# Caring for Queer Youth

Announcer ([00:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lefNRTDnPqWfOE-3jfw7cf1cTGQR9qnW6wyrBQRKD4JYoXYScxSGkc7tYoze5VGoOi0kN_XgUmMXN1PT590UMpPxfcQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4.54)):

You're listening to Under One Roof, a Covenant House Vancouver production. Under One Roof is your opportunity to hear conversations with subject matter experts on a variety of social justice and public policy issues. Covenant House Vancouver is dedicated to serving all youth with absolute respect and unconditional love, helping youth experiencing homelessness and protecting and safeguarding all youth in need. Please note that the views of our guests do not necessarily reflect the board, management, or staff here at Covenant House Vancouver. And now, Under One Roof.

Justin ([00:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Z9BxCVbJxLhH6brJsyt02AkU8lQ-sOMRMF1He8dVT1TVMVno40V2UUuBw7jKuzfCDtjizjE7-384cmxAPZoAAJ0nVco&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=41.49)):

Welcome to Under One Roof, a Covenant House Vancouver production. My name is Justin Goodrich sitting in for Jennifer Hall. This month in honour of Pride month, Covenant House Vancouver is thrilled to be speaking with Han Hugessen a youth programming specialist with QMUNITY, a Vancouver-based non-profit organization. QMUNITY provides resources to BC's queer, trans, and two-spirited, young people. Together, we'll be unpacking a variety of topics pertaining to queer youth, and I could not be more excited. Welcome to the program Han.

Han ([01:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6GeM5QfySJ5PvhwlkvbJ-SFxJGbCIHdk-PQyugic4YxxRgt6Njn0f4DlT-V8uSL860-dFo9boJlUFDDDKkX9J_8CEIo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=74.5)):

Thank you. It's so nice to be here.

Justin ([01:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NNWuR-p_YRI5QtsQsv0icmC3arbuRZSo0RQD30rHZfOLqng-uDw2meZKsHKehErNdncw8P_pEX_wraKj-xhbgj-R40I&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=77.36)):

And for listeners that may not be familiar with QMUNITY, I was hoping we could begin our time together with having you simply share a little bit about the programs and services QMUNITY offers.

Han ([01:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VlV3eq21ifV0x0c6i83Bvf2NrBBFm4Ke7qJWk6hq_HhW1ShGMXoQOP5YsXC_TVdg29uWiXQxIq9mUr9fZ41mXql82Ug&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=89.55)):

Absolutely. Yeah. So, so QMUNITY is BC's queer, trans and two-spirit resource centre. We've been around for over 40 years now, which is quite some time. And our goals are to provide support, connection, and leadership to queer and trans people and two-spirit people in BC. So we empower queer people to be their best selves via counselling, senior services, volunteering, advocacy, peer groups, and support. I'm going to be focusing on the youth services today because I'm the youth specialist at Q. We provide services for youth aged 14 to 25. And the things that I do in those services are, I do some drop-ins. So they are both virtual and in person drop-ins. They run virtually once a week and in person once a week as well. We also do some one-on-one services and they are provided by me to queer and trans youth.

Han ([02:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YH6EpfdN4rXM7x-3ygx3wepGcsWP4FQnU_Hx7WgZSxHzNwy5cNcvkF-BOUiJqh9dgP-ckwUg4yEYd_ggRGEUT_EWfr8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=152.66)):

I will speak to caregivers, of queer and trans youth in a one off capacity and also share some resources and referrals for both queer youth and their caregivers. We also do events throughout the year. So our largest event actually is queer prom, which is a very cool event in pride season, where we provide a space for youth that that might not be able to be themselves in their school prom and an event in which they can come to and express who they are. And we also do things such as barbecues, and things like that in our drop-ins. Alongside that, one of our main programs is our BBB program. And that stands for bras, binders and breast forms, and we provide free gender affirming chest garments to any youth in BC, under the age of 25. And we can send that to, to any location that they are in. We can send that to either their house or their school or a supportive adult in order to make sure that trans youth are getting the access that they need.

Justin ([03:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lfGpPvxVLLyC6eEXhRZqXITHeG2hk-ldx1nsVLE-TQBVpIWwXP3Dqlh0nVprhfsi10_bH7tUgFKGkX5_3F1xc4iqIcY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=226.29)):

Wow. Well, that's quite an array of services that are offered. Now, with respect to your particular role as a youth program specialist, you mentioned some of the things that you do. I'm wondering, what does a typical day look like for you then with all of these moving pieces?

Han ([04:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-15hNuzkIg6F-dG_HTpMJuqDx2tO_xd4vOqucoT68_M5G6UsW13mhIWKaab7l9A_gaBaSmj8GjMHBmOHvO0KPBh1DuE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=244.28)):

That's a really great question. I think I am uniquely in a role that maybe doesn't have a typical day just because of how incredibly broad it is. I'm the only youth specialist at the organization, but in kind of like a general way. The way that I work is to approach the youth that are coming through the organization with a really holistic lens and to empower them in their identity. So I think we're working with a lot of young people that are accessing us for a sense of community and who might not be around people that share similar lived experiences with them. And there, alongside that, there's a very real lack of mentorship, but particularly a lack of older trans mentors. So, I identify as trans. I use they and he pronouns. So I work from my lived experience as well, in order to have conversations with youth one on one around navigating gender identity and navigating the systems in which they find themselves within in our society.

Han ([05:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bCFvFAjd6c_abU-lWzYczn_DSU3reC9hsWZ84T66E4hYN9ipgFe3zBrq32KGesuNHcmIc7gbs6TmV7gl7GZ-bS6NhKE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=315.26)):

So I think a main focus of the work that I do is to provide community, external to the family of origin that they've come from. I think queer youth face a pretty unique problem, or barrier, in which usually their identities are different from others in their family. And that's usually not shared by other minorities. So it's really important in order to create chosen family and people that do share those experiences, in order to affirm them. And I think just at a really base level, let them know that that they're going to be okay and that they will grow up into, you know, adults that are happy and productive, and queer and trans, and that are living their lives to their best capacity.

Justin ([06:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fNjpLT8TcN5cWkibHv1morjqHm02Kp8HfkxP2r_cwzJXvKmdrkwCzdThGb-YlBe1voi9hkaOZc87QPp1GHvJ882gM58&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=367.96)):

Wow. That's beautiful. That is so wonderful. Now, before we move on to the rest of the interview, I was hoping we could just pause briefly here and you could provide some clarity, both for myself and our listeners around the various acronyms used for the queer community. And I'll contextualize it a little bit like this, as a public affairs practitioner, I tend to use LGBTQ2. And the reason I use that particular acronym is because we do a lot of government relations work and the federal government has a secretariat and it is titled LGBTQ2 secretariat. And so that's sort of, you know, the reasoning behind why I use that particular acronym. It's synergistic with the work I do with government, but there are a whole host of acronyms. and I'm wondering if you could just maybe demystify that for us a little bit.

Han ([07:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SirjhG1XIkA0lm98MOa_lyu5IgqA_cFTm2JE7wWhS9WW6e9CynmHhhakMtppwVNR-7LEgR-9oqat1jfznSWABCe-aNQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=426.95)):

Absolutely. I love an acronym question <laugh>. So people tend to use, a lot of different acronyms for the queer community. We've kind of added letters as time has gone on in order to represent, the different intersections in the community. The one that community currently uses is 2SLGBTIA+. So I can go through the letters that are included in that acronym. Um, so we start with 2S, meaning two-spirit, which is a term that's specific to Indigenous communities. So we're talking about indige-queer and two-spirit folks, and it's moved to the front to acknowledge, firstly, the ongoing discrimination that Indigenous people face, on Turtle Island, or Canada, and to stand in allyship with that, and also to acknowledge that that two-spirit and Indigenous people were here, you know, since time memorial, so long, long before colonization and before Europeans brought the gender binary to Canada. Indigenous people were living lives that were queer and that were trans.

Han ([08:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Kx4Ckt9jmrmwSbam-mVK1ScO43Q8XnrFM7uE6PgTdNlJbIUuMau1s8_04KIhmjv6KMGUObJeyg17R08ZwS8boc2zDKI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=507.35)):

And that was often a part of the, the societies in which they were a part of. And a lot of the transphobia discrimination was brought along by colonization and the invasion quite literally of that. The L stands for lesbians. So we're talking about women and when I'm saying women, I mean both cisgender, so that's, women whose gender assigned at birth was woman. So the doctor looked at them and said, it's a girl. And then trans women. So, women whose gender identity might have been differently assigned at birth. And that is so when I'm saying lesbian, I'm talking about people that are, have a romantic and/or sexual attraction to people of the same gender identity of themself. Gay is, is similar but flipped. So it's men who have a romantic and or sexual attraction to other men, bisexuality is the B.

Han ([09:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pil2R_KydfD7qUShmFg1har75I5KUuHJVhJ_PwdW_3jivxV85AO0qMebVCKKO3BrDPATini6P-JZ9STZ9hOq9Gv9LrI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=570.09)):

And that stands for being attracted to both people that identify as the same gender as yourself and to other genders. T is for transgender, which has turned into a bit of an umbrella term, but that is not identifying with the gender that you were assigned at birth. That can include identifying as non-binary or identifying just something as other than what the doctor ascribed to you when you were born. Intersex is bodies that, that fall outside of the gender binary, quite like in a physical kind of way. Asexual is the A as well as a romantic. And when I'm talking about asexual, we're talking about little or no sexual attraction to others, and aromantic is little or no romantic attraction to other people. That's a lot of terms I just defined there. But the plus is used to represent those that might not feel represented by that particular acronym. I generally use queer. That's a reclaimed umbrella term by the, the queer community. It did used to be a slur. It is since been reclaimed, although important to know that perhaps not all people are comfortable with that, particularly if they're around in a time when it was used as a slur. It is pretty generally understood to be an umbrella term at this point, I would say.

Justin ([11:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Nczv8naAHTgMAW4YqmSWkBeFpSuIRd_vp5Po75O9KbuyuZrgFWk0CSWbcPd8DGGDWuRnby1aYb3TLqvzJcf9Zyvmtrw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=662.95)):

So is there a particular methodology then, or is it really a matter of personal or organizational preference?

Han ([11:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=d1EicCF5n29hWUUXvmptrIcqzLCTrE8q2qIhRlIGJU7bFLmnTlU1CWDk0G6tvxR-mYsqtC_ZnsmM4R8iFC_ZBQkZd_M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=672)):

That's a tricky question. I really do think that people are, are choosing acronyms that are representative of maybe, the people within the organization or what they view as a good framework. I think it's constantly being updated and it's constantly being changed in order to be the most inclusive it can be. And it's just around decisions that people are making, within their organizations or within the way they speak about the community. In order to make it as inclusive as possible. I don't think there's necessarily, I don't think there's like a website that you can go onto that gives us updated versions, but there is a lot of things out there you could definitely Google and you would come up with probably 10 different acronyms, that represent the queer community.

Justin ([12:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KNCJUd6SF4m7ddcPtTx8POyRegyAkM_IlRpAWrG4EJua-51ZvkzBuYt_ERI6qteWcEf6Rk6aObYP8CXRLArjoGYE3C8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=727.67)):

Well, certainly at least at least 10, probably more, okay. So now that we've addressed that, and we've got a little bit of context and I appreciate the way you so thoughtfully, talked me through that. Let's start talking about young people. What would you say are some of the biggest barriers facing queer youth?

Han ([12:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ARiZlxRntLpIiAKxyYnpkmTFHElqmLXRMCwj-KMtTAA5VbTw2SC-1IHgsl2doP1MczW9u0GiULpApa3vD2BNwUYJ6HE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=755.19)):

Yeah, that's, I think a really a really important and good question, and something that does come up quite a lot. And I think, like I said before, queer youth are in a family of origin, with different lived experience to them typically, which can take away a huge protective factor when moving through the world or experiencing discrimination because their family at home may not be experiencing that same discrimination, which is pretty unique. And so that can lead to things, like a greater risk of homelessness if they are to come out in that family and the family is unsupportive. It can lead to negative mental health outcomes, the use of substances in a way that's impacting mental health, or might be perceived as harmful, and then ultimately self-harm and suicide. And I think also there's a number of structural barriers in place within our society.

Han ([13:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=snMcpGPnudzjer7ZsNBL4mDSobvWfgiXboODCxIxnASk7786xnRS7ngAyG-EIUKm_bvx-EMyd_y16x0DiR8G6LvjKmE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=818.08)):

Such as, for instance, healthcare systems, are often within frameworks that are not built for queer and trans people. And that ultimately ends up in, gatekeeping necessary medical care. And what I mean by gatekeeping is when a young person is trying to access medical care, they are kind of subject to a lot of questions around their gender identity, and hoops that they need to jump through in order to access gender-affirming care. I'm speaking specifically about medical transitions at this point as well. I think that's something that a lot of, if not all, most trans people experience within medical systems. And I think typically as well, like we, we're talking about social stigma and we're talking about minority stress. So that's the discrepancy between the dominant values in our society. So that's a very like cisgender, heterosexual white society. And then also if you are an identity that is a minority, the stress between that difference and what you're expected to be, or how you're expected to behave, is, results in often a constant need for self-advocacy, which is extremely exhausting. And again, contributes to, you know, negative mental health impacts and all of the things that I was talking about before.

Justin ([15:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8Nk2KtQDvsVlBn-BYJm0AU9uJsSXujz7VfpSYZReIXdDIpDIRSQQIGdLlKV0d9DK3CLsHYF21TzRBmZs6pAOOHBXTXY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=908.33)):

Well, based on your answer, this next question may, may be somewhat redundant, but I'll ask it, nonetheless. Are there then bigger barriers for certain subsections of the queer community?

Han ([15:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Qyt74c1gp7hbVEaQWsfKSsAmaonatrpTmBShTcFmowSOkQYJhSUFc6NL9rUa1M8YS5TyvSVaJP6sQeIF8uCR6oRf3cY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=925.53)):

Absolutely. I think very important question. I think when I'm talking about minority stress, minority stress impacts people that sit at intersections more. So if you're sitting at, in like, a racial or cultural intersection, if you're part of the disabled community, then you're going to be experiencing these stresses and risk factors, disproportionally. As for instance, if you, if you're a cis white gay man, you are, going to be experiencing discrimination less than a black trans fem woman. And I think it also impacts access to services that might be able to provide support and protective factors. I think we live in a society in which queerness can be kind of packaged into like these like white allosexual when I say allosexual, I mean, experiencing sexual attraction and romantic attraction to people, and a very binary world.

Han ([16:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3DxLGSMJk-xXfR6mEy0V9Xgc4P3OKspefj0SlQceSddEhmaLYfBjfhaUZ5OoFzqzJ-Uk3GGWIDRJY-d9gYIyKbDDGaA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=986.54)):

And I think sometimes we package queerness as, as identities that are easier for people to, I guess, for like lack of a better word to consume or to understand. And I think it's important to think of queerness as not a response to the dominant culture, but an embodiment of people's own lives and identities in an important way. But the further you move away from the dominant culture, or have qualities that are not deemed worthy, the more you are stigmatized. And I think it's really important, particularly in Pride month to realize that the whole queer movement was built on trans stems of colour. And I think that that's a really important, huge cornerstone of the queer community that is not really acknowledged in, in kind of mainstream Pride. And we see, you know, Indige queer and two-spirit and particularly trans people of colour that face discrimination within their own community, from people that, that maybe, you know, already have the rights or are already being able to live in in ways and experiencing minimal discrimination. And I think it's really important as a community that, that we stand in allyship with those people.

Justin ([17:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=PcIEvYqCH09GxDnPCsnOVB099T49eAMDOyV8Yj8o4lA2hkZkRe8s6PYWNghpjxB914NqqLDQYriMM55qDtOVtMDRTTs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1066.39)):

Well, the notion of allyship is very synergistic with, what we do here, at Covenant House, in terms of, you know, we will serve any young person that comes through our doors with unconditional love and absolute respect. And if there's one thing, this world hates way more of these days, the world needs more love. And those who, are feeling as though they're not part of community and aren't loved unconditionally it's, it's good to know that organization like yours, like QMUNITY is, you know, is, is out there reminding those people that they're loved, and that they do belong and, and breaking down some of those barriers. So, great admiration for the work that you're doing there. I'd like to pivot the conversation a little bit and talk about the importance of symbolism.

Justin ([18:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gnLpeNnBVqMXiXLo_HlSdiQ7p6-quvsWY4_0ORQn_YTTl0Gb-9QopnSx3jNaQ-usFzMC61D8aJr0rzeRG0N2qj3FBq0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1125.31)):

And, and I'll contextualize it by saying this when we built our new location at the corner of Seymour and Drake about five years ago. And incidentally for listeners who are curious and sometimes email us, yes, our new building is about to launch as well, right across the street. But when we built the one at 1302 Seymour, we were very intentional about prominently featuring a rainbow flag at our entrance. And I'm wondering if you could talk perhaps a little bit about the importance of the flag and why service providers and businesses and other organizations, you know, should perhaps consider also displaying you know, displaying the flag.

Han ([19:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yAQ3GYj65CAa5eHZDFBEHpqUHPVo2GrEd0HpOBJXEnRVEZw_Ntbu6KlcXHxsqPxc1D_IsGXPuAE46nR1kvUphPe4MJU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1177)):

Yeah, absolutely. I think visual cues in organizations are important, and they're important knowledge for queer and trans people, when deciding whether to enter and access a space or not. It's often incredibly helpful to know that the organization is taking kind of like a visual active stance around inclusion. And I would also say alongside that then, you know, I would be asking questions around frameworks that are in place in the organization to ensure that it's a continuity of care. You know, there might be a rainbow flag at the front of the building, but what frameworks are in place within the building in order to make sure that people are safe and are included. And, when I'm saying included, I'm talking about like building specific policies around queer and trans inclusion as well, rather than, kind of tacking that on to existing policies, or adapting existing policies.

Han ([20:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Sty8wxb3LJ1GLitRvXZT69AZKgSxQtBoEsWGCuw_TkcCbqze7BubXgiG3g4QLdctXIIA4t2ohv9ksxxfgncYi9kWPIU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1246.25)):

And I think it's really important to note as well, that that marginalized people have less choices for support. If you are looking to be housed and that's your pressing concern, then that's what you are, you are gonna be thinking about, you know, and I think if you're looking to be housed, you really don't have a lot of options sometimes, particularly if you're a young person. So I would really urge people to, you know, have a think about maybe asking people that are accessing those services, you know, are you feeling safe and included here, or do you just have nowhere to go? And I think that's really important for an organization to do in order to continue to build those frameworks. I think, I mean specifically with Covenant House Vancouver, I actually, I used to work there <laugh> for several years.

Han ([21:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WsoSdj16-o6oPwk8LRdD8MDlmo-uPTCLKJe3LZunFs1APXkDxufH8DWFWsCBZn1TaRC5iZMuVDC-sxcfr_HIvdZgP8U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1298.1)):

And I found it generally fairly inclusive. And also, I do think that the space is perceived and read as quite religious and also quite binary. So a rainbow flag can be used to mitigate that in terms of public image and in terms of getting queer and trans young people to access that space. But thinking about options for expansion and inclusion beyond that, and to make sure that those young people are safe, you know, every minute that they're staying within those walls and, and if not, and when instances do happen because they do, what policies are, what's the response, from the workers on the frontline, what's the response from management and how can we build that into a framework that's truly holistic and truly celebrating people's entire identities?

Justin ([22:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=9GRChSuDzLVTriqLHc5o3fgPwJFTxggBw2F7_3i8_HGP-_5WGUBsn3U09RLeMXjLN5zOyerbT58I_kJyzCpkkwEUNHI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1353.26)):

Well, you know, I appreciate your comments and certainly the power of symbols, the importance of perception and how perception and reality may indeed be very different. And then, you know, being a public policy guy, I couldn't agree with you more about the importance of creating policies in and ensuring that there's a methodology in place and that it's consistent. And those are just, those are fantastic reminders to, you know, to all of our listeners about ways in which, you know, they can elevate and in intentionally engage some of these issues. We're here in Pride month, and it looks like we're going to have our first, in pride or sorry, in person rather, Pride event later in the summer, After, you know, two years, more than two years now of the COVID 19 pandemic. And I can't help but wonder about the impacts the COVID 19 pandemic has had on, on queer youth. Would you be willing to maybe elaborate or dive into that with me?

Han ([23:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=V4G79W5zypPCTHY8sylnfWEMhki-QW4Vf_LzKkID-9k-8s5jp0NARr5bxc6tn7v5INLu7_bO6z_ohkKOQfNr1e2-lVM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1432.05)):

Absolutely. Yeah, I think it's a really important conversation, and I think it, again comes back to a lot of the time, the family of origin, and the increased risk that COVID has had on youth that are living at home with a family of origin that, that either are unsupportive, or, I mean, I guess unsupportive or the youth isn't out to them yet, or the youth is discovering their own identity. And there's been really no access to community, within this time. And I think because of that disproportional impact upon queer youth, that's, it's been a particularly different, difficult time for them, because there's been a lot of time to sit and to reflect and to come to realizations about their own identity, but there's not been a lot of time to celebrate that. And there's not been a lot of opportunities to meet people in person to meet their own community in person.

Han ([24:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=H6hLESDe9Y-jOSaZYD2weRdL6vNhapU7UyPM9zClveHbViqOuHfRmSFQ-1RNoYP9RI0gJ8ZN2DS0PAjyTYOfE13sd8c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1495.79)):

And I think I touched on the importance of queer community, previously when I talked about my job, but I think queer community has a very long history of creating space and creating community that, that people are not getting from maybe the people around them or their family of origin. And even if the family of origin is supportive or there are supports around them, it's really important to be able to speak and be around people that have the same lived experience. It's really important to know that you're going to be okay in the future. And I think the virtual programming that has been offered in the time is just not feasible because it's too risky for a lot of the youth in these situations, so I am very excited for there to be an in-person Pride in Vancouver.

Han ([25:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=uvGqdPH3xqcBaYUPVgmBGRoEMI5RE4TJQemxrwj0rUn3DrJQXEdN-NjuAeZPAf0WyaPkvtR1EpzcUxSuPx4tWfur1zM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1547.88)):

I'm very excited for youth that have come out in the last couple of years to be able to be quite literally physically surrounded by like the love from the community. I think it's the greatest protective factor we have and the best thing about being queer. And I think it's really important to celebrate that. And I'm also, I think, grateful for the provincial reach that we have had with our programming during Pride. I think it's enabled us to reach youth in underserved communities that might be in rural or remote areas in BC. So we're planning to continue it, continue that virtually, but I'm just thrilled that the people can access it in person as well now.

Justin ([26:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WG8Cz4NYK0njD4fi2E0rox9h_fPgUfrkwURrVtPpXq9gaZqWjgDo1ui-RoDkKOuiORganBxq64LbPICSOUAOCflOGck&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1594.42)):

Well, you know, it's always nice to hear stories coming out of the pandemic, recognizing that we've all battled and we've all struggled, but that in the midst of the hardship and sometimes the loneliness and the heartbreak, there have been, you know, perhaps a bit of a silver lining when there have been a few, you know, a few things we can look to and say, because of the pandemic we were able to adapt, and it sounds like QMUNITY adapted and its reach has expanded. And I think that's, I think that's, I think it's just a beautiful story that out of, out of the midst of struggle, some good was able to come of it. And I think that's wonderful. Just a couple more questions for you. And this first one is really about, it dovetails nicely, in terms of successes. And I'm curious, what are some of the greatest successes you've experienced with your work, things that have really brought you a sense of joy and satisfaction where your, where your work has, has really, you know, made a difference and where you have been able to you know, you're able to look back and smile.

Han ([27:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=BOC7EORVHnGz8us8YUuATgoTeKYKRJblA94cnhRomNHWzBIZT4Vk2osOou8-87BPKYescG5DATbkWZeDrDVaCaSbhC4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1674.81)):

I mean, I think I experience a lot of joy in my work because I am a queer and trans adult working with queer and trans youth. And I mean, they're quite literally the future, and they're also just incredible young people. I think you don't sit with yourself and do that much reflection without just, I mean, I'm very biased. I just think they're great, and I think that there's no way to sit and reflect that much without becoming a better person. But I, in my work, I see many instances I've worked with youth for, for really long periods of time. I'm talking like three years and I've seen youth from, you know, getting their very first binder and questioning their gender identity through their medical and social transitions and through coming out, and then watch those same youth give back and advocate for their own community.

Han ([28:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=v_EzHaSVJLd_QeTz2nItTDBBCXYHo49jipFDUiJoG7bkAG6rYihbj49_cLR4ZrTvA3DHtdmMW_Z9y0_zsVVrfMqiyUc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1731.7)):

I see, I mean, recently we had a youth at our IDAHOT [? Not sure of the acronym], which is the international day against homophobia, transphobia and biphobia breakfast speak really beautifully on the impact and then journey. And I have another youth that is educating the church community about trans identities. And I think, I, I think it's incredible to watch people that are, you know, 18 or 20 years old, give back in such beautiful ways. And it makes me really, really hopeful for the future and not just for queer youth, but I think a world where these queer youth have been celebrated at a younger age is, is going to be a world that's just better overall for everyone.

Justin ([29:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MZY827IytTHDli51AxHunKPAyn69Ar-6rSJUpba5ovEMEc_nTUqBb_MTQD_IrIM4VIbKbUdrTO4jaBBMdAgEUQPOMl8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1783.48)):

You know, that's, that's extraordinarily inspiring to hear, and let's be honest, being a young person and getting up and advocating and speaking is an extraordinarily challenging thing. You know, there's sort of that notion that one of the things people are most afraid of, regardless of where they are in their journey, is public speaking, right. And, and do it, do it through the lens of advocacy. And being a champion is just, it is just extraordinary, it truly is. As we bring our time to a close, I wouldn't be doing my job as the guest host for this episode, if I didn't ask this question and here it goes, what are things that our listeners can do to help support queer youth?

Han ([30:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=J8cYTGEsWZmjDxnvmTLUD44WPD0zNZzGRJRkfc7Ej0ZesIOCe_LP2TOA0192Akf0JTeU13pTIRcCr26TdBpHhT_8seY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1834.81)):

I mean, this is a great last question. <laugh> I think, I mean, there are a lot of things that people can do. And I think the main one is when we're talking about youth, we're talking about a group of people that people don't listen to a lot, you know, and I think with queer and trans youth, that's particularly important. If someone is telling you something, that's a time to be listening to them, and that's a time to leave your own assumptions at the door and, and really listen to the ways in which they are explaining who they are to you. And I think being an active ally moves much beyond listening. I I'm going to give some tangibles cause I think tangibles are important, but I think some of the things that come to mind are, you know, sharing your own pronouns, not assuming that everyone is cisgender or heterosexual, thinking about ways to make spaces gender neutral, thinking about gender neutral bathrooms in your organization.

Han ([31:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zPqqeUOwAqrMvJ7uurTU13A0yCfFWxgerVfqypLYp89YvF17lN5-U7DzrZ5zpWDuk-MnHxCV27e3I-6XayVDgwJlDII&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1897.57)):

And speaking up and out for queer youth. I think when we're talking about silence, it is a violent act to say, to stay silent when, when someone's being homophobic or transphobic. I think sometimes people have a misconception that, you know, like, oh, I'm not homophobic, and that people should just somehow know that. And I think you need to be active in your allyship and you need to be active in the ways that you are supporting people and the ways that you are celebrating people in your life. I think, you know, there's also, it's important to keep deconstructing it for yourself. It's not on the people that are sharing who they are to, to deconstruct their identity for you. And I think specifically when we're talking about queer youth, you know, we, we're talking about young people.

Han ([32:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0YxiBQM8kxJk-zXCNHrx2WfCQQ4XbxE_uAwM9SNrb66FxguyBAV0AT2vWMA13haYm9lP0VsetOsDMd3EeAPbA3i4Xkk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1950.92)):

We, I want queer youth to be able to have a space for themselves to like live and to celebrate who they are and to be proud and feel joy and, you know, date and have heartbreak and all of the things that everyone else is having. And I think like if, if you have queer youth in your life, if you're just around youth in your life, it's important to, to create that space for those people. Because, youth are the future, but queer youth specifically, like we want them in our future and it's up to everyone to make sure that they stay there.

Justin ([33:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2huPaDz0oKJwMhg8g89OHaoNiGKsDykS4IHiFAFZpevBNsKp8QiqZOLsNczlMkGBKDSUg-moTxoBk1AsepTkdOJcFLI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1986.9)):

Well, Han, I have thoroughly enjoyed, um, this conversation and I'm, I'm still very appreciative to you for making this time and, and just sharing so passionately about, about this topic. So thank you so very much, Han,

Han ([33:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=o1SWcMDkAPseIGFasKdv2hHZoyI4W9BDPMIb--2H4HjVz03X2HqYGROntryiqI6D7EkjLIrKUpCy-cQ0okncVpUALKo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2004.15)):

Thank you so much for having me.

Justin ([33:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cJKfrFSGVEJDLbbw2ww2kFiho0k48sp_R73QuqbmKpekXG8srWGz9kHzSgVrSg46rPRc24tXgH2XzKUZ2NeW8l1hbEc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2006.45)):

That brings us to the end of this episode of Under One Roof. I'd like to thank my guest, Han Hugessen for joining me. As always, if you have feedback on today's episode or suggestions for future topics, please email us@publicaffairsatcovenanthousebc.org. Until next time, I'm Justin Goodrich. Thanks for listening.

Announcer ([33:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JEwPQAMGyj3fA6iZnhgjNP_zmGdgkGQ2CFh1phr5qCQNyIQ2WKwmU-bUUYdiokDLQ1NhdxE-7wX4--w27jqYekKm1hg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2028.71)):

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