

Dear Editor,

It was disappointing and ironic to read the interview with Michelle Moonen (p.11), in the last edition of Bloodlines. According to the interview, Michelle Moonen feels there is little support for a 'heterosexual woman who does not use drugs and is not a street person,' stating in particular that Positive Women's Network is 'too gay-based.'

It's unfortunate that the editorial slant of the interview implies that women's needs are not being met by Positive Women's Network. And it's ironic, given that Positive Women's Network is profiled in the same issue, including quotes from members expressing such views as, 'I am so happy there are places like PWN.'

The essence of what I'm saying is, let's not pit one woman against others. Positive Women's Network serves a wide diversity of women - including women who are working full-time in paid jobs, women working at home raising their children, women in school and women who are drug-using and living on the streets. Our membership includes women who identify as a heterosexual, two spirited, bisexual, transgendered, lesbian or gay. We serve women whose ancestry is First Nations, Metis, Caucasian, Black, Hispanic and Southeast Asian. We welcome any woman living with HIV in BC to access our services, and to try to make our space a welcoming, accepting place for all. Women from diverse backgrounds come together at PWN and create a supportive space that honors this diversity. When challenges arrive, we address them.

It is unfortunate for Moonen that she feels she hasn't found what she is looking for, and we hope for her that she does. But to use Moonen's disappointment to imply that our organizations aren't doing work to support women is doing all women seeking support a disservice. What would have been helpful to see on the page where the interview appeared was an acknowledgement that while PWN doesn't meet Moonen's needs, it does meet the needs of other women as noted on the profile page.

Janet Madsen
Communications Coordinator
Positive Women's Network

Dear Janet,

I absolutely agree with your comment that we should not 'pit one woman against the others', however, Moonen's views and opinions, especially as an Aboriginal Person living with HIV/AIDS must be respected.

RRHANS Executive Director Michelle George suggested Moonen be interviewed for Issue #3 (which focused on women), as she fit the profile for this particular issue - an HIV+ woman, a mother, and a person who has led a high-risk

lifestyle. Whilst Moonen's views do not reflect those of Red Road HIV/AIDS Network Society or Bloodlines Magazine, her verbatim opinions as expressed are as valid as the positive comments made by Anne Genovy in her interview entitled 'Gaining Strength' and the PWN profile entitled 'On a More Positive Note' in the same issue.

I also agree with your suggestion that an editorial acknowledgement would have been helpful stating that... 'while PWN doesn't meet Moonen's needs, it does meet the needs of other women...' and we will certainly look at how we will deal with controversial statements in the future. - Editor

Bloodlines is a thoroughbred. It explores connectivity, insists on high production values and maintains a positive attitude. Not shrinking from harsh truths, it knows that each and every human being on Mother Earth, however hard individual circumstances may be, must be accorded compassionate dignity, or else we are all diminished irretrievably.

Donald MacKenzie
Raven (Ganbada) Tribe

Congratulations on launching Bloodlines! As Canada's national HIV/AIDS treatment information service, we are acutely aware of how important it is to have culturally-specific HIV information. Bloodlines, in providing HIV information for, by and about Aboriginal people, makes a significant contribution in the prevention, treatment and support of Aboriginal people infected and affected by HIV. We look forward to working with Bloodlines and hope to see this dynamic resource become available to Aboriginal people across the nation. Keep up the great work!

Laurie Edmiston,
Executive Director
Canadian AIDS Treatment Information Exchange
(CATIE)

I read Bloodlines from page to page and found it fascinating. I commend all of you for the work that you are doing with your people. Here in New Mexico, even though we have cases, we are nowhere near the work that you are doing there. Once again, thank you.

Marie R. Kirk
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I have received my first copy of Bloodlines and in between a rushed schedule have read it through a number of times. The immediate challenge is that there are so many points I wanted to raise because I found the publication absolutely stunning and exceedingly informative!

First, recently I have been reminded of the research on Indian Education for the seventies which

indicated that we are a visual people. Learning is accelerated when images drive the message. I grew up during a time when we rarely saw images of our own people. In this regard I absolutely loved the images of those who worked in the field, the use of archival images (to remind us of where we come from physically and spiritually) and the use of traditional artwork (welcome figures/cloth work).

In all of our recent work with communities, elders, I have been reminded of the great strengths of our traditions and of course through archival images the degree to which the images serve as powerful reminders that we have been here for a very long time. If change is to occur within our communities and if we are to be reminded of our own teachings the series 'My Old People Say,' is profound and essential in today's world! My sincerest congratulations for a superb effort! I yas eye un Suli/May you be happy and in good spirits!

William A. White
Coast Salish (Nanaimo/Cowichan)
Aboriginal Liaison Office
University of Victoria

- See page 45 for Bill's beautiful poem and his sister Rita's stunning Thunderbird - Editor

It has seemed over the years that HIV/AIDS has slipped to the rear in health initiatives and it is continued efforts that will inevitably win - with proper health care and a global understanding of the issues.

The people who face prejudice and fears yet share their issues in Bloodlines are inspiring. My prayers are with those who have shared their hearts and their stories, in order to be teaching tools for people who feel that they are alone with so many problems.

Bloodlines captures the eye with colour and fabulous photographs. The magazine can be proud of the superb efforts made in continuing to battle indifference and ignorance of the disease with good writing, excellent presentation and information. It's also great to network the efforts of other groups working to defeat this disease that, for now, has no cure.

I pray that the Creator always guides Bloodlines and inspires your team to care for and love humanity enough to never give up the fight to achieve healthy lifestyles, families and most importantly, our future generations.

Keep up the good work!

All my relations
Lawrence Redwood
Circle of Eagles Lodge Society