

SUSA Proudly Presents: WHERE WE BELONG

2026 Regional Conference

October 6 & 7, 2026 • Kamloops, BC

Everyone belongs. Everyone has a voice.



Join us for two days of learning, sharing, friendship, fun, and self-advocacy. The conference will explore inclusion, rights, relationships, health, and living a good life.

REGISTRATION FEES – include a free SUSA membership!

Self-Advocate — \$25

Non-Self-Advocate — \$50 for one day

Non-Self-Advocate — \$75 for both days

- **Registration includes: lunch and snacks both days, plus the movie screening of A Place Where I Belong on October 6th from 6:00–8:00 p.m.**

AT A GLANCE

- Day 1: Registration & Marketplace open at 9:00 a.m. • Events 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
- Day 2: Registration & Marketplace open at 9:00 a.m. • Events 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
- Choose a first and second choice for each session.
- Marketplace, showcase, food, and time to connect will be part of the conference.

SUSA • 250-572-6009 • speakupkamloops@gmail.com

SUSA gratefully acknowledges the incredible support of the following organizations – without them, this event wouldn't have been possible.



ESATTA



NEW HORIZONS
Professional Support Services Inc.

DAY 1

Tuesday, October 6 • 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Registration & Marketplace open at 9:00 a.m.

The day at a glance:

Time	Cedar Room	Sanctuary	Mosaic Room
10:00 – 10:30	Opening in the Sanctuary		
10:35 – 11:25	Healthy Living	BCPF – Housing Matters	ESATTA – Light Your Path, part 1 & 2
11:25- 11:40	Break		
11:40 – 12:30	Voting 101	RDSPs	
12:30-1:30	Lunch		
1:30-2:20	Storytelling	Employment	Miss Mousse & Autumn Horizon – The Art of Drag, part 1 & 2
2:20-2:35	Break		
2:35-3:25	Karaoke	Real Talk	
3:30-4:00	Showcase in the Sanctuary		
6:00-8:00	Movie Screening: A Place Where I Belong		

OPENING & KEYNOTE | 10:00–10:30 a.m.

Welcome to Where We Belong!

SESSION 1 | 10:35–11:25 a.m.

A. Healthy Living: Choices for Everyday Life — Tony and Andrew share their personal stories and experiences with healthy eating, exercise, and setting health goals. Learn about the Canada Food Guide, reading food labels, drinking water, stretching, and getting active. Join the round-table discussion to share ideas, challenges, goals, and tips.

B. Housing Matters – Join Jo-Anne to learn about the Housing Matters Project and why inclusive housing matters to everyone. Learn what makes housing affordable, accessible, welcoming, and connected to the community. Find helpful resources, hear about what is happening in our communities, and discover ways you can get involved and help make housing better for everyone.

C. ESATTA presents: **Light Your Path While Living Life in the Fast Lane, PART 1 -**

This training is designed to give you some tools and techniques to help you recognize the direction you want to take with issues you may have around Self-Esteem and Confidence.

SESSION 2 | 11:40 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

A. **Voting 101:** The municipal elections are just around the corner—but where do you even begin? Join us to learn the basics of voting. Do you need to register? How do you decide who to vote for? Where do you go to vote? We'll break it all down, answer your questions, and help you feel ready to **vote with confidence!**

B. **RDSPs:** What is an RDSP, and could it help you plan for the future? Julia and Suzie will break it all down in plain language. Learn what an RDSP is, who can apply, how to get started, and what you need to know. Bring your questions and learn how to better understand and make choices about your RDSP.

C. ESATTA presents: **Light Your Path While Living Life in the Fast Lane, PART 2 -**

This training is designed to give you some tools and techniques to help you recognize the direction you want to take with issues you may have around Self-Esteem and Confidence.

LUNCH • 12:30–1:30 p.m. | Lunch and snacks provided.

SESSION 3 | 1:30–2:20 p.m.

A. **What's your story?** Come and sit in our storytelling circle and listen to each other tell the important stories from your life. Everybody has a story to tell, and we all have something to learn from each other when we sit and listen. Shelley Nessman will help to create a safe space for everyone to share. Shelley will share an essay written by David Pitonyak that talks about the importance of storytelling and that someone should know your story.

B. **Employment: Where Do I Start?** You want a job, but don't know where to begin? This session will help you start thinking about employment and what kind of work might be a good fit for you. We'll talk about where to look for jobs, what you might need to prepare, and some of the things to think about as you get ready for work. Come with your questions and ideas!

C. The Art of Drag- mini workshop PART 1*: Step into the wonderfully bold world of drag with Miss Mousse and Autumn Horizon, who are ready to bring the glamour, creativity and FUN. Ask your burning drag questions, play with makeup, explore fabulous looks, and discover the art of creating a drag persona. Then get ready to strut, serve and shine as we bring it all together for a group performance! Come as you are and leave a little more fabulous!

SESSION 4 | 2:35–3:25 p.m.

A. Karaoke: Get ready to have some fun with Briana! Choose your favourite song, grab the microphone, and sing like nobody is watching. Whether you are a karaoke star or just want to give it a try, everyone is welcome. Come have fun, cheer each other on, and enjoy some great music!

B. Real Talk: Join John to learn about **Real Talk**, a free and accessible sexual health program for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) across British Columbia. Discover helpful resources, including our online video library and free Zoom events that people can join from anywhere in the province. We will also talk about some of the barriers people with IDD can face when trying to get sexual health information or services, and why accessible, inclusive education is so important. Come learn, ask questions, and find resources to support healthy relationships and informed choices.

C. The Art of Drag- mini workshop PART 2*: Step into the wonderfully bold world of drag with Miss Mousse and Autumn Horizon, who are ready to bring the glamour, creativity and FUN. Ask your burning drag questions, play with makeup, explore fabulous looks, and discover the art of creating a drag persona. Then get ready to strut, serve and shine as we bring it all together for a group performance! Come as you are and leave a little more fabulous!

CLOSING & SHOWCASE | 3:30–4:00 p.m.

Celebrate the day, share what we learned, and enjoy the showcase!

DAY 1

MOVIE SCREENING • 6:00–8:00 p.m.

A Place Where I Belong

Join us for a special screening of *A Place Where I Belong*, a documentary directed by Rheanna Toy that shares the stories of six 2SLGBTQIA+ people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The film explores identity, love, self-advocacy, family, friendship, and what it means to feel like you belong.

The film highlights the Connecting Queer Communities program, which creates safe and inclusive spaces for queer people with cognitive disabilities in BC.

We are excited to welcome **Noah**, one of the people featured in the film! Noah will join us for the screening and take part in a **post-film panel discussion**, where you can hear more about their experience and the importance of finding community and belonging.

The screening of this film was made possible by the generous support of Cloudstreet Media.



DAY 2

Wednesday, October 7 • 9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Registration & Marketplace open at 9:00 a.m.

The day at a glance:

Time	Cedar Room	Sanctuary	Mosaic Room
10:00-10:50	Storytelling	Speak Up with Confidence	ESATTA – One Page Descriptions, part 1 & 2
10:50-11:05	Break		
11:05 – 12:00	Representation Agreements	Scams & Internet Safety	
12:00-1:00	Lunch		
1:00 -2:00	Wrap Up for All in the Sanctuary		

SESSION 1 | 10:00–10:50 a.m.

A. ESATTA presents: **One Page Descriptions PART 1** - This workshop is a self-exploration about the things that are important to and important for you. It looks at the supports you need and want in life, work, and play. We will guide you with a group to look at these ideas and put them together so you can share them with people you trust. Many people say it helps them understand you more and it also saves you having to constantly tell people all these things. People who have done this workshop can use it for resumes, cover letters, and just as general information to help others get to know you. It is also a powerful team building exercise.

B. **What's your story?** Come and sit in our storytelling circle and listen to each other tell the important stories from your life. Everybody has a story to tell, and we all have something to learn from each other when we sit and listen. Shelley Nessman will help to create a safe space for everyone to share. Shelley will share an essay written by David Pitonyak that talks about the importance of storytelling and that someone should know your story.

C. **Speak Up With Confidence** - Join Jo-Anne for a fun and encouraging session about finding your voice and speaking up with confidence. Learn simple tips to share your ideas, express yourself, and feel more comfortable speaking in front of others. Whether you are new to self-advocacy or have been speaking up for years, there will be something for everyone.

SESSION 2 | 11:05 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

A. ESATTA presents: **One Page Descriptions PART 2*** - This workshop is a self-exploration about the things that are important to and important for you. It looks at the supports you need and want in life, work, and play.

B. What is a **Representation Agreement**, and why might someone have one? Join us to learn what Representation Agreements are, what kinds of decisions they can help with, and who might want to make one. We'll break it down in plain language and help you understand how a Representation Agreement can support your choices, rights, and wishes.

C. Scams & Internet Safety

Scams are everywhere, and new technology like AI can make it harder to know what is real and what is not. Join us to learn about common scams, warning signs to watch for, and simple ways to stay safe online. We'll share tips to help you protect your information, spot something suspicious, and know what to do if you are unsure.

LUNCH & BREAK • 12:00–1:00 p.m. | Lunch and snacks provided.

CLOSING | 1:00–2:00 p.m.

Wrap up the conference, celebrate our voices, and talk about what comes next!

PRESENTER BIOS

Roxci Bevis

Roxci is a project manager and community engagement specialist. She helps nonprofits turn ideas into action through workshops, events, communications, and community projects. Roxci has experience in strategic planning, grant writing, program development, and marketing. She is passionate about helping organizations grow, connect with their communities, and create positive change.

Tony Cuglietta

Tony is a local self-advocate from Kamloops who is passionate about inclusion, accessibility, and making sure everyone has a voice. He has served on the Thompson Cariboo Community Council and the CLBC PAC. Tony has also been an active member of the SUSA Society for many years. He is the founder of Buddy Up For Friendship, a program that helps people build friendships and feel connected in their community.

Briana Dillon

Briana is a new member of the SUSA Society and is discovering the power of self-advocacy. As she has become more involved, Briana has been finding her voice and developing a passion for public speaking. She enjoys sharing her ideas and experiences with others. In her free time, Briana loves singing karaoke and making creative cards for family and friends.

Andrew Embury

Andrew is a longtime self-advocate and SUSA Society board member who is passionate about inclusion and making communities more welcoming for everyone. He has worked hard to promote and grow An Amazing Race to Inclusion, helping bring people together through fun and connection. Outside of advocacy, Andrew is a passionate Kamloops Blazers supporter. He shares his love of the team with readers through his monthly Blazers Report in the Kamloops Self-Advocate Newsletter.

Jo-Anne Gauthier

Jo-Anne is a prominent figure in the self-advocacy movement in British Columbia, known for her dedication to inclusion and accessibility rights. She has been involved in various community projects and has served on advisory boards, including the CLBC provincial advisory board. Gauthier is also a research assistant on the Housing

Matters project. Her work has been recognized with the title “The People’s President” by BC Disability, highlighting her role in advocating for the rights and needs of individuals with diverse abilities.

Autumn Horizon

Autumn Horizon is where glam meets sass and the sun never truly sets! A dancing diva with a razor-sharp wit, Autumn is known for lighting up the stage with high-energy performances, flawless looks, and a personality as colorful as a fall sunset. Whether she’s serving face or stealing hearts, this queen brings the heat no matter the season. Autumn Horizon is a Kamloops-based drag artist.

Miss Mousse

Hope you saved room for dessert ‘cause Miss Mousse is here to satisfy your sweet tooth! Your local Kamloops queen is ready to serve up something delicious. She’s fluffy, she’s chocolatey and she’s gonna be your favorite treat!

Miss Mousse is a Kamloops-based drag performer, host, and self-described “bearded disco diva” known for bringing bold energy, humour, and a whole lot of sparkle to the stage.

Shelly Nessman

Shelley is passionate about storytelling and knows that every person has a great story to tell about their lives. Her career includes supporting BC People First for many years, working for Community Living British Columbia, collecting stories and hearing from self-advocates around the province.

Tami Pedersen

Tami is a long-time self-advocate and has been a co-chair of the SUSA Society for many years. She is also involved with the Thompson Cariboo Community Council, BCSALN, and CLBC PAC. When Tami first started speaking up, she was nervous and unsure of herself. But once she found her voice, there has been nothing holding her back! Tami now presents at conferences and with ESATTA, sharing her experiences and helping others build confidence, speak up, and find their own voices. She is passionate about inclusion, self-advocacy, and making sure everyone is heard.

Noah Wang

Noah Wang (they / them) is the Peer Coordinator for Connecting Queer Communities. They are also Vice President and Director at Large of BC People First, and a member of

the possibilities Social Media Fellowship. Noah holds a BSc from Douglas College. In their free time they enjoy cooking, content creation, and walking their dog Lucky.

James White

James White has worked in the Community Living sector for 40 years in several roles. Now retired from 9 to 5, he is working with his business partners on projects. He is a board member of The Learning Community for Person Centred Practices. He is also a mentor/support member of an entrepreneur co-operative who deliver presentations on a range of topics and use their own life experiences and skills to teach others. James is a founding member of ESATTA Cooperative.

John Woods

John Woods (he / him) has worked in the community living sector since 1992, and with Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion since 1997. He is also a Certified Sexual Health Educator. John founded the Real Talk sexual health education program in 2017, and is the program's manager. John also works with Options for Sexual Health in their Education department. His sex-ed theatre show 1-800-S3X-WYZE: The Health Hotline Musical was a sold-out hit at the 2025 Vancouver International Fringe Festival. John holds a BA from the University of Manitoba. In his free time, he enjoys running, biking, and performing music.

Speak Up Self-Advocacy Awareness (SUSA) Society

The Speak Up Self-Advocacy Awareness (SUSA) Society is a self-advocacy group in Kamloops that helps people speak up, make their own choices, and have a voice in their communities. SUSA provides opportunities to learn about rights, build confidence, make friends, and develop leadership skills.

SUSA is also active in the community. Members help organize and take part in events such as **An Amazing Race to Inclusion, Community Inclusion Month activities, film festivals, conferences, community and social events, and awareness campaigns.** SUSA works with community partners to promote inclusion, belonging, and self-determination and to help make Kamloops a community where everyone has a chance to participate and be heard.

Land Acknowledgement

SUSA respectfully acknowledges that we live, work, and gather on the unceded territory of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc Nation. We are grateful to be guests on these lands and recognize the importance of respecting the land, culture, and history of the Secwépemc people.

REGISTRATION FORM

Please complete this page and return it to SUSa.

YOUR INFORMATION

NAME:

PHONE:

EMAIL:

REGISTRATION

Please tick ONE:

- ☐ Self-Advocate — \$25
- ☐ Non-Self-Advocate — \$50 for one day
- ☐ Non-Self-Advocate — \$75 for both days

Days you will attend:

- ☐ Day 1 — October 6 ☐ Day 2 — October 7 ☐ Both Days

SESSION CHOICES

Please tick your 1st choice and 2nd choice for each session. We will do our best to give you your first choice.

Day 1 – Session 1 — 10:35–11:25:

1st choice: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C

2nd choice: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C

Day 1 – Session 2 — 11:40–12:30:

1st choice: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C

2nd choice: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C

Day 1 – Session 3 — 1:30–2:20:

1st choice: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C

2nd choice: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C

Day 1 – Session 4 — 2:35–3:25:

1st choice: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C

2nd choice: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C

Day 2 – Session 1 — 10:00–10:50:

1st choice: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C

2nd choice: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C

Day 2 – Session 2 — 11:05–12:00:

1st choice: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C

2nd choice: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C

FOOD

Lunch: ☐ Day 1 ☐ Day 2 ☐ Both Days ☐ Neither

Dietary needs: ☐ None ☐ Vegetarian ☐ Gluten-free ☐ Food allergy ☐ Other

If needed, please explain:

TRAVEL & SUPPORT

Travelling from out of town? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Where are you travelling from?

Need financial assistance with travel or accommodation? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Please contact me

ACCOMMODATION & PARKING

Thompson Hotel rooms are available for \$135 per night.

3-hour paid street parking is available. Full-day parking is available at the parkades at 335 Lansdowne St. and 240 Seymour St.

PAYMENT METHODS

You can pay in one of the following ways:

- Mail a cheque.
- Send an e-transfer to: speakupkamloops@gmail.com
 - E-transfer security password: **SUSA2026**

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Your voice matters. Your ideas matter. You belong.