



# July Newsletter



SPREADING AWARENESS AND  
CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY



We have some exciting events you won't want to miss this month!

[VinoSpa Speaks Out](#)

[Rural Live Wellness Events](#)

We also want to highlight the overwhelming support we received from the Stigma-Free community after speaking out about the Konect Media scam.

Keep reading to learn more.

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# VINOSPA SPEAKS OUT

JULY SPEAKER

## Andrea Paquette

STIGMA FREE SOCIETY  
AWARENESS UNDERSTANDING ACCEPTANCE

The poster features a woman with curly hair, Andrea Paquette, wearing a black t-shirt with the Stigma-Free Society logo. The background is light beige with decorative vine and leaf patterns. The text is in various fonts and colors, including gold and dark purple.

Making a Change Together:  
Get Your Tickets to VINOspa Speaks Out

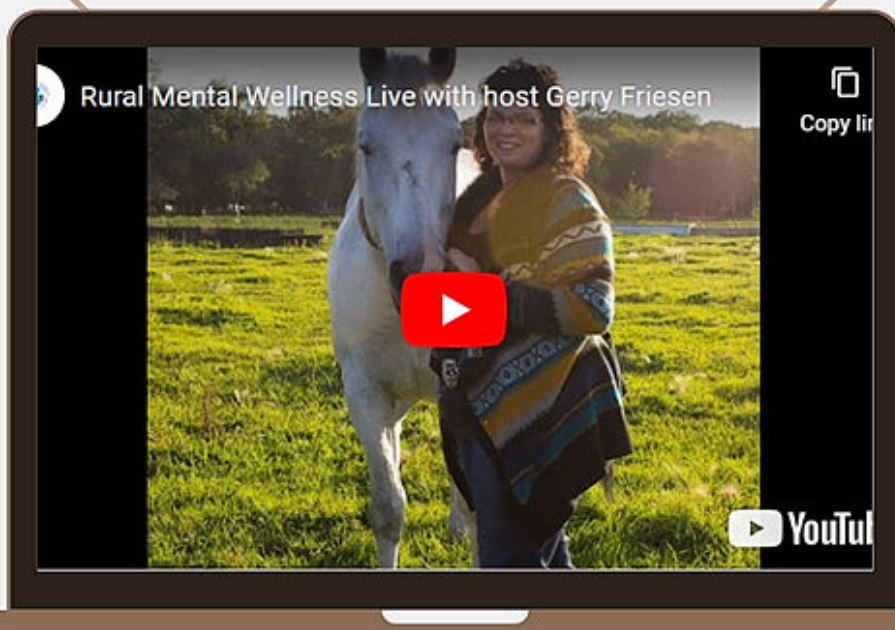
Are you passionate about building an inclusive future?

The VINOspa Speaks Out series, hosted by 40 Knots Winery, offers insight from organizations who are breaking barriers and creating change. These events open up honest, stigma-free conversations about issues that affect our community, including mental illness, drug addiction, domestic violence, human trafficking, and more.

**Andrea Paquette, President and Co-Founder of Stigma-Free Society, will be speaking at the first VINOspa Speaks Out event on July 5th.** Join her to explore ways we can address these issues, gain a better understanding of how people are affected, and raise awareness.

# Get Tickets Now

## TUNE IN STIGMA-FREE SOCIETY'S RURAL LIVE WELLNESS EVENTS



Learn more about rural mental health and wellness through our live events, hosted on our [YouTube channel](#) and [Facebook page](#). In each session, our host Gerry Friesen speaks with advocates and experts in rural mental wellness. Join us to hear their inspiring stories and valuable advice.

Check out our YouTube channel below to watch recordings of our past events and go to the “Live” tab to be notified of upcoming sessions!

[Rural Live Wellness Events](#)

## Stigma-Free Society Turning a Loss into a Big Win!



### How Your Support Helped Us Overcome the Konect Media Scam

In February 2022, Stigma-Free Society was the target of a scam orchestrated by a fraudulent organization called Konect Media. The company offered to produce 2000 grocery bags for Stigma-Free Society for a cost of \$1500. The bags were to be distributed at IGA on Robson Street in Vancouver, and the deal was confirmed by both Stigma-Free Society and IGA. Unfortunately, once Konect Media received payment, they became unresponsive and no product was delivered.

Rather than accept the loss and move on, we decided to stand by our charity's values and speak out about falling victim to a scam – an experience that often comes with stigma and shame.

We raised awareness about Konect Media, and our story was covered by media outlets across Canada. As a result, several other organizations reported similar experiences with the same company. The scammer's website was taken down and flagged as illegitimate by the Better Business Bureau. By speaking out, we helped protect other organizations against potential harm.

That was not the only victory. Our community made a collective effort to recover lost funds. IGA on Robson Street in Vancouver hosted a fundraiser for Stigma-Free Society in May and donated \$1 from each sale of KitKat bars. IGA also covered \$400 in expenses for fundraiser materials, including a banner and information cards. Because of the support from IGA and each of you who donated, \$1850 was raised from the fundraiser. In addition, Coca-Cola Canada donated Fresca mini cans in exchange for a \$300 donation made by IGA. Georgia Main Food Group generously contributed an additional \$1,500. The legitimate advertising agency, Konnect Media ([konnctnow.ca](http://konnctnow.ca)), provided us with top-quality design services for the fundraiser free of charge.

Altogether, our Stigma-Free community raised nearly \$4000 which a significantly higher amount than we initially lost.

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who donated, stood by us, and helped transform this loss into a big win. Your support shows that by speaking out, even in the face of stigma, you can truly make difference.

We are proud to be part of such an inclusive, generous community that embodies our values and takes meaningful action. Because of you, others will hopefully be encouraged to share their story and contribute to positive change.

Your support means the world to us, and we are more dedicated to our mission than ever. We will continue to combat stigma in our community and create change, no matter what challenges come our way.

We are in this together.



# Thank! You!



Thank you for keeping up to date with Stigma-Free Society! Feel free to share our no-cost programs and resources with people in your network.

[Student Mental Health Toolkit](#)

[Rural Mental Wellness Toolkit](#)

[Make a Donation](#)



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