned at all. Same for the Brokeback trail in the provincial park. That helps the visibility so much and makes me feel safe to be myself, because the queer culture is embedded in some parts of our town.
- When ever there is a pride event
- With other LGBT
- During Fernie pride events
- At any event where pride is represented. Somewhere that is marked clearly as a safe space
- Stores that have inclusion messaging in their windows!
- At Fernie secondary school's rainbow project club!
- At work and in Fernie I feel very welcomed and my orientation celebrated.
- Businesses in Fernie are very welcoming
- Communities who make a point to be inclusive, ex Fernie has all of the 'you are loved and welcomed' rainbow posters at businesses and residences. I see them all over.
- Fernie is great for the most part, especially as an adult. At school as a youth I definitely did not feel as though queer youth were welcomed and heterosexual assumptions were prevalent in all media/literature and discussions in class.
- Gay owned businesses, businesses that demonstrate their support or mention they are allies, gay bars!
- Haven't explored much actually.
- Honestly mostly just around my own friends within the community
- I guess bi erasure is a thing. Some of my gay friends have questioned my orientation. Since I'm a cis woman in a monogamous life partnership with a cis man, it's part of me that doesn't see the light. At least my husband acknowledges that we are in a queer relationship because I'm in it. So, I guess my answer is I feel celebrated and welcomed in my closest relationships.
- I guess in certain establishments such as the northern bar in Fernie. Mostly with friends so not a specific place.

- I haven't been at the bars lately but most of the Fernie ones have been good hosts. At Fernie Library is also a place where I always feel like a part of the community
- If I am in an area where lots of businesses have the safe-space stickers, I feel more welcomed. Downtown Edmonton, White Ave in Edmonton, and all over Vancouver, most businesses have these stickers. It makes me feel safe and welcome when I see these in the majority of businesses, it makes me feel that the community welcomes me.
- In bigger communities where not everyone knows who you are I find you are more accepted because there are more people in the LGBTQ2
- In queer communities.
- I've met a lot of very lovely, supportive and open people all around the valley, not necessarily in specific places, and I just want to say I appreciate them.
- Large pride events (Vancouver, Calgary). in small areas it's easy to tell when pride events are run by mostly straight people/allies and feel performative 90% of the time. LGBTQ2+ run events are much more welcoming
- Local spots where the community is already celebrated.
- My family from the Michigan woman's festival
- Not confirmed or specifically identifying as LGBTQ2+ at this time
- Not in the Elk Valley. The only exception I could say is Fernie as they continuously show support and protect youth effectively.
- On applicable apps.
- Really only on social media currently
- Restaurants and stores in downtown Fernie
- Schools have really improved
- The artistic and creative community has been an accepting of everyone community for me.
- The more Liberal places. Fernie but not so much the south Country. Vancouver more than Calgary.
- There are some safe places, but they tend not to be advertised, or are private (friends gathering).
- When there is more young people 20-30 I feel more comfortable
- Within my friend group, at pride events, Queer ally businesses.

vi. *Are there any specific places in the Elk Valley where you feel significantly less safe or unwelcomed?*  
*Open-ended question.*

- Among some Christians. And pretty much everywhere. Since I'm able to pass as straight, I avoid the discomfort of exposing myself to unknown adversity.
- Anyplace I camp, I don't trust anyone I don't know. all the bars after dark. depending on which business some of the folks that work there.
- Pubs downtown in middle of ski season or middle of summer.
- Pubs in Sparwood and Elkford that are typically frequented by "locals" only or mine workers from northern Alberta
- Bars
- Bars and pubs, but this is more due to the clientele. Trivia nights, for example, are generally filled with younger more educated people, so very welcoming. Other nights where it's lots of single white men from small conservative towns, not so much.
- Sometimes at the bars later in the evenings as people get a bit loose.
- Sometimes the bars, because you still can't physically feel safe to dance, kiss, hug or just touch your partner!
- Out in public, for example parks or walking in town with someone of the same sex. People judge you or make comments because you are holding hands
- Out in the public when alone. Better in numbers. downtown
- Public spaces particularly outside of Fernie.
- Car derby, rodeo, hockey games all bastions of conservative crowds and toxic masculinity
- Anywhere cisgender straight men gather and consume mind altering substances
- Anywhere with a large amount of hicks. Because of the lack of visibility in the community i didn't feel welcomed anywhere growing up. Now that i'm older i've found people who in comfortable around
- Certain attitudes in Sparwood are not very inclusive
- Church.
- Elkford. I have witnessed and been victim to abuse and harassment due to my identity and transition. I have been dead named harshly and degraded for identifying the way I do. Likewise, I have been called slurs from my identity.
- Events that have large gatherings with conservative minded people.
- Generally, most places feel rather iffy
- Grocery store
- Gyms/ training centers
- I am careful not to be openly queer when I first meet people, particularly those of older generations. I don't feel unsafe but more just have a gut feeling that being open to certain people it would drive uncomfortable and too personal of questions, which is very common. My child is not yet daycare or school aged, but I'm concerned with how they my child will be received and treated as there are so few queer parents in the Elk Valley and when our family meets many new people we are often met with lots of uncomfortable or inappropriate questions.
- I had a tough meet up with a police agent once because I had an open beer on the street at night. He called me "he" and then got really uncomfortable when my friends stood up for me, letting him know I'm a "she". I don't really mind people using either pronoun, but the response of the agent made me feel very uncomfortable.
- I do not feel safe showing affection with my girlfriend in south country, Jaffray, Elkford, Sparwood.
- In public generally

- mmm, not so sure, in more public places i guess where one doesn't know who is potentially homophobic - groups of drunk young men - lol and - if I was to go to particular churches, I would not be sure if they were supportive or not (except for the united church).
- Never have I felt unsafe
- No where specific, my general concern is the lack of visibility here and the uncertainty because of it. I don't know how most people would react if they knew I was LGBTQ2+ because it seems like no one here talks about it.
- Not confirmed or specifically identifying as LGBTQ2+ at this time
- Not really, although I do not visit smaller towns because there is a worry that they are not as inclusive and welcoming. Small, rural towns are still very much places where I don't feel confident that if I went with my partner, we would not face discrimination in some form.
- Old school parts of Fernie, along with all of Sparwood and Elkford.
- On one hand I feel the sentiment from corporate and specific people that want to encourage diversity, on the other hand I am still weary of how people would think of me at work, especially in a town where everyone knows everyone.
- Religious communities.
- Trade sites, churches
- School and on the streets
- Small, conservative towns.
- Some places where it is very hetero male dominated. Like some mines
- There is a perception of feeling less safe or unwelcome around the the work mining environment. This is only a perception.
- Sparwood & Cranbrook. Un-welcoming. Homophobic vibes
- Sparwood, Elkford
- There aren't many places that I feel unsafe, however, places like Elkford and Jaffray I find make me uncomfortable due to people staring and whispering

vii. *To whom are you 'out' as a member of the LGBTQ2+ community? Or, who, if anyone, is aware that you are Questioning your sexual orientation or gender identity? Additional comments.*

- All of the above with exception to new acquaintances, just like any topic there is a time and a place. my sexuality is not the first thing I blurt out
- Half my family is Asian - I'm not really out to many of them. half my family is white - and I'm mostly out to them. I tend not to bring up sexuality with new acquaintances, my clients (I'm a health practitioner), or even friends until we are closer. But, on social media, if one looked close enough they could find out.
- I am out with my family, friends and close coworkers.
- I can't hide it even if I wanted too
- I don't lead with my sexuality, but I always answer any question truthfully, and do not hide the fact I am gay (unless the topic is not warranted, like during a brief social interaction).
- I don't make a point of discussing my sexuality unless it is part of a relevant discussion. I don't "announce" this is what I am, I don't feel the need to. Anyone I have dated and been involved with has been introduced to my friends of any gender, and we attend community events just the same.
- I don't talk about my personal business at work, typically.
- I don't wear a sign about my sexually, but if asked I'm not going to lie!
- I hate the moment of meeting someone new and trying to decide if I trust this person enough to be true about who I am. Sometimes I am comfortable but don't correct assumptions like "what does your husband do?"
- I have only come out to 2 people. I am still not comfortable enough to come out to anyone else yet.
- I have only come out to two people. One friend of many years and an online friend of a few years. I do not feel comfortable coming out to anyone else yet.
- If my personal life comes up in conversation, then it quickly becomes evident I'm in a same sex relationship
- I'm just me. Most people have always loved and accepted me for the human that I am. I've never really had to explain anything, which is amazing.
- It was a process, but I am now completely out!
- Just figured out I am ace.
- Not confirmed or specifically identifying as LGBTQ2+ at this time - no one is aware.
- Out and proud!
- That's kinda sad, really.
- Took a while to come out but now am quite open about it
- Usually I don't disclose my identity to new acquaintances but I say all here meaning I always give my preferred name and pronouns from the get go.

viii. *What was your experience like coming out? Open-ended question.*

- All of my friends and family were supportive. I still struggle with coming out to new people but am becoming more confident.
- As a bisexual with mostly heterosexual relationships, I was told and still am told, its a phase or I just say it for attention. After coming out I don't talk much about my sexuality as I do not want it to be labeled as fake or attention seeking
- Awful. My family ended up accepting me slowly ... the experience feel insincere and TERRIBLE. It didn't matter that I expressed discomfort I "had" to. My friends were accepting, however at the time my now ex boyfriend was very adamant on denying it to the point of harassing me saying I was making him look bad. Likewise, he was angry at the idea that I was asexual.

- Came out to my parents and the only thing they said to me was it took you long enough. Parents always know and wait for you to come to them
- Confusing as I was in a hetero relationship at the time, then difficult as my first few same sex relationships were not healthy. It has been much better over the last few years. Came out to friends initially and continue to daily. Some colleagues are aware. They are all supportive. Very few family members know, and none of my immediate family (conservative). Resources: lgbtq2 friends and reddit
- Conservative family so more difficult
- Family was accepting and friends did not care. Came out to friends first, then family friends, then the parents. My grandparents do not know, but they are very elderly and unlikely to understand. I sought out people who were already out to ask them their own experiences, then I sought out people who knew my family and I could trust.
- I came out 10 years ago. Growing up, there was no visibility of gay people, especially lesbians, so it was very hard to first accept it myself. After 10 years of hiding it and then to willingly tell people I'm different was very difficult. Deciding I wanted a romantic relationship was the trigger to coming out. I came out to my friends first and then my siblings. Telling my parents was difficult and I did it via email. Everyone was supportive, it's easy to forget that my parents knew me before I consciously started hiding that part of myself so had a pretty good idea already.
- I came out to classmates who were part of my high school's LGBTQA alliance group when I was 16. I was given lots of support that eventually gave me the confidence to come out to family.
- I came out to my friends first and they were very supportive. My family is supportive. It took me a long time to come out to them because when I was younger, they made comments about gay people being "creepy". I don't hide my orientation at work, but I don't flaunt it either. I feel pretty safe at work, I just don't talk about my love-life much at work so it doesn't come up. I get tired of "coming out" again, and again with every new group of people I meet, and you never know how people are going to act, so I mostly don't bother unless it comes up for some reason.
- I came out to my friends initially who were very accepting and kind. My mother also expressed love and told me she will always love me regardless of who I love. I did not seek any resources because when I came out a few years ago I honestly didn't know of any resources to help. I mostly have kept it between my family and close friends, but if someone asks, I am always honest about being bi.
- I came out to my immediate family and close friends. Then it became just a natural part of conversation, but it is not the first thing I introduce myself as when meeting new people. I was very lucky to have a very supportive family and friends and it was a positive experience that allowed me to deal with depression and live a much happier life.
- I came out when I was 14 and no one believed me as I continued dating men. When I began dating my girlfriend people began reacting to my sexuality for the first time. Most of my friends were shocked but happy for me. My family are not supportive of me, they still speak to me but fail to recognize my relationship. They ignore any conversations when I bring up my girlfriend. My mum and grandma both told me I would regret it, they're disappointed, and blame my ex-boyfriend for doing this to me. I used the Fernie Women's Resource centre to help me through the reactions of my family back in xxx. They were very helpful and I now recommend them to any ladies in my life who need support.
- I came out years ago and only to family and friends. Coming out at work or other environment was a risk. Things have come along way and its amazing to see the new Pride Wall in Kimberley and the discussion of the LGBT+ community in the Elk Valley.
- I didn't tell a lot of people but it was fine. I told my husband first and some work colleagues. Everyone was ok with it.
- I first came out with friends then family. This was late 90s so a different time. At work colleagues only know if they ask or if they have heard. I don't bother to bring it up.
- I had an amazing group of friends who helped me through those times. They wanted to be cool and even helped me to feel that I was in the right place to be. My parents took their time but even they

were very supportive. At my sport team it was the best experience ever. We all came out at the same time, assumed ourselves as bisexual and pansexual

- I had wonderful experience coming out. I came out to my best friend 1st and openly accept my self being a bisexual xxx. My family and friends were neutral. There were some people who were not convinced that being bi is just psychological thing. It took me 28 years to finally accept my self and I am very proud of being my true self. At least no more lies.
- I initially came out to my friends who were extremely supportive, and then to my boyfriend at the time who also was an angel. Everyone I have told has been extremely supportive and my friends even through me a surprise coming out party to celebrate be and show how much they love and support me. Very lucky
- I never really had a coming out moment, I've always talked about both men and women in the same ways
- I was incredibly fortunate with my coming out experience. I've experienced very little backlash and none of it came from my family or friends. I came out to my sisters via group text and they all basically said "yeah, we know" which also rang true to most of my friends whom had known me for many years prior to coming out. I was met with love and understanding.
- I'm not out to family because I don't feel the need to come out. to me, it's unnecessary. they'll find out when they do. my friends were all very supportive, majority of them are now also lgbt+. I'm out to most of my school, mainly because people spread rumors about my sexuality without my knowledge. it was scary, because I was 12, but now I have a large enough support system that I feel fine being outed if it happens. most people I know don't have a support system and aren't safe to be out.
- It was a bit uncomfortable having to come out to everyone in town, given that they had known me my whole life. Again, this comes down to helping people to not make heterosexual assumptions so that people do not feel the need to come out to everyone. This comes down to use of inclusive language... For example, if I am at the doctor and reference my spouse, they will often insert male pronouns (i.e. he) into the conversation, while my spouse uses female pronouns (she/her). This results in me having to correct the doctor and outing myself, which can be uncomfortable. What would be better is to use a neutral pronoun (i.e. they/them) until the gender of the spouse is made clear.
- It was a very long drawn out and deeply stressful and conflicted experience. I found it harder to come out to family than to new or old friends. My mom reacted very poorly when I told her which then delayed my coming out to my immediate family for another two years. I had no resources at the time. I knew nothing about supports.
- It was brutal. I worried for weeks that some if not all of my close friendships would disintegrate or be changed forever. I wanted to tell my family in person, but was so nervous, I left it until the last few minutes before they were leaving for a trip. I didn't want to be embarrassed, and I didn't want them to be embarrassed - I wanted them to have time to process the news, without feeling the need to emphasize or respond immediately. So many parts I would change if I could repeat that period of time.
- It was not a big deal at all to my family, but it's not been as easy outside of that.
- It was okay - it was better after coming out, a relief - the year's before being in the closet were more challenging/painful. I came out to my father first, around age 15 and closer friends and my mother around age 16 or 17 Went to a queer support group at a different high school that was more liberal than mine. (this was in xxx - 1999/2000). My high school was institutionally biased at the time, not supportive. My family and friends were supportive.
- It wasn't very hard to be out, Mostly everyone knew before even I knew, but I found it very hard to be open around my family as they follow certain beliefs I may not agree with, but over time they came around and are still coming around and I hope that they can open there mind to be more accepting for future generations and people.



- It's hard but I'm very confident and comfortable with who I am. I have never had a bad reaction to telling anyone. Some of my family is very conservative and I simply don't involve them in that
- It's was non-typical, and the acceptance far outweighed the rejection. I did it quite publicly, with a Facebook post when I came out fully, but I started with close friends, then wrote letters to each member of my entire massive extended family. Only one rejected me. My favorite uncle, but when I held his hand as he breathed his last breath after a short and sudden struggle with cancer, there was just Love between us. I lost a few friends, but then again, we're they really? Even in the time since I've been out, the availability of resources has multiplied exponentially, as I was still a part of the forum self-help trans community as there wasn't really much else locally. Fernie Pride was a massive resource to me, and support, in getting me through some really dark times without proper care, just by making a safe place to be me as I worked through a lot of trauma from so many years in hiding.
- I've always kind of been out I guess. Or me identifying as both boy and girl has never bothered me, nor has it been a question for the people around me. I'm very grateful for that. I've written a Facebook post a couple years ago that I feel human and that I don't mind which pronoun you use, and everybody responded very positively on that (as I expected). I find it easier that people know that they don't have to correct anyone if they see me as a boy or use the other pronoun, but I also don't mind people stepping in. I'm still me, nothing really changed.
- I've never felt the need to "come out" as an announcement. I have lived my entire life dating people of any gender or identity, being more attracted to an entire being regardless of physical attributes.
- Most of my friends are LGBTQ+ so I never necessarily "came out" I one day just started talking about my sexuality and it was very welcomed and never questioned. When I came out to my sister she was a bit confused but not a bad experience.
- Mostly to friends. They mostly don't care
- My experience was overall very positive. My friends were who I came out to first and they from the beginning were supportive and encouraging, after that I told my family in stages ( first my parents + brother, and then onto my other relatives. I was truly amazed with the amount of support that came from all of my family members, most of them reaching out to offer me love and share their support verbally. I thankfully did not really need to seek out any resources when coming out due to the reaction of my friends and family. I am still learning how to be brave in telling strangers or people I'm not close with about my sexual orientation, I am currently dating my first girlfriend.
- My family struggled but I live my life loud and proud!
- Not really an event, have always somewhat been this way so I guess people slowly found out. Don't really tell work colleges because of judgement and age difference
- Not that easy.
- Only out to immediate family and my friend group. So far it has all been positive. Sought help from my family physician and BCCH
- Overall pretty good. My friends were awesome. Most of my family were great, mother not so great but came to accept it. I really came out in a lot of stages. I was in AB when I was coming out to my friends but in the Elk Valley 10 years later when I came out to my family.
- Quite supportive. My mum was out before me.
- Relatively uneventful. I was dating someone for probably six months before I told any family or friends. Family was sad, but accepted it.
- Some good, some not so good.
- The family that does know reacted decently well, I came out to my mom, close friends, and school councillor first
- The fear is that people won't want to be associated with you anymore because that's how social life worked in junior high, even though I was well past that. So friends were told first because one can always get new friends. Then family next starting with siblings. My siblings were a big support for coming out to my parents. It all worked out ok. I don't come out at work, it just happens as part of

normal conversation and I don't really care if they have an issue or not, that's their problem because I am protected by a discrimination policy.

- The first people I came out to were my best friends (4 girls and 1 other guy who was gay) they were so supportive and backed me in any situation where there was bullying. I came out to my classmates in high school at the end of grade 12. Then my sister was the first of my family that I came out to. She's 3.5 years older than me and her friend saw me on Grindr and when I was DD'ing she asked why I had one and I was like uhhh isn't it obvious? Why else would I have one?! She said that she was proud of me and that if anyone screws with me her and my brother (in-law) would be there and it made me feel really supported and loved. The next person I came out to was my mom when I was 19 and she had picked me up from work one day and was driving me back to my house. I had been debating for a long time to talk to her about it and got butterflies every time I thought about it. So one day in the car I just told her. She thanked me and told me she loved me. I was living back at my parents when I came out to my dad and I had a guy friend staying over like once or twice a week and my mom said your dad's asking questions why a guy is over? You should be the one to tell him not me. So one day I went down into their room one morning and we were smoking a joint and I told him the guy who was over was the guy I was seeing and all he said was oh that's cool. Does he want some breakfast? The last member of my family I'm going to mention is my brother. He is a year older than me and he's that family member I never had to come out to at all. He's my best friend so I've never felt the need to hide who I am from him. He's been there for me through 100% of my life and helps me in any situation I have trouble with. Once my immediate family knew I was gay, everyone else was easy. I started posting pics with my now fiancée. And it kind of became obvious at that point. I am so fortunate to have such a great support system in my life and honestly I take it for granted sometimes. I wish everyone was able to have this ease of a time being able to be who they are.
- Told some close friends, one of them outed me and nobody really cared.
- When I came out I lived in another small town and then moved to the Elk Valley, I escaped my old life, because I knew that it might not accept me the way I might have wanted! When moving here to the Elk Valley, I was my own self finally and people knew me as the "outed" person and I was very well welcomed! When I told my family and friends, they knew and were amazing to accept me. My new friends in the valley were also very accepting because my partner was here in the valley a few years ahead of me. I'm very good at what I do and I think when people are going to judge you initially because you're a hard worker and amazing person, finding out that I was a lesbian was like, oh..ok! Continue On!! My partner was my resource for coming out!

ix. *With regard to your rating of whether it is easier or harder to identify as LGBTQ2+ in a smaller community, why do you feel that way? Open-ended question.*

- A smaller community means more people are going to know you and word gets around quickly so your support comes quicker and the talk about you doesn't last as long! I find it's easier to educate and share your experiences with a smaller community so, acceptance is easier for you and the community!
- Based on my experience there's less people around this area that care.
- Because a smaller community usually has a smaller percentage of LGBTQ+ people so I personally feel a little less supported
- Because in small towns people aren't so used to it because there aren't as many people involved in the LGBTQ2
- Because more people know you and talk can travel quickly in a small town.
- because of what I went through and also what I witnessed with folks be for me. It's easier to hide in a large city
- Because people can find out sooner who you may not be ready to come out to. Then, you can get hurt depending on their values. I have been a victim of this hurt and have found it deeply troubling.
- Bigger communities usually mean more diversity so it's not as much of a big deal
- Easier in large communities due to more visible diversity
- Easier to find your tribe because of sheer numbers of people. Fewer intersections with work/school/recreation in larger cities, more anonymity
- Everyone knows everyone and less people means less diversity
- Everyone knows everything about each other and I don't want to make people uneasy or be treated with prejudices.
- fewer liberals and socialists in small towns
- Harder to find partners, traditional close mindedness.
- I believe there are more resources in larger communities. There is more mental health resources and more clubs and such for people who identify as LGBTQ2+
- I don't live in the Valley so I cannot comment on whether its harder or easier.
- I feel Fernie is unique and more welcoming, most other places would be harder. Larger cities might be easier to "blend in" As a disabled person I have experienced abuse everywhere.
- I feel like it's easier in a larger community because less people know you, it's easier to feel pressure or fear when everyone in the community knows you/your family
- I find it easier to be myself in the small community and still fit in and make friends without having to try crazy hard. But I can also imagine that if you don't find that loving community in your small town, then it must be super tough to identify as LGBTQ2+.
- I have only been in a same sex relationship while living in a small community so I cannot compare. In ways I think it would be easier to "blend in" in larger communities. But I also think hate crimes and verbal abuse are more prominent in larger communities.
- I just know a lot of people casually, and they only see the outward facing identity. So thinking about dating in a small town where I always run into 1 or 6 people I know, it's like choosing to come out every time I am in public with a woman. This is a lot of pressure - to know that every dinner is a coming out ceremony.
- I personally I am already a private person. People who care about other peoples business are not welcome in my life in big cities or small towns.
- I suppose my community is the people a choose to spend time with. Big city or small town, I hang surround myself with quality people who accept me

- I think it really depends on the area you are living in vs the size
- I think small vs large community would matter more to a person who grew up in a small town and came out. My experience was that I moved from a large community to this small community and came out in a community where I was able to reinvent myself as I didn't have the family history here
- I think, just because you don't really have many figures in person that you can look up too
- In a larger community people can spend time among similar people and avoid those who aren't affirming. In a small community, everyone is interconnected for better or for worse.
- In a larger community there is more awareness than in a smaller community. Many smaller communities have that redneck feel to them. There are smaller communities that are changing that perception.
- In a larger community there's a lot more resources, people like you, and safe places specifically for LGBTQ+ people since there's just a higher population making it possible for those things. While in smaller communities there's way less people and it's easier for people to be judgmental of you.
- In a larger community, it is easy to get lost in the crowd and not stick out or draw unnecessary attention to yourself.
- In a larger community, you get lost in the crowd so to speak. Plus there are more people that identify similarly. In a smaller community like Fernie, everyone knows everyone and gossip is terrible. (Whether true or false)
- In a small community, everyone knows everyone and may not necessarily form their own opinions.
- In a small community, there is significantly less representation, and significantly less other people that you can relate with. There are very few youth or adult groups for diversity. There is also a lot of proud conservative people in the elk valley specifically, that don't hesitate to show their ignorance
- In a smaller community everyone seems to want to know everything about everyone who lives there. When I grew up in a large city I was never asked "so are you a lesbian or not, we have to know?" Things of that nature have only happened to me in this community.
- In bigger communities its more possible to find like minded people / Chosen Family. Too much gossip in small towns
- in larger cities, the demographic is more diverse, more visibility for minorities, and people are generally more exposed to different types of people, cultures. There's a larger queer community. Small town people are good hearted but can be more traditional.
- In my experiences, I find smaller communities are less diverse and less inclusive.
- It takes more courage to be the only different person. It may also mean there are very few supportive friends or resources available.
- Larger centres allow for some anonymity.
- Larger cities have people like minded people and events to celebrate everyone's uniqueness
- Larger gay community in larger city
- Less people like you
- Less personal connections
- Less privacy
- LGBT are a % of a population, in areas with a larger population there are more LGBT and therefore more people to make you more comforted. Coming out in a small town will mean I seem co-workers frequently and will be identified as different, which I do not want.
- More like minded people to bond and socialize with.
- More support groups activities and you can be less seen if you wanted
- More venues and options for queer based entertainment and resources

- Most of the people know each other from years. You can see how the families are growing and it's hard for kids to be what their parents expect. At schools, even when the noun "them" exists, no one uses to refer to the LGBTQ2+ community
- People judge more in a smaller community
- rumors spread fast in a small community. bigotry is taught. there is no where to escape from the bigotry. schools are riddled with homophobia with little to no solutions
- Small town drama means that word travels quickly regardless of whether you want it to
- Small town seems to have close minded people. They just don't see that much of it either.
- Small towns do not offer as many social settings or sub culture groups to meet and feel supported by other queer members of the community. Also, small towns do have a lot of people who have not been exposed to as diverse populations so there are unfortunately many people with very narrow and discriminative outlooks. You also do not have safe spaces to go to and new social settings to lean on in a small community it if when you come out things do not go well. This is why many queer people often leave to larger cities to find supportive and like minded peers.
- Small towns, small minds although Fernie is changing.
- Smaller communities (especially in Alberta where I grew up) are typically conservative and not as accepting of other sexual orientations.
- Smaller communities- everyone knows everyone's business, For better or worse.
- Smaller communities tend to have more conservative views as the norm. It also seems that when you are more connected to a small community and your gender or sexual identity end up being different than expected people feel deceived due to individuals usually being in the closet for a time before coming out.
- Some anonymity in the city, flip side is small town communities can be more explicitly welcoming if you know the right people.
- Some of these rednecks have guns, think they live in America, and worship the Union Jack from beneath their white hoodse. I've got a pen and some eloquent wordse. Undoubtedly, a weapon in its own right, but a knife at a gun fight when the aggressor is full of hate is an unevenly scaled matche. and I've seen that hate in some of their eyes, and some of them had badges reflecting in them. It's the same in the city, but at least I'd have community on days when I need more than just my gf's comfort
- Some people will never look at the bigger picture, that there is a life outside of the elk valley
- Sometimes people are judgemental and start looking towards you in a different way, spl male.
- The anonymity is nice in a larger centre. More room for experimentation, less scrutiny, more humans and diversity, more potential partners.
- There is more exposure to lgbtq2+ in larger communities so I feel like it is easier. In small communities like Fernie I feel as though everyone just assumes you're cis and straight
- There's less eyes on you and the more people there are in a place the less people care about random people
- Usually small communities = small minded unfortunately. and smaller means less of lgbtq2+ people so less networking and less people like you
- With knowing the smaller communities in the Elk Valley very well and seeing a parent go through it - larger communities generally are more open-minded and have a broader range of people and diversities. Small communities are often close-minded about much of this.
- You are more likely to encounter more LGBTQ2+ people in a large community which means two things: 1. that you will have more role models, and more people who can relate to your experiences, more LGBTQ2+ groups to join, etc. 2. Non-LGBTQ2+ people will have a higher chance of encountering an LGBTQ2+ person, and so are generally more educated and less nervous about LGBTQ2+ people. I've gotten a lot of well-meaning questions about LGBTQ2+ stuff in small

communities and don't get me wrong, I'm happy with people that want to be educated but the fact that this knowledge isn't already out there speaks to the lack of education and visibility. Also your reputation matters more in small communities. You are likely to meet the same people in lots of different groups, so if a person has a problem with you, it will be a problem in a lot of different aspects of your life. It makes me less likely to come out to people here, because the risk to my integration into the community is higher, because the community is smaller.

x. *To what degree do the activities of the Fernie Pride Society meet the needs of the Elk Valley LGBTQ2+ community? Additional comments.*

- Amazing programs
- I get the impression they do amazing work! I tend to stay on the outskirts
- I have little experience with this so cannot comment. Having moved to the valley during the pandemic, meeting new people has been a struggle.
- I love the diverse range of activities the Fernie Pride Society provides, and the prominence of FPS in the community (posters, stickers, clothing, etc). I always attend the drive in movies, and I enjoy any drag events they put on. I especially love how involved they are with the Library.
- I love the fact that the activities are for all ages! So good to make everyone in the community aware of all different human beings.
- I think Fernie Pride is quickly getting onto the right track.
- I think the Pride Society does an amazing work to meet people's needs. For my current situation I feel my needs are met but I am not educated enough on what level of needs are being met for others in the community,
- I think you have a long way to go but you're trying and doing as well as you can given the resources you have.
- Very well, and getting better and better all the time.
- I'm just grateful there is help for today's LGBTQ2+ youth, and that the society works hard every day to grow and become a greater force of good here in the valley. I only rated what I did because FPS is still young, but growing into their mission statement rapidly.
- I don't really know - the online meetings have never aligned with my nights off. There seems to be a diverse offering, would be nice to have an outing where you could do the activity, like dykes on bykes or something, lol
- Not super gay man oriented
- I did not know it existed.
- I didn't know there was a pride society in Fernie.
- I don't know anything about it.
- I don't know. I visit my girlfriend in Fernie - but I live in Bull River/work in Cranbrook. So I didn't hear about Fernie Pride til she told me you painted the zebra crossing yesterday, and she sent me this survey
- I would love to be more involved but I am ill and cannot make the events.
- I would love to enroll my self in the activities.
- This is very difficult to answer after 18 months of Covid restrictions

xi. *Why are you not more involved in the Fernie Pride Society? Open-ended question.*

- Because I have moved to Calgary for school so am not currently living in the elk Valley
- Because it's not in my town and I don't exactly have access to most events if my parents are working
- Covid mainly. My partner is immune compromised. I went to a few socials when they used to happen at the valley social. I also feel weird at queer events as a person in a straight passing relationship.
- Does not really occur to me.
- Honestly, I wish I had more time. I'm also kinda shy and socially anxious, which is something I'm working on. So sometimes it can be a big step to take.
- I am only in Fernie 1/2 the time, and have only attended events the last year or two. Arranging my time in Fernie to coincide with events when possible.
- I am unaware of what they do or how to get involved. Also new to the area.
- I did reach out but during COVID pandemic limited volunteer opportunity
- I find it hard to find things that are going on, or events aren't super relevant to me
- I follow Fernie Pride on Instagram but still hear about events too late
- I have been away for graduate school. I still consider Fernie my full time residence.
- I have donated items through my workplaces and done displays at them etc. I haven't gone to many events specifically for pride here, some of the day time things. The night time events I haven't really tried as I have felt intimidated to go. When I lived in a large city I was more participatory as I felt more comfortable as a bisexual woman. The community in the city seemed to have more of an understanding of all of the different things people identify as outside of just lesbian or gay.
- I have reached out to volunteer and then nothing was ever set up for me to be able to help.
- I have young kids
- I live out of Fernie so it's hard for me to take part in most of the activities since I'm unable to get into Fernie other than school.
- I think gay guys call it Narnia. Closet.
- I think it's hard to find the time, and be able to make it too activities because I'm not able to drive
- I travel alot
- I'd love to be and will be in future years. Very busy in work and personal life at the moment.
- I'm a new local! And find with covid it's more difficult to participate in community activities.
- I'm incredibly passive
- I'm not out and not comfortable coming out yet. I think I still fear the stigma that unfortunately still comes with being an LGBT member
- Intimidated, not ready to fully come out - seems like a very small group that is well acquainted with one another, so to inject myself is hard! Not that anyone has been exclusionary, it's just always hard to enter a new group.
- I've worked away a lot, then unemployed and unable to travel to Fernie often due to the cost of travel. I try and stay connected virtually as much as possible
- Just being busy with work and school.
- Lack of time. Not interested in big group events. Comfortable in my own skin.
- Moved during pandemic, in-person events a no-go.
- No time or interest
- not out yet
- really just haven't looked into it

- Shyness, I know I need to push myself more! I'd love to work/ volunteer with the Fernie Pride Society!
- Time
- to me some of the activities feel performative. I know that the Fernie pride society is doing as much as they can, I just don't care about painting rainbows
- Work scheduling usually keeps me at work in the evenings and I am not a super social person.



xii. *What could the Fernie Pride Society do to increase your participation? Open-ended question.*

- A pub quiz or something like that but sadly I would likely still not be able to attend .
- Being aware of what is being done would be the first step.
- Being more present in the community.
- Better advertising. More events geared towards sports or things that young adults in this town do
- Drop in events "patio beers"
- Have a party!! Let's all meet!!
- Have more people
- History is a crucial part of the LGBTQ2+ community and the younger generations don't know our history. it's needs to be taught. if more history was taught I'd be more inclined to join
- I do plan to volunteer once events start up again. I'm not much of an online kind of person
- I need to visit the website more, and investigate if there is a newsletter or other advance notifications of activities.
- I would participate in activities that advance education in the schools / at the PAC level.
- It's nothing that they are doing or not doing
- Make it events for LGBTQ2+, but so that everyone participates not just LGBTQ2+ so less alienating
- Make more events
- Maybe bi or pan specific awareness sharing, but honestly this is internal stuff.
- More activity geared events where there is less emphasis to introduce myself to a ton of people
- More advocacy, less social.
- More casual meet ups with association activities - paint night, bike rides, etc.
- More evening events, activity-based events.
- More flexible schedules and events
- More gay guy specific events
- More outdoor meet-ups with people! Not only during pride week, but maybe a monthly outdoor activity or something. Like bike rides and barbecues in summer, and winter walks and campfires and stuff. It'd be great to meet a bunch of new people to hang out with.
- Not anything that could change
- Not much. I think they are doing great.
- Not too sure. I like to stay as anonymous with most things.
- Possibly more online involvement.
- Put out Facebook ads and flyers looking for volunteers, and actually have a role for those volunteers to play
- Seems every time there is a pride event the one thing you always hear about is the "drag queens" coming to town. Yes they are entertaining but we are way more than that. Cooking, bingo, the shows are all good, but why the need for "drag queens" all the time.
- They are doing it already! Keep up the awesome events that keep being added. The last couple of years especially I have seen and gone to so much more, inclusion is growing.
- They don't have to do much, we just need in-person events to be allowed again.

xiii. *What is the biggest benefit that you get out of involvement with the Fernie Pride Society? Open-ended question.*

- Connecting with a network of love!
- Exposure to help educate the need for diversity and inclusion
- Feeling the love and support of a likeminded community in the regional town we live in. Being an educating, fun, and diverse advocate for the LGBT+ community. Also having a "go-to" when looking for resources and information.
- Helping to ensure equity for all is a priority in our region and that the area is welcoming for safe.
- The social aspect of it since I am newer to Fernie and have met some new friends

xiv. *What could your organization do to make your workplace more welcoming and inclusive? Additional comments.*

- A better way to include preferred name and pronouns
- Access to educational materials
- Adequate qty of washrooms for all genders would be appreciated
- Be really aware of language use, like pronouns and ways to address a group
- Big update to the existing policies which are all gendered.
- Bring the discussion up more regularly to make people more comfortable with it.
- Bringing the subject to light only heightens the awareness
- Dedicated personnel to advance D&I efforts
- Educate others in the organization of its plans.
- Ensure representation of minority groups at all levels of org.
- XXX has done a really good job of taking suggestions and turning these into actions. They are fully on board with diversity and inclusion.
- Gender Neutral Policy/Procedures
- Hire more diverse people.
- Honestly, it's a mindset and a decision of employees and employers to be inclusive and value diversity.
- If benefits aren't the same for hetro couples then they should be improved
- I'm currently self employed
- Improved Discrimination awareness training
- In terms of training, more awareness is required regarding the additional barriers and challenges LGBTQ2+ community faces both where they live and in the workplace
- More Diverse Leadership/ Sr. Leadership Teams at a site level.
- More strict policies for gender harassment
- My org does all these things
- Not sure. We already have gender neutral washrooms and titles.
- Nothing. Everyone is treated equal no special policies need to be implemented
- Opportunity to educate stakeholders (parents)
- Pride activities or celebrations where we can be out
- Promote events that celebrate the LGBTQ2+ community or safe places for individuals who identify as part of that community
- Public support and participation in diversity activities.

- put up some inclusive signage.
- representation of contributors
- Sensitivity training
- Sensitivity training for all existing/ incoming staff
- Treat everyone equal
- Treat them like everyone else
- Unsure of other items we should do

xv. *How important is improving Diversity and Inclusion to your organization? Additional comments.*

- At the forefront for us at the moment
- First we'd like to stay competitive, and profitable
- I am worried that my organization is going too far with Diversity and Inclusion. I don't think an organization should push diversity/inclusion ratios beyond what exists in the general population
- My employer has policies in place, but they need to action in addition to setting policy
- The CEO preaches it, but on a lower level it is not important
- Very important from the corporate Level. Moderately important from the local level.
- We should always evolve.
- We're such a small organization and I feel like we're already very inclusive individuals. I think we can be more aware of the language we use so the kids we teach all feel included and addressed, also if they don't identify as cisgender.

xvi. *What are the biggest challenges to improving Diversity and Inclusion in your workplace? Open-ended question.*

- A general lack of knowledge and understanding. As a small business owner, wearing many hats, I need tools and support to inform and guide me
- A lot of people see diversity as a "quota" - that the company has to hire people of certain backgrounds, ethnicities, sexual orientations, etc. This perception puts groups at a disadvantage, as they are perceived as getting a job/promotion/opportunity because they are of a certain group (women, LBGTQ, first nations, etc)
- Battling stigma
- Biggest challenge is the majority of employees and community residents are not diverse and lack awareness and understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion.
- Breaking through the language patterns we have in our brains. It's so common to address a group with "guys" and separate them into boys and girls, so that's something I'm trying to implement for myself. Opening up the conversation about that would be a great thing to do as well.
- Budget and time
- Challenges between cultural divide between engineering/operational groups who have different levels of exposure to diversity/inclusion efforts (really often feels like a reality of more educated people who have lived in a city to go through school are often more accepting of EDI efforts)
- Cultural challenges Changing/showering facilities for transgender people without singling them out
- Cultural expectations
- Currently small workforce that will grow rapidly - hiring at speed while the focus is on experience can challenge other objectives.
- Customers.
- Difficulty communicating the value to the business, not being seen as business critical
- Finding the correct language to use when promoting or marketing which is inclusive and diverse. Something we work on daily.
- Funding, time for teachers to build and implement resources, lack of resources
- General lack of education overall as well as general backwards thinking from many in the local population.
- Getting more in depth training than just entry level. Affordable, good quality professional training us also expensive
- I have not identified any challenges.
- inadequate resourcing to support (people, budget)
- Initially we were concerned with offending someone by saying the wrong thing on our Social platforms, so we would sometimes remain quiet on bigger issues. We have since done training with a Consultant and she is helping us find our voice. Recruiting people of different backgrounds has been challenging, as often there are not diverse applicants that have applied.
- It can be difficult to attract qualified female candidates to this location.
- Lack of education, people are uncomfortable having open conversations
- Lack of knowledge, budget and resources.
- Mining industry has long been male dominated, a "rough" environment prone to chauvinism and discrimination. However, there is a cultural change happening and I am hopeful for the future.
- Not enough time or resources to provide education
- Not getting into peoples personal lives
- Not knowing what else to do.

- Not tons of diversity in Fernie
- Old School Mentality
- Old school mining mentalities; lack of general diversity in the industry.
- Opposing parents who feel very passionate about their inclusive views.
- Our workforce is not particularly diverse, and the area in general is not particular diverse, so making sure we are aware of how we project ourselves to other groups of people
- Our workplace supports and promotes diversity and inclusion.
- Past mining culture -
- people!
- Prevalent societal attitudes. Heavily conservative area, more "old fashioned" thinking and attitudes.
- the "old boys" mentality
- The biggest challenges are probably retention; Pushing towards Diversity wastes resources when the target group leaves the workforce when they do not like the job and quit.
- The lack of diversity in our population hampers our ability to hire both locally and from a diverse and inclusive applicant pool
- The lack of intake for opportunities. We are working hard to present opportunities to all residents.
- The mining industry has traditionally been white, straight, males for a long time. The older generation who still work in the mining industry see diversity as change and change scares people. Educating this old-minded generation is a constant challenge.
- There aren't a lot of women being pit supervisors or dispatch on our work site. It would be nice to see more inclusion.
- This is not something that will magically change overnight. It is a series of small changes that will have the greatest impact and this requires constant focus and diligence. It's easy to let it slide.
- Time
- Time and money
- Unconscious bias, blatant harassment, harsh/toxic work environments, exclusion, not appreciating differences
- We are a very small company and do not have direct exposure to the issues yet.

xvii. *What do you see as the biggest benefits to your organization of improving Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace? Additional comments.*

- Acceptance of diversity in students
- Being a role model organization for the community around inclusiveness
- Better ideas, better execution, better outcomes
- Better organizational performance
- Citizens of our Country being able to participate and contribute in a very meaningful way.
- Creating a diverse and inclusive space for the public we work with
- Creating a workplace where people are judged on their work performance not their gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, etc
- Creating safe, caring and welcoming schools
- Different perspectives
- Expanding our minds to a different point of view
- Having a workforce who feels respected
- Improving business performance
- Improving client retention
- Promoting a more inclusive society
- Providing a safe space
- Getting input into our processes from people who think differently to us as individuals
- Having a more diverse workforce allows for learning about other cultures.
- Improving environment for clients so that they feel safe and welcomed
- Improving the experiences for our guest and customers
- We are a multicultural world. If we want to stay ahead or in the game as a progressive company we need to become more diverse

*xviii. What could the Fernie Pride Society do to help your organization create a more safe and welcoming environment at work for employees who identify as LGBTQ2+? Open-ended question.*

- Continued communications around communities, events, etc
- Continued engagement with leadership, build relationships, encourage action, connect employees who identify as LGBTQ2+ with leaders they feel safe confiding in, so we can better understand Teck gaps and opportunities to address these.
- Educate the public that generally doesn't think about this issue.. not that they're not tolerant, they just don't realize it's an issue for members of our community.
- Educating and modeling acceptable ways to interact that are inclusive. Individuals of a certain generation may not be getting exposure in their media etc. on how to engage while being inclusive.
- Education
- Education on the appropriate language we can use for creating a diverse safe space.
- Gender neutral forms of address, gender neutral bathrooms
- Help to advocate for and facilitate ongoing D&I training for industry
- I don't know what Fernie Pride Society do to help the organizations create more safe and welcoming environments, aside from communicating the presence and inviting LGBTQ2+ and allies to connect. but I think that the Fernie Pride society could be a safe haven and resource center for LGBTQ2+ employees who are struggling with not feeling safe and welcomed at work (not unlike the Fernie women's resource center)
- If there would be some sort of document or video or podcast to review about how to address a group in an inclusive way, that'd be great and an easy resource for us to use.
- Keep up the public awareness campaigns. Every initiative and article in the Free Press helps build awareness and acceptance from community members. Expanding outreach to LBGTQ2+ members to create greater sense of community is also appreciated.
- Let them be themselves, Bringing attention room to the community only singles them Out further
- Let us know of any barriers that may exist for current employees, and potential future employees within our company, that we my not see.
- Make a list for we employers to check.
- More outreach in the community to change prevalent attitudes.
- Offer to give staff/crew presentations. Members of the LGBTQ+ community are not weird outcasts. They are valuable human beings. they are our family members, our friends, our neighbours. I think that a lot of prejudices that we have towards the "others", is the lack of understanding. We don't know how to act around people who are different than us.
- ProD training, speakers
- Promote and learn with the company current initiatives, and also proposing new ones to further improve.
- Provide a list of consultants that can help develop policy. Work with/encourage the Chamber to bring workshops on Diversity & Inclusion to Fernie.
- Provide affordable training that is more in depth
- Provide education and tools
- Provide educational sessions
- Provide guidance on best practices.
- Provide more workplace education to workplaces, host events that are inclusive of those outside of the LGBTQ2+ community.

- Provide policy examples Provide training examples Provide workbook or presentation on resolving sticky industry challenges - e.g. examples of how to resolve everyday barriers - I've sent people to work camps where the forms are heteronormative and felt like as a manager I was failing my staff to force them to only identify as male or female.
- Provide tools for employers to develop policies or train existing staff with. links to existing information and tools would also be helpful
- Resources Offer consultation when we need help share best practices
- Run work shops or training sessions in order to answer questions
- Share opportunities with the LGBTQ2+ community.
- Share results with organization/ community
- Targeted workshops facilitated by the Fernie Pride Society would be great.
- Training and presentations
- Would love to see seminars/talks carried out here, more signage perhaps, recommended resources
- What are the biggest challenges or issues that you have witnessed for members of the LGBTQ2+ community as they have come out in the Elk Valley? Open-ended question.
- A lack of a social network, perhaps?
- A very unwelcoming local population
- Bigoted people who don't accept diversity in any form
- Closed, ignorant minds.
- Cost of living creating financial barriers to adults restarting their lives after leaving a relationship.
- Finding a partner in a small community.
- I have not witnessed any challenges or issues.
- Ignorance from idiot rednecks
- Inclusion and acceptance
- Judgement and intimidation (fear of the unknown)
- Lack of professional resources particularly counselling and medical
- Lack of understanding, ignorance of other community members.
- Old school mentalities and stigmas. People could spend more time educating themselves and may be less "afraid" of the topic
- People making comments, staring, and generally making us feel uncomfortable being affectionate in public spaces.
- Seeing a larger LGBTQ2+ community for them to feel supported by
- There are still people who hold stigmas
- Trans kids have expressed feeling extremely unsafe, under threat of violence.



xix. *What has been your personal experience as an ally or family member of people in the Elk Valley who identify as LGBTQ2+? Open-ended question.*

- Educating people
- Explaining to other people that so-and-so is gay/bi/whatever and what that means for them and what the right terminology to use would be in a lot of instances. Largely dealing with borderline rude or nosy questions they don't want to directly ask LGBTQ2+ person
- Homophobia & Transphobia are witnessed daily.
- I had one local man assume I was on a date with him, while my girlfriend was present. He had seen us kiss, hold hands, call each other "babe" etc., but he later told me he "genuinely had no idea" we were together. He was blind to our relationship. I've also had completely blatant stares from men when I kiss my girlfriend, which feels like I'm being sexualised. A man has also yelled at us from his basement window when my girlfriend and I were walking last holding hands at 11am on a Sunday. "Oooo is that your girlfriend?!" in a teasing tone.
- I have been support for family members who were not accepted by other members of our family. I have witnessed positive relationships that are accepted by our group of friends. I have been there for a friend who has come out and fortunately had the Fernie Pride Society there as well to support xxx in the process.
- I have not really witnessed homophobia but I have been able to educate myself more through the teachings that we have had in our school system. I have just found that I have supported my friends and family members always as this is the way I was taught as a child.
- I have not witnessed any challenges or issues.
- I have observed people having the fear of experiencing homophobia, or the uncertainty of what coming out would mean.
- I try to make my language as inclusive as possible, and not make any assumptions about how someone identifies and their sexual preference. That's my biggest challenge in supporting friends that are out as LGBTQ2+. In the Elk Valley I haven't witnessed homophobia / transphobia (yet), but back home in xxx I have seen enough to lose faith in humanity. It sucks. It's just so sad to see that not all people are accepting. I've mostly used my out friends as resources, finding out in conversations what works and what not. Besides that I like watching documentaries and series.
- I've had moments of feeling shy due to internalized shame, but I think I'm making good progress.
- Just knowing how to be supportive
- Limited ability to support and advocate without outing individuals. Educating family members in a constructive manner.
- Many are accepting but those that are not are aggressively opposed and will not hear any other perspective. We are trying to educate kids to break cycles but every time we have parents who cannot be trained with in regards to who is so important to provide SOGI education. It's disheartening but we try our best and stay our course because we know it's the right thing to do. It would be nice if our LGBTQ2+ youth had safe community locations to go.
- The "old school" mentality. Jokes
- The biggest issues I've had in Fernie has been the local population and not wanting to grow and become more welcoming to LGBTQ2+ community. Most people I've come across who have been in the valley for 10+ years are very quick to use slurs and other language that is derogatory toward the LGBTQ2+ community.
- They spent many years afraid to be themselves. Years of depression, anxiety, shame etc. Rather than being embraced. I do find at work, it is becoming more of an open topic, however, still "old boys club" talk in the background

What resources could the Fernie Pride Society provide to family members of individuals who have identified as LGBTQ2+ or who are questioning their sexual orientation and gender identity to help you create a more safe and welcoming environment? Open-ended

xx. *What resources could the Fernie Pride Society provide to family members of individuals who have identified as LGBTQ2+ or who are questioning their sexual orientation and gender identity to help you create a more safe and welcoming environment? Open-ended question.*

- Continued campaign (you are welcome signs) and public presence, keeping dialogue going, so we can help our family members feel welcome everywhere.
- I think that making sure that every school has a GSA club.
- Maybe education or inclusion
- Peer and professional support
- Provide training and workshops

xxi. *What resources could the Fernie Pride Society provide to allies like yourself to help you create a more safe and welcoming environment for friends and coworkers who have identified as LGBTQ2+ or who are questioning their sexual orientation and gender identity? Open-ended question.*

- A sense of inclusion, meetings
- Education for the general public on LGBTQIA+ terms, how to ask someone about their pronouns and why it's not ok to assume, etc. Take the fear and ignorance out by increasing regular exposure and normalizing gender & sexuality variance.
- I think easy-to-access articles on creating safe places, how to have conversations, even contacts of psychologists who deal with this specifically.
- Keep the activities and events coming. There's always something happening that affirms LGBTQIA+ people. It's increasing visibility and gives me opportunities to be supportive.
- Keep up the representation at local community events! Education goes a long way.
- Make a list of the frequently overlooked stuff and frequent implicit biases as a reference for improvement.
- Open house nights, workshops etc
- Presentations Share best practices for schools Work with communities to create safe spaces
- Same as for helping us in my work space. Make us aware of what to and what not to do, say, ask, all that stuff. Sometimes people, including myself, have the best intentions and still mess it up, so a fun way to give us more information that'd be great. (Like the Dragathon! I loved the Dragathon)
- See above
- Training
- Ways to casually signal that I am an ally and 'with it' in terms of acceptance and using more modern language/conversations about LGBTQ2+ identity
- 
- What could your municipality do to make your community more welcoming and inclusive?  
Additional comments.
- Acceptance and a big push to begin punishing discrimination
- Active, public support for inclusion, zero tolerance for harassment and discrimination, all year and for all types of diversity. This could include representation in tourism campaigns, recruitment processes for city staff, police training, etc.
- Again, it's a mindset. It's ultimately comes down to respect for everyone. You either do this or you don't. The rest almost seems like window dressing.
- Awareness and educational campaigns to residents in general
- Branding and Marketing as a welcoming and inclusive community. (ie, increase the number of LGBTQ2+ members in the community)
- Create or identify Safe spaces. Show their commitment publicly

What resources could the Fernie Pride Society provide to allies like yourself to help you create a more safe and welcoming environment for friends and coworkers who have identified as LGBTQ2+ or who are questioning their sexual orientation and gender identity

- D&I Education for the General Public
- Education support and awareness for the community
- Events local to Elkford
- Have multicultural/diverse lifestyle festivals
- Hiring more diverse people
- If you keep treating them different they will all way be different
- Installation of artwork
- Making inclusivity a fundamental part of all decision making - and explicitly so
- Pride flag or rainbow crosswalk
- Pride parades/festival/celebration to show support
- Public diversity/ sensitivity training workshops (ie, Elkford public library)
- Safe spaces or events for the community
- Subsidies for vulnerable people groups for housing, sufficient clothing for living in a place where the wind hurt our faces, and for food for those in need
- They already provide enough support
- Defining this to the local populations, groups of individuals, elder, red necks etc, have no idea what a two spirited or pansexual is. A rainbow crosswalk isn't going to teach them these things
- Diversity/ sensitivity training workshops at the elementary and high school levels
- More support services, community groups for LGBTQ2+ members
- Pride events in Sparwood on a regular basis
- Support diversity through activities and artists