

Students study life with HIV through art

AARON YEO
News Staff

First-year nursing students chose coloured pencils over scalpels last week in an activity designed to teach them about HIV in their community.

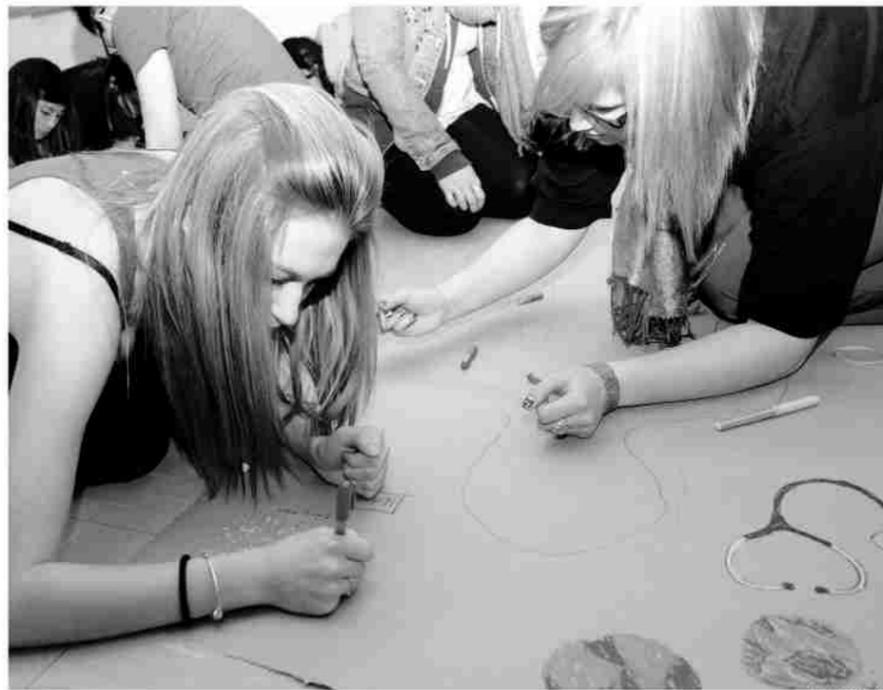
In a session hosted by HIV Edmonton, a local support group for those suffering from HIV, more than thirty Nursing students spent their Friday afternoon tracing outlines of each other and expressing their personal stories with a variety of markers, pastels, and crayons in a process called body mapping. After removing their shoes and sitting on the floor, the students were encouraged to be freely creative in the body mapping activity.

"There are no barriers. You can't make a mistake in this process," said Lynn Sutankayo, a U of A alumni who led the session. "It's really just fun and play and just going with it, letting your guard down. Which I know is different [from] university classrooms."

On three-by-seven foot pieces of paper, students drew several outlines of different people in their groups, and then drew symbols that represented their background. The students were told to open up to their peers about what's important to them, and not to hide their past. Short- and long-term goals of the students were portrayed as well, in an effort to put the entire lives of students in an artistic display.

Sutankayo, community education coordinator at HIV Edmonton, said body mapping started out in South Africa as an art project to help women to live with HIV. It was used as a method to help those infected to open up to their communities and to live life without fear.

"There's a lot of stigma to go along with this disease; people don't like to disclose that they have it, and people don't like to talk about it if their friends or family members have been affected. For many reasons, AIDS and HIV is related to death, drugs, sex; stuff that's hard to talk about."



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THAT AIN'T NO ETCH-A-SKETCH First-year nurses drew body maps in a self-exploration exercise.

Sutankayo thinks it's important to get those in nursing to understand HIV and to get rid of any stereotypes, especially as they will see patients infected with the virus on a regular basis.

"Often as healthcare providers, we feel that we're entitled to know everything about our patients' body, but we have to appreciate how much trust is required for a person to feel safe enough to disclose their history to us," said Sutankayo. "What we're here to do is to de-stigmatize HIV and people living with HIV."

Two HIV Edmonton volunteers with HIV were present to help the students with their body maps, as well as tell their personal stories of how the activity helped them in their struggles.

One student, Kaitlyn Gorman, didn't know

what to expect when she first went into the session, and said that it changed the way she looked at the ailment.

"I wasn't really sure about HIV. I didn't really know a lot about the disease, so I was kind of oblivious to it and ignorant to it," she said. "Now I feel like I understand a lot more and have gained a lot of knowledge towards it, and I'm much more accepting, and have gotten rid of all those stereotypes that I did have before."

Sutankayo also mentioned that body mapping could be used as a tool to help people with all sorts of issues or problems in life, not just chronic illnesses such as HIV.

SEE MORE PHOTOS ONLINE IN AN AUDIO SLIDE-SHOW AT WWW.THEGATEWAYONLINE.CA

CAMPUS CRIME BEAT

Compiled by Aaron Yeo

BOP IT!

At 3 p.m. on March 21, a car owner reported that their vehicle had been broken into while parked in the Education building car park. The thief gained access by "punching" the driver's side door lock and subsequently stole a speaker. UAPS want to remind drivers not to leave valuables in their vehicles in plain view and to contact UAPS if they notice any suspicious persons around vehicles.

THAT'S A REAL NICE (BIKE) RACK

UAPS officers observed a male loitering around a bike rack near the University Terrace building at 1:30 p.m. on March 22. The male has an extensive criminal record including theft and trespassing. He was given a new trespass notice and photographed before being told to leave campus.

CRIMINAL CONSIGNMENT

Staff from the Book Cellar in HUB reported a male had stolen two textbooks on March 23 at 2:30 p.m. The male had consigned the books and when staff did an inventory, they realized the male had taken the books. He was described as Caucasian and slim with dark hair, wearing a dark baseball cap, navy blue hoodie, and blue jeans. UAPS officers checked the area but were not able to locate the male.

GRAND THEFT AUTO III

At 3:45 a.m. on March 24, UAPS received a call from security at the NINT building that a male was at their front desk reporting he had just been robbed at gunpoint in Windsor car park. The robber stole the victim's car and wallet. All UAPS units were dispatched to the area and EPS were contacted. EPS advised this had been the third such incident that day and asked UAPS to be on the lookout for a grey Oldsmobile that had been stolen earlier from a casino on Argyll Road. The first vehicle had been stolen from the River Cree Casino. The stolen Oldsmobile was recovered on the top level of Windsor car park. The victim was interviewed by EPS and given a ride home by UAPS.



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