

plc

POSITIVE LIVING CENTRE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PROFILE: CRAIG

ACCELERATED
AGING?

HIV DIAGNOSES
DECLINE IN
LONDON

WINTER
NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2017 TO
SEPTEMBER 2017

PROVIDING INTEGRATED
AND COMPREHENSIVE
SERVICES FOR ALL
PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

A PROGRAM OF THE
VICTORIAN AIDS COUNCIL

VAC 

POSITIVE LIVING CENTRE

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Tram Stop

No.28 on the 72 Route Camberwell Line

Bus Stop

No.13 which covers Routes 216, 219, 220

Note: We are a short walk from both Prahara and South Yarra railway stations.

PLC OPENING HOURS

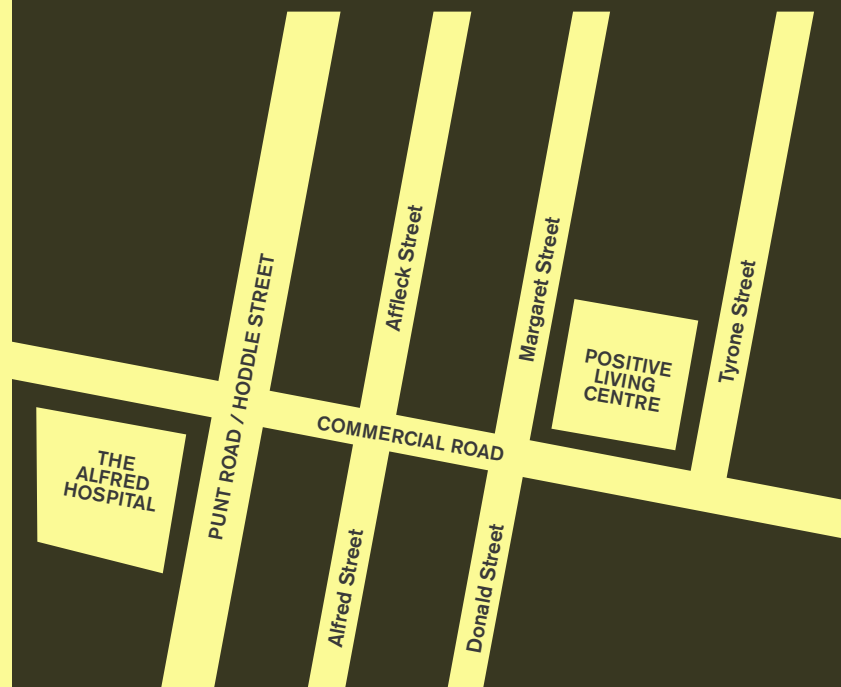
Tuesday 10am – 4pm

Wednesday 10am – 4pm

Thursday 10am – 8pm

Friday 10am – 4pm

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WELCOME

WELCOME

WELCOME TO THE WINTER EDITION OF THE POSITIVE LIVING CENTRE NEWSLETTER. THERE IS A LOT TO READ AND ENJOY AS WELL AS A GREAT DEAL OF USEFUL INFORMATION IN THIS EDITION.

Our regular newsletters are an easy way to keep up-to-date with new developments and interesting topics in the field. With contributions from a variety of sources, our newsletter contains insightful news pieces, and keeps you informed of all our upcoming events and activities so you never miss out.

From all the team at the Positive Living Centre we wish you the best and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Best Wishes
Alex Nikolovski





PROFILE

PROFILE: CRAIG

WHAT DO YOU DO?

Teach and take care of people. I do my best to check in with people to see how they are, especially if I know they are going through some tough times. I always say that my role as your friend is not to tell you how to live your life, but to be there if you need me to help you pick up the pieces. I try to bring this into the work I do in the PLHIV community. Sometimes I feel we get caught up chastising people instead of helping them get through their hardships and doing our best to prevent these situations. I think that's why I enjoy teaching so much; giving out information and support to those seek it out. I've been teaching at a tertiary level for about 8 years now. It brings me joy and fulfilment to see the growth and development of my students. There are few things nicer than seeing someone's face light up when they understand something new. Also, I make really bad puns and dad joke. By bad I actually mean amazing #Puncle

WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?

I've lived most of my life in Melbourne. My gap year was spent in the English countryside being a teaching assistant and I lived in Sydney for a summer between degrees. I wouldn't say I have grown up though. There is still a childish side to me which likes mischief and playing jokes on people. I don't think I'll ever stop growing and at this point in my life I'm not sure I am able to continue growing in Melbourne.

ONE WISH?

I think I would wish everyone was better at accepting each other. Sometimes people get caught up in how other people live their life. I just want people to be happy, as long as they aren't hurting themselves or anyone else. Also, I would wish for whatever I want as it bypasses the "No infinite wish" rule. I love a good loophole.

'I THINK STIGMA COMES FROM AN EMOTIONAL REACTION TO HIV. IT'S OKAY TO HAVE AN EMOTIONAL REACTION TO HIV, BUT IT'S MORE IMPORTANT THAT IT IS DEALT WITH IN AN APPROPRIATE WAY.'

CAT OR DOG?

Depends, if I were to get a pet to live with, probably a cat. I'm not always able to deal with a constant need for affection; I like my downtime. That said, I love visiting other people's dogs and taking them for walks. Just as long as I can give them back when I am ready.

MODE OF TRANSPORT?

Bikes. I have a motorcycle and a bicycle. I like the efficiency and manoeuvrability of them. The idea of zipping through traffic easily and park anywhere really speaks to my need for efficiency. My motorcycle is quite fuel efficient. I try to be conscious of my environmental impact and do my best to compromise between impact and time. I also enjoy the tinkering side of bikes as well: maintaining them and adjusting them. It just so happens I think both leather and lycra look and feel sexy. So, that helps as well.

HOW MANY YEARS SINCE YOUR DIAGNOSIS?

9 years. I was diagnosed by the Australian Blood bank. For as long as I can remember, I've had a fear of needles. One day I decided to overcome the fear and the way I knew that I would be able to do it was to donate blood. It would be a social contract I would have to give back to the community and that would drive me to go through with it. I did the whole year without sex and then donated. About two

weeks after I donated they called me in and told me my HIV test came back positive and they confirmed the diagnosis later that day.

WHO DID YOU FIRST TELL?

My mother. After I was diagnosed, I was taken to the Alfred and had a healthcare plan developed for me. I went straight to my mum's house afterwards and told her. She cried a lot because she thought I was dying, which she later realised was not the case. There was a while when I didn't tell many people and it caused me a lot of anguish. Now, I am quite open about my status. I don't see it as a hindrance; it's just one of the many facets which are a part of me.

'THERE WAS A WHILE WHEN I DIDN'T TELL MANY PEOPLE AND IT CAUSED ME A LOT OF ANGUISH.'

WHAT DOES PREP MEAN TO YOU?

It means greater protection against the transmission of HIV. The more ways we have of preventing transmission, the better.

DO YOU THINK OF HIV EVERY DAY?

No, even though I take my medication daily, a lot of the time it is on autopilot. I try not to have anything in my life which I think of everyday; I fill up my life with a variety of activities. I am always thinking and I like connecting different parts of my life to bring something new to it. HIV is only one part of my life and I think about it when it comes up.

BEST ADVICE GIVEN TO YOU?

Deal with the reality; not the ideal. I used to get caught up in what "should" happen and it caused a lot of frustration for me. Now I prefer to deal with what has happened. I don't always follow this advice, but I do my best to step back and think about it when I'm getting frustrated. I try to incorporate this advice in my community work as well.

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Sometimes we get caught up expecting people to behave a certain way and not accept they are human and don't always get it right. I prefer to accept people for who they are; look after them regardless; and try to plan and prevent the worst case scenarios.

HAS HIV CHANGED YOUR LIFE?

Yes.

HOW CAN WE BEST COMBAT STIGMA?

I think stigma comes from an emotional reaction to HIV. It's okay to have an emotional reaction to HIV, but it's more important that it is dealt with in an appropriate way. I think there are a lot of people who think the counteraction to an emotional response is evidence and statistics. As a classically trained scientist, I know evidence and statistics have a time and place. Emotions are not always logical or reasonable and using reason and logic to sort through them often doesn't help.

When my sexual partners have freaked out about my status, I have found they were able to process the situation better when I have explained part of the reason I take my medication every day is so I don't pass on the virus. I would never want to put anyone in harm's way. I think the best way to combat stigma is to use emotional logic; that's the real counteraction to an emotional reaction. My hope is people will have a greater understanding of HIV if they knew many PLHIV don't have sex for quite some time after their diagnosis and are often crippled with the fear of transmitting the virus. Living with HIV can be difficult and often PLHIV put everyone else before themselves. I believe if more people knew the effort PLHIV put into not passing on the virus, they would not be so stigmatising.

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THE VOICES OF PEOPLE OF LIVING WITH HIV

STAYING NEGATIVE IS A CAMPAIGN RUN BY THE VICTORIAN AIDS COUNCIL THAT FEATURES THE REAL LIFE STORIES OF GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANS MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN (MSM).

It aims to emotionally engage MSM through the sharing of personal experiences and how they navigate their own sexual health, sexuality and wellbeing. It provides a platform for both HIV-negative and HIV-positive men to talk about the very real everyday issues they face.

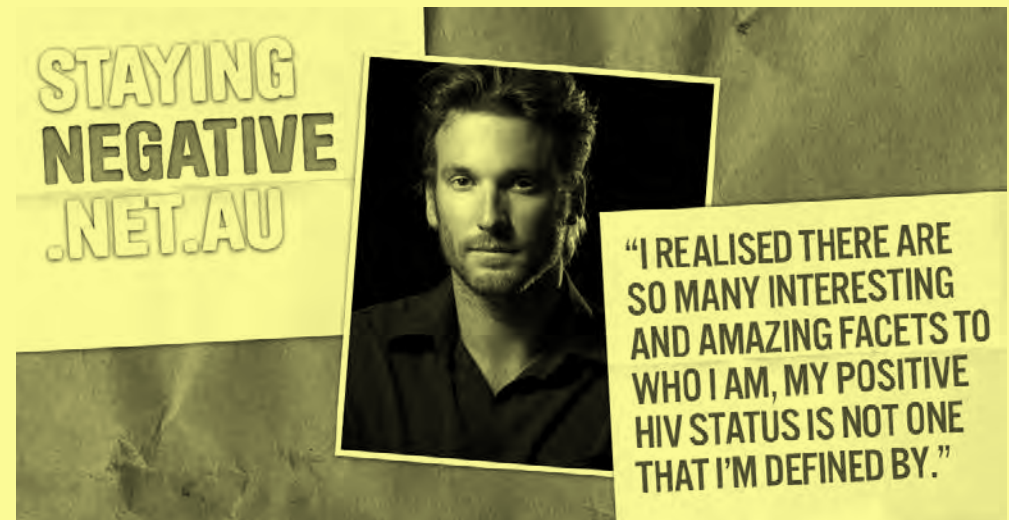
It is important to us that the voices of people living with

HIV (PLHIV) in the community are heard and made visible. We are currently looking for new participants to share their story as part of our campaign. Everybody's story is different and we recruit participants from a very wide range of backgrounds.

INFORMATION

Go and check it out!
www.stayingnegative.net.au

If you are interested or just want more information, please feel free to contact Jessie at jessie.wong@vac.org.au



HIV, AIDS AND 90-90-90: WHAT IS IT AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?



Twenty years ago when someone acquired HIV, they would, on average, not live more than 12 years. Today, a young person who becomes infected in the developed world can expect to have a near-normal lifespan with access to lifelong, uninterrupted HIV treatment. Globally, the HIV/AIDS community has worked hard to realise the Sustainable Development Goal of ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. One crucial part of this plan is bringing HIV treatment to all who need it. The 90-90-90 concept is one part of this plan. President of the South African Medical Research Council, explains the importance of 90-90-90 and why there is so much talk around it.

What is 90-90-90?

A concept introduced by the United Nation's program on HIV/AIDS in 2013, 90-90-90 is a set of goals. The idea is that by 2020, 90% of people who are HIV infected will be diagnosed, 90% of people who are diagnosed will be on antiretroviral treatment and 90% of those who receive antiretrovirals will be virally suppressed. Viral suppression is when a person's viral load – or the amount of virus in an HIV-positive person's blood – is reduced to an undetectable level. The strategy is an attempt to get the HIV epidemic under control and is based on the principal of universal testing and treating. What is central to "test and treat" approaches is that if one can identify people early on in their infection, and start treatment so they become virally suppressed, the onward transmission of HIV will be prevented and this will impact on HIV incidence at a population level. There are an estimated 36.7 million HIV-positive people across the globe. In line with this, the goals

would mean that 33.2 million of these people would be diagnosed, 29.5 million would be on antiretrovirals and 26.9 million would have viral suppression. According to some of the latest figures, there are only 19.8 million people – or 53% – who have been tested. About 13.4 million people remain undiagnosed. There are 17 million people on antiretrovirals while a substantial 12.9 million have not been initiated on antiretrovirals and remain untreated. Of those on antiretroviral treatment, only 11.6 million have viral suppression, which means that almost a third of HIV-infected individuals on treatment are not virally suppressed. This not only impacts on the development of antiretroviral drug resistance and future treatment options; it also has implications for the onward transmission of HIV.

How realistic is this plan?

This is a strategy to try and control the HIV epidemic and get towards an HIV-free world. The concept of universal test and treat is an aspirational concept, but it is an incredibly difficult plan to implement at scale, particularly in resource-poor settings that are heavily burdened with HIV. This plan entails that the health service identify HIV in people who are not symptomatic, and who are not seeking care. It entails taking HIV testing out of the clinics and into the community, and requires new and innovative ways to get people tested for HIV infection. In order to make this plan realisable the health system has to endeavor to make HIV testing easily available even in the most remote areas of the world.

The second component of this plan entails ensuring that HIV-infected individuals are triaged into care, and they need to start

antiretroviral treatment as close to diagnosis as possible. People who are asymptomatic and well may not feel ready to start taking treatment for life, which means that there needs to be adequate counselling and support, and the health benefits of early initiation of care need to be adequately explained. Antiretroviral drugs need to be available in all places at all times. Once treatment is initiated, the aim is to keep people on treatment and adherent so that they can be virally suppressed and incapable of transmitting the virus to sexual partners, and to have maximal health benefits from early initiation of treatment. It also requires countries to have at least three lines of drug therapy. Currently only five countries in sub-Saharan Africa have three lines of treatment for people to transition onto once they have drug resistance or experience toxicities. Most countries are unable to realise these ambitious programs. There are several reasons for this: First, they require resources for extraordinary access to HIV testing. Second, they need resources to procure drugs and prevent stock-outs. And, lastly, they need resources to keep people on treatment for life. No country either rich or poor can boast this kind of access or resources. Although resource-rich countries that have less of a burden of disease are more likely to get and retain people on treatment, in heavily burdened countries there are difficult choices to make as a government, as programs such as this require extraordinary resources. It entails a robust health system, innovation to improve HIV testing access, and antiretroviral supplies that will be uninterrupted and support all three lines in case of drug resistance. It will entail not only a robust health system but a cadre of health-care workers who are trained and able to deliver a good service. It also requires financial investment and a country that sees the investment case and is willing to put its own money and not that of donors into the program.

Which countries have made remarkable

progress towards 90:90:90?

In Africa, Botswana is close to reaching the 90-90-90 target for testing, treatment and viral suppression. Botswana was the first country on the African continent to provide free antiretroviral treatment to people with HIV, starting in 2002. Furthermore it has achieved its level of coverage when providing treatment to people with CD4 cell counts below 350 cells/mm³, even before moving to providing treatment for everyone diagnosed with HIV infection. Previous international reviews of treatment cascade performance have shown that northern European countries and Australia have made the greatest progress towards reaching the 90-90-90 target. At the last International AIDS Conference, it was reported that Switzerland, Australia, the UK, Denmark and the Netherlands were well on their way to achieving this target. In each case, easily attainable improvements in the rate of diagnosis or treatment initiation should allow these countries to reach the goal.

Which countries are struggling to reach the 90:90:90 goals?

Many countries are struggling to reach these targets because of hard-to-reach populations. Testing and treatment has enormous challenges irrespective of the country you live in. Many of those who receive HIV treatment are those who are the easiest to reach. This means that the road to universal access for all populations still poses major challenges. There are substantial coverage gaps in many regions. To use Africa as an example: in 2013, treatment coverage on the continent ranged from 41% in eastern and southern Africa to 11% in the Middle East and North Africa. At least 30 countries in the world account for 89% of all new HIV infections. At least 18 of these countries are in Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Nigeria and South Africa. But the list also includes other low- and middle-income countries like Brazil, China and India, and high-income countries like the US.

NOT SO FAST:

Do People With HIV Really Experience Accelerated Aging?

BY DAVID ALAIN WOHL, M.D.
FROM TEST POSITIVE AWARE NETWORK



RECENT TALK ABOUT HIV AND AGING HAS ALMOST ALWAYS BEEN SCARY. A NUMBER OF STUDIES CONCLUDE THAT PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV HAVE SO-CALLED "ACCELERATED AGING" -- MEANING THEY WILL SUFFER HEART ATTACKS, STROKES, CANCERS, AND OSTEOPOROSIS MORE OFTEN AND SOONER THAN THOSE WITHOUT HIV. READING AND HEARING ABOUT THESE CONCERNS CAN BE DISHEARTENING, ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE FOUGHT SO HARD, OVER SO MANY YEARS, TO CONTROL THEIR HIV.

Well, this is one article on aging and HIV that will challenge the concept of people living with HIV having an early expiration date. Instead, we can look at what we know and what we don't, to get a better idea of what the risks are for HIV-positive people growing older -- and what they can do about them.

FACT: HIV-positive people have higher rates of age-related conditions.

HIV-positive people are definitely at increased risk of cardiovascular disease, certain types of cancers, neurocognitive impairment, and weaker bones (collectively what I will call "age-associated badness"). I know, that is a pretty gloomy realization to start with when trying to argue that HIV infection does not lead to accelerated aging. However, what the statistics show us is that people living with HIV have a greater chance of these serious problems, to a large extent, because they are more likely to have the traditional risk factors for each of these conditions -- the factors that are seen in the general population as the main drivers of such conditions.

For example: People who smoke, don't exercise, eat unhealthy diets, and live with high levels of stress are more likely to have cardiovascular disease than those without these risks. Rates of smoking alone are up to three times higher among HIV-positive people than in the general population. It is not a stretch to say that people living with HIV are also more likely to experience those other traditional risks. Therefore, it follows that people with HIV would have more heart attacks and strokes -- and they do.

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The same goes for cancer, cognitive concerns, and brittle bones. Mental illness, substance abuse, and head trauma can lead to cognitive issues, and those are risks that people with HIV more often have. While a number of studies have shown HIV to be associated with low bone density, a recent study of HIV-negative men enrolled in a study of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) found higher than expected rates of bone density problems in these men before they started on the study drug. Alcohol and methamphetamine use were both associated with more brittle bones.

Certainly, researchers try to account for imbalances in risk when comparing HIV-positive and HIV-negative people. The problem is that it is hard to account for all of the most potentially influential factors, let alone those that are less obvious. Depression, poverty, discrimination, and certain types of substance use have been linked to poor health outcomes, but are hard to measure and are not typically included in these adjustments. We are left with possibly comparing apples to oranges when comparing HIV-positive and HIV-negative people, and attributing excess risk to the virus or its therapies rather than an unaccounted-for imbalance in other risk factors.

FACT: The risk of age-related badness can be reduced.

In contrast to the notion that the development of age-related

badness is a foregone conclusion, people living with HIV often have the power to tilt the odds in their favor by taking action. Not all risks can be eliminated, for sure. You can't take back 30 years of smoking, but you can stop smoking. Moreover, you can also reduce your risks in very traditional ways.

HEART DISEASE RISK

Like any aging person, people with HIV should have their risk of cardiovascular disease assessed by their clinician. Using cholesterol values, blood pressure readings, age, race, and diabetes and smoking history, the 10-year and lifetime risk for cardiovascular disease can be easily estimated based on data from huge numbers of people (yes, there is an app for that). This risk score can inform recommended interventions -- from doing nothing, to making dietary changes and exercising, to starting medication.

Cardiovascular disease risk can absolutely be reduced, with lifestyle changes, as mentioned; better control of blood pressure and blood sugars; and in many cases medication, particularly drugs like lipid-lowering statins or aspirin. Recent data even show that rates of heart attacks and strokes among HIV-positive people in care have dropped and are now about the same as those for HIV-negative people. This has been attributed to some of the factors I've mentioned, including smoking cessation, control of cholesterol and blood pressure, and the push for an earlier start of HIV medications.

BONE LOSS RISK

For bone health, a similar calculator can be used to assess the risk of osteoporosis; and action can translate into risk reduction. There are guidelines for when to measure bone density using X-rays called DEXA scans. Older people living with HIV should ask their health care providers about whether they need a DEXA scan or not. When low bone density is identified, it can sometimes be explained by low vitamin D or testosterone levels. Simple supplementation with vitamin D and calcium can help improve bone health; stronger medications can be used for more severe cases.

CANCER RISK

Another way that HIV-positive people can help make sure that the force of prevention is with them is to get the recommended routine cancer screenings. Recommendations are pretty clear about screening for cancer of the colon, breast, cervix, lung (for those with significant smoking history), and liver (for those with cirrhosis and hepatitis C or B). Early detection of these cancers can lead to early treatment and, in many cases, cure.

Too often people, with and without HIV, stall on getting potentially lifesaving colonoscopies or mammograms. Not a good idea. These screenings are notorious for causing discomfort, but you have gone through worse. Take a deep breath, and get screened.

A FEW MORE OUNCES OF PREVENTION

We should not short-change other interventions that help people stay healthy as they age. These include basic things, like vaccinations. Many people don't get the influenza vaccine, believing it will make them sick -- placing themselves and others, including children, at risk for this potentially devastating infection. The flu shot cannot cause the flu (it is an inactive vaccine -- not alive!). We should all get it every year. Other important vaccines include those for strep pneumonia and shingles.

Other no-brainers when it comes to aging well with HIV include good recordkeeping of all medications, even over-the-counter and alternative ones. Bring a list of all your drugs and supplements to the clinic to help your health care providers avoid drug interactions or errors that could be harmful.

Older people also have sex, thank goodness, and no one should age out of asking about and being screened for sexually transmitted infections. Lastly, depression is highly prevalent among people with HIV, as well as older folks. This needs to be looked for and addressed. Besides medicine, social support can help and is critical to well-being

Fact: Studies show higher levels of markers of inflammation in people living with HIV, and these are associated with age-related badness.

Inflammation is our body's way of responding to damage or threats. Hit your thumb with a hammer and you get lots of inflammation in your thumb. This is because damaged cells sent signals to other cells that something harmful happened and needs to be dealt with. Less obvious is inflammation that occurs in response to more chronic insults like bad gum disease, high-fat diets, or infection with HIV. Here, too, signals are sent and can provoke responses that, unlike the sore thumb, persist, keeping the body in an active state of response that can hurt organs over time.

A number of studies have shown that HIV-positive people in general have higher levels of markers (signs) of inflammation than those without HIV. Studies of patients with undetectable viral loads on HIV medications show that levels of inflammation markers are closer to normal but, in general, are still somewhat higher than for those who are HIV-negative.

Note the use of "in general." This is to make

loud and clear that these studies do not show that all people with HIV have high levels of inflammation. In fact, the studies looking at this have found a range of inflammation among HIV-positive people with many (maybe most) having low levels of inflammation. It is only when they look at overall averages that they can see differences between groups.

Additionally, it is unclear what these levels of inflammation really mean, as they can change over time and we don't know for certain what is a good, concerning, or dangerous level of inflammation markers. It is also hard to know to what extent any of the inflammation seen in these studies is due to HIV, HIV medications, or something that is more unique to HIV-positive people. There may be a role that the virus continues to play, even when controlled, that contributes to age-related badness, but with so much else going on, it is hard to say how big this role is.

Actions that can help reduce inflammation include the usual suspects: good diet, good weight, good exercise, good control of diabetes, good control of blood pressure, and so on. HIV therapy itself (especially started early, before CD4+ cell count declines) reduces levels of inflammation markers -- likely by controlling the virus -- and that may be the most important intervention of all for HIV-positive people getting older.

CONCLUSION

People living with HIV are not powerless against the onslaught of age-related badness, and need to

be proactive regarding their health as they get older. Ask your health care providers about assessments of risks for cardiovascular disease and low bone density. Screening for cancers is a must.

On the other side of the stethoscope: Older HIV-positive people must take good care of themselves, physically and mentally. This means eating healthily, exercising, managing problems such as obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure, getting all recommended vaccinations, and using care to avoid sexually transmitted infections.

For all the handwringing about HIV and aging, we cannot lose sight of the facts: The survival rate for people living with HIV is now incredibly close to that of the general population. That does not mean we know it all, but it means a lot.

David Alain Wohl, M.D., is a professor of medicine in the Division of Infectious Diseases at the University of North Carolina (UNC). He leads the UNC AIDS Clinical Trials Unit at Chapel Hill.

HIV DIAGNOSES DECLINE IN LONDON

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THE LARGE FALL IN HIV DIAGNOSES IN LONDON GAY MEN IS REAL AND THANKS TO COMBINATION PREVENTION, NOT JUST PREP

The number of new HIV diagnoses in gay men attending five key London clinics fell substantially during 2015 and 2016, Valerie Delpech of Public Health England told the British HIV Association (BHIVA) conference in Liverpool yesterday.

Epidemiological analysis shows that the phenomenon is real. Diagnoses fell while testing rates dramatically increased, showing that the explanation cannot be reduced testing. The CD4 cell counts of newly diagnosed men increased, suggesting that fewer new diagnoses are indeed the reflection of fewer new infections. The time from diagnosis to starting HIV treatment has fallen.

Delpech said that the results were the result of combination prevention – testing and ‘treatment as prevention’. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is likely to have contributed to the fall, but to a lesser extent, she said. It could have more impact in the future.

Nneka Nwokolo of the 56 Dean Street clinic agreed: “Although I think we all accept that PrEP plays some part, actually the decrease started significantly before PrEP was being used in any widespread way,” she said. The clinic quickly identifies and engages the men with the very highest risk of acquiring HIV and encourages them to attend each month for sexual health check-ups. GeneXpert testing for sexually transmitted infections has reduced the time from test to treatment from ten to two days.



Perhaps most importantly, a quarter of newly diagnosed individuals now start HIV treatment within three days of diagnosis.

Valerie Delpech said that Public Health England had reliable data on new HIV diagnoses across England up to and including the third quarter of 2016 (July to September), whereas reports for the last quarter were still coming in. Nationally, there was a clear fall in diagnoses in gay men between October 2014 and September 2016, but not in other population groups.

Moreover, there are five clinics at which the falls in gay male diagnoses were

concentrated. They are all in London: 56 Dean Street (which accounts for over a third of diagnoses), the Mortimer Market Centre, Burrell Street, Homerton Sexual Health and St Mary’s.

Trends in clinics elsewhere in London, and elsewhere in England, are different. During 2015, there were over 200 new diagnoses per quarter at these ‘steep fall’ clinics. In 2016, this lowered to between 100 and 150 diagnoses per quarter.

This has occurred against a backdrop of many more HIV tests being done and men getting tested more frequently. Among repeat testers (men who had tested at the same clinic within the previous two years), the number of tests done per quarter at the five clinics increased from around 4500 in 2013 to almost 10,000 in 2016. The greatest falls in diagnoses occurred in repeat testers, rather than men testing for the first time at that clinic.

Delpech said that clinics appeared to have got better at identifying men at greater risk of HIV (for example, those with rectal STIs and those seeking post-exposure prophylaxis [PEP]) and encouraging them to come back more often for testing. The number of men taking two, three or four tests within two years has increased dramatically. Nonetheless, around half of clinic attendees still test only once in two years.

The time from diagnosis to starting HIV treatment has been falling for several years. This has been observed across the country, but has been especially marked in recent years in the five steep fall clinics. In 2011 the median was around 450 days; in 2013, around 180 days; and in 2015, around 100 days.

As a result of both faster diagnosis and faster treatment, the estimated number of gay men with a viral load over 200 copies/ml at these clinics has fallen dramatically. There

were around 4000 men in 2014, falling to around 1700 in 2016. These numbers include the estimated number of men with undiagnosed HIV infection attending these clinics, together with men not on treatment and men on treatment but virally unsuppressed.

Delpech presented data on the ‘transmissibility ratio’, a new measure which could serve as a proxy for the risk of onward HIV transmission in a clinic population and the sexual networks they connect with. It is calculated by dividing the estimated number of men with a detectable viral load by the number of men considered ‘high risk’, those with an STI in the previous year.

At the steep fall clinics, there were 1752 men with detectable HIV and 3596 men at high risk, producing a ratio of 0.5. (With a ratio below 1, the chance of transmission is low.) However, at other London clinics, there were 1444 men with detectable HIV and 868 at high risk, producing a ratio of 1.7 (suggestive of a greater transmission risk). Similarly, outside London, the ratio was 1.7.

Other clinics have seen increases in testing rates and decreases in time to starting treatment, but the changes do not appear so far to be of a sufficient scale, or combined in the same way, so as to result in the large falls in new diagnoses observed at the five London clinics.

“We are witnessing and recording an ecological experiment of the impact of combination prevention on HIV incidence,” Delpech said. While the downturn in new diagnoses has only been seen in gay men, she said that there was no reason why testing and early antiretroviral therapy (ART) could not be scaled up in all people who are at risk of HIV in this country, regardless of gender, ethnicity or sexuality.

Source: Roger Pebody AIDS MAP

VIIV HEALTHCARE AUSTRALIA HIV AND AGEING COMMUNITY GRANT

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Victorian AIDS Council



VAC AND LIVING POSITIVE VICTORIA WILL COLLABORATE IN DELIVERING A PEER-LED, POSITIVE SELF-MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR HIV (PSMP HIV) TO THE AGEING PLHIV POPULATION IN VICTORIA. LPV AND VAC WERE INVITED TO SUBMIT A COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION TO VIIV HEALTHCARE AUSTRALIA FOCUSING ON HIV AND AGEING, A GRANT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SUCCESSFULLY AWARDED FOR A 12 MONTH PERIOD.

This project aims to improve the health and wellbeing, in addition to the quality of life, of PLHIV, particularly those who are ageing, by building capacity of participants to better manage health needs, including physical, mental and social wellbeing, through a peer based delivery models.

The grant is divided into two components as follows:

LPV: Ageing with HIV Support Network. Establish peer support groups in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria for older PLHIV, utilising existing, successful and sustainable models used by Living Positive Victoria. Utilising an empowerment model (Phoenix and Gen Next), the project will build resilience in participants to more actively engage with health care providers. It will improve self-advocacy, develop skills and aptitude to disclose HIV status and experiences of stigma and discrimination,

and build networks of peers experiencing similar situations. Peer group meetings will be participant-led to ensure needs of participants are met. Content will include improving health literacy, navigating the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), home and community care (HACC) packages, as well as diet, exercise, cognitive health and computer literacy. The Project worker hired will be a target population peer as the project requires a worker to network with participants face-to-face, and build trust and confidence. The Project worker will initially facilitate groups, the project aims to train volunteer peer facilitators to better enhance peer-led solutions, as well as sustainability of support networks beyond funding.

VAC: POSITIVE SELF-MANAGEMENT PROGRAM FOR AGEING PLHIV

The approach involves delivering a peer-led, Positive Self-Management Program for HIV (PSMP HIV) to the ageing PLHIV population in Victoria. The PSMP (HIV) is a patient education program model of Stanford Medicine, part of Stanford University, one of the world's leading teaching and research universities. Stanford programs are aligned with principles of self-management, community-based health education, community health workers and an empowerment philosophy. The program gives PLHIV the skills to coordinate all the things needed to manage their health, and to help them keep active in their lives. The PSMP (HIV) is a workshop for people living

with HIV, comprising of sessions of two and a half hours length, once a week, for seven weeks, in community settings. Workshops are facilitated by two trained leaders, one or both of whom are PLHIV. Sessions are participative, where mutual support and success build participant confidence in managing their health and maintaining active and fulfilling lives. One of the core requirements to implement this model within a Community setting is to train a number of facilitators to deliver the program to PLHIV. At least one facilitator of each Program must be a peer. In this case we will include older peers to reflect the cohort of clients who the program will target. Facilitator training consists of 4½ days, with an authorised and licensed training provider, to undertake the all-encompassing Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) in combination with web-based cross-training for the PSMP (HIV).

The Project aims to serve older people living with HIV (50+), living in the state of Victoria, both metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria. While the majority of PLHIV in Victoria identify as men who have sex with men (MSM), this project is not exclusively focused on this group, but also on women and men who identify as heterosexual, and trans and gender diverse PLHIV.

The program would particularly target those with long standing HIV and significant co morbidities and other challenges such as depression, loneliness, isolation, stigma and rejection and other concerns and needs surrounding aging with HIV, as well as taking an early intervention approach.

The Positive Self-Management Program (PSMP) subjects covered include:

- How to best integrate medication regimens into daily life so they can be taken consistently.
- Techniques to deal with problems such as frustration, fear, fatigue, pain and isolation.



- Appropriate exercise for maintaining and improving strength, flexibility, and endurance.⁴
- Communicating effectively with family, friends, and health professionals,
- Nutrition.
- Evaluating symptoms.
- Advanced directives,
- How to evaluate new or alternative treatments.

VAC and Living Positive Victoria will collaborate closely with Straight Arrows and Positive Women Victoria to ensure inclusion of all older PLHIV, particularly those who are high need, and would most benefit from the Project.

Vic Perri and Gerry O'Brien have been appointed as Project Officers for the program and can be contacted via email for further information.

Vic Perri:
VPerri@livingpositivevictoria.org.au
Gerry O'Brien: Gerry.obrien@vac.org.au

A MOMENT FOR SENIORS



The Community Support Program is developing a new project to provide peer support and social connection for isolated older people living with HIV. The project, made possible by a grassroots grant from State Trustees, will include individual visits from a peer support staff member and also some small group social activities.

Anyone aged 55 or over may apply to be part of this project. Priority will be given to clients who are unable to access support services at the Positive Living Centre.

The seniors project continues the expansion of peer support offered by Community Support staff and volunteers. The opportunity to speak to someone else living with HIV can be a valuable source of support and advice for everyone from people recently diagnosed to those coping with the long-term effects of living with HIV.

For more information about the seniors project and other Community Support peer services, please call 9863 0426.

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What are your thoughts on relationships, health and wellbeing whilst living with HIV? Complete the survey to help us improve peer, community and health programs in Australia. www.pozqol.org.au

Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society is testing

different ways of asking about quality of life in order to improve community and health programs for PLHIV in Australia. You can fill in the survey online at: www.pozqol.org.au. It's also available to complete at the Positive Living Centre. By completing the survey you will get a chance to win an iPad.

PREP'D FOR CHANGE

Since June 2015 our Facebook group has grown to over 1,600 members with participation from many people in Victoria, including people living with HIV. In conjunction with another community group called PrEPaccessNOW, we're part of the Victorian PrEP Accord working closely with organisations like VAC, Living Positive Victoria and the VicPrEP/PrEPX Studies. Spreading the word about PrEP and providing support, information and a discussion platform for the community is important to us. We're passionate about reducing the

stigma and discrimination attached to HIV, and believe that PrEP is a powerful tool that will aid in the elimination of HIV transmission. To provide community information and education, we created the www.prepdforchange.com web site site for people choosing if PrEP is right for them, how to get PrEP, information for existing PrEP users and some tips on how to handle some of the conversations about PrEP - something that might be of use to PLHIV, or anyone who is interested. Some useful links to resources are below:

PrEP'D For Change web site: <http://www.prepdforchange.com/>
PrEPaccessNOW web site: <https://www.prepaccessnow.com.au/>
PrEP'D For Change Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/126223771044150/>
PrEPaccessNOW Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/397054560486070/>

10 TIPS FOR WINTER WELLNESS

Winter can be a trying time both mentally and physically. The days are darker, colder and shorter and our bodies become more susceptible to all kinds of winter nasties like cold and flu. While it sounds tempting just to stay inside and hide from it all, being proactive about your health and wellbeing will help ensure that you make it through the cooler months cold and flu-free, and in tip-top shape to enjoy the summer. Here are some tips for supercharging your winter wellness.

WASH HANDS

Sounds simple but it's the number one way to stop the spread of germs. Experts recommend washing hands every few hours and in particular after using the toilet and before meals. Give them a wash after touching someone else's phone or keyboard at work.

GET VACCINATED

The seasonal flu jab provides 12 months of cover against the major strains of flu.

KEEP EXERCISING

It's hard to get motivated when it's cold and dark, but your body has to work overtime to get warm, so you can burn more kilojoules on that early morning walk or run. Find an exercise partner to keep you motivated and if it's too cold outside, go to the gym or do laps at an indoor pool.

EAT WELL

Keep your immune system in shape by making sure you're eating a healthy diet. For your body to be able to respond to infection, it needs to have enough protein, so enjoy lean meat, fish and poultry.

DOSE UP ON VITAMINS AND MINERALS

Iron, zinc and vitamin C are also key to a healthy immune system. But before popping supplements, boost your dietary intake of these substances. Look for dark, leafy greens and red and yellow vegetables, which are all high in antioxidants.

STAY HYDRATED

Drink at least eight glasses of water each day. If cold water is unappealing when the mercury dips, try boiled water with a slice of lemon. The moisture will also help make mucous membranes, including those in your sinuses, more resistant to bacteria.

REST UP

Regular sleep is vital to staying healthy. Don't let yourself get run down. Those who aren't well rested are more likely to get sick.

QUIT SMOKING

Smokers are far more susceptible to upper respiratory infections, which tend to strike in winter. Even if you're a social smoker, now's a good time to quit and clear your airways.

CLEAN UP WINTER MOULD

Mould can trigger nasal congestion, sneezing, coughing, wheezing, respiratory infections and worsen asthma and allergic conditions. So move your spring clean forward to autumn.

SAVE YOUR SKIN

Cold air, wind and heating will dry out your skin, so keep your face and body well moisturised.

Hi there, I'm PETE.

LET'S
TALK
ABOUT
STIGMA

Stigma is a nasty beast. It can come at you in different ways, whether it's around living with HIV or associated with anxiety or depression.

That's where **PETE** comes in. **PETE** offers a safe, online space for men living with HIV so you can get the info you need and connect with other men who are in a similar headspace.

pete.org.au

Pete has been developed as part of beyondblue's STRIDE project with donations from the Movember Foundation.



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NUTRITIONAL SERVICES AT THE PLC

MEALS

Nutritious and delicious meals are served at the centre with your choice of a meat or vegetarian main meal and dessert or soup as an entree. Soft Drinks, fruit juices, coffee and tea are also available. Ram has now been with us for a number of years and feedback about the quality and variety of the food he and his volunteers have prepared has been exceptional. Please come to the PLC and enjoy a great meal and chat to others.

- **Cost is \$3 for clients and \$5 for guests**
- **TUESDAY LUNCH 12.30pm – 2pm**
- **THURSDAY DINNER 6.00pm – 7.30pm**

PANTRY

The pantry service is available fortnightly and allows clients on a Health Care Card to choose from a large variety of grocery items, fruit, vegetables and some refrigerated items.

TUESDAY:

11.30am to 3.30pm

WEDNESDAY:

11.30am to 3.30pm

THURSDAY:

11.30am to 7.30pm

FRIDAY:

11.30am to 3.30pm

Please note that this service will close while lunch and dinner are being served. Please check the Calender insert for dates. We encourage you to do your bit for the Environment and bring Recycle Bags to use at Pantry.

Cost is \$2 for clients with Health Care Card

AFTERNOON TEA

Afternoon Tea is offered during the "off-pantry" week on Wednesdays. 2.30pm-3.30pm.

Come along and enjoy cakes, pastries and coffee. It's Free and it's Delicious!

THE PANTRY SERVICE IS AVAILABLE FORTNIGHTLY AND ALLOWS CLIENTS ON A HEALTH CARE CARD TO CHOOSE FROM A LARGE VARIETY OF GROCERY ITEMS, FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND SOME REFRIGERATED ITEMS.

EAT RIGHT WHEN YOU HAVE HIV

THERE'S NO SPECIFIC EATING PLAN FOR PEOPLE WITH HIV, BUT AN OVERALL HEALTHY DIET CAN HELP YOUR HEALTH A LOT.

The virus weakens your immune system. Because your body uses nutrients to keep up its defenses against germs, eating well can help you fight off infections. It can also boost your energy, keep you strong, help you avoid health complications, and ease issues brought on by HIV and its treatments.

Follow these simple tips to get started.

1. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. They're high in nutrients called antioxidants, which protect your immune system. Aim to have five to nine servings of produce each day. An easy way to meet that goal is to fill half of your plate with fruits and veggies at each meal. Eat a lot of different produce to get the most vitamins and minerals.

2. Go for lean protein. Your body uses it to build muscle and a strong immune system. Choose healthy options like lean beef, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, and nuts. You may need to eat more protein if you're underweight or in a later stage of HIV. Your doctor can help you figure out the right amount for you.

3. Choose whole grains. Like

gas in a car, carbs give your body energy. That makes whole-grain carbs, like brown rice and whole wheat bread, high-end fuel. They're packed with energy-boosting B vitamins and fiber. And when you eat plenty of fiber, that can lower your chances of getting fat deposits called lipodystrophy, a potential side effect of HIV.

4. Limit your sugar and salt.

Whether because of the virus or the treatment drugs you're taking, HIV raises your chances of getting heart disease. Too much sugar and salt can harm your ticker. So aim to get less than 10% of your calories each day from foods and drinks with added sugar. You should also have no more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day.

5. Have healthy fats in moderation.

Fat provides energy, but it's also high in calories. If you're not trying to gain weight, limit how much of it you eat. Heart-healthy choices include nuts, vegetable oils, and avocado.

6. See your doctor about any problems related to diet or weight. HIV medications, or the virus itself, can set the stage for eating- or weight-related issues. Talk with your doctor about them, including these common ones:

- **Loss of appetite.** Unwanted weight loss can weaken your body, so it's important to have

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WHETHER BECAUSE OF THE VIRUS OR THE TREATMENT DRUGS YOU'RE TAKING, HIV RAISES YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING HEART DISEASE. TOO MUCH SUGAR AND SALT CAN HARM YOUR TICKER.

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LIQUIDS HELP CARRY NUTRIENTS AND FLUSH OUT USED MEDICATIONS FROM YOUR BODY. THEY CAN ALSO LIFT YOUR ENERGY LEVELS AND KEEP YOU FROM GETTING DEHYDRATED.

enough calories. You may need to eat more energy-dense foods, like peanut butter or other nut butters. "A good option is a higher-calorie shake or smoothie," says Kristen F. Gradney, director of nutrition and metabolic services at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center.

- **Nausea.** If foods make you queasy, you may need to eat smaller amounts more often instead of having three big meals a day. Crackers are easy on the stomach for most people, Gradney says. Pair them with some protein, like peanut butter. If even the smell of cooking makes you nauseated, you may want to ask someone else to prepare your meals.
- **Mouth issues.** Have a hard time swallowing or pain from mouth sores? Cook your vegetables soft so they're not hard and crunchy. Stay away from spicy or acidic foods, and rinse your mouth with water before and after you eat.

7. Eat the right amount of calories. Your doctor may recommend a nutritional supplement if you have unwanted weight loss.

But people with HIV often carry too much weight. Being overweight or obese can raise your chances of getting long-term diseases, like heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers. What's more, it may make your immune system weaker -- a recent study found a sign of this in obese people with HIV, compared with those who were at a healthy weight.

8. Drink plenty of fluids. Most people don't sip enough. Make sure to have at least eight to 10 cups of water or other healthy drinks during each day. Liquids help carry nutrients and flush out used medications from your body. They can also lift your energy levels and keep you from getting dehydrated. You'll need to drink more if you've got diarrhea or you're nauseated, Gradney says.

9. Follow food safety rules.

Because HIV lowers your body's defenses against germs, "even a mild case of food poisoning can lead to a serious infection or illness," Gradney says.

Practice these good-for-you habits:

- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after you eat. Also wash cutting boards and utensils after every use.
- Avoid raw eggs. Cook all meat, seafood, and poultry until they're well-done.
- Thaw frozen meats and other foods in the fridge or microwave.
- Rinse all fresh fruits and veggies with clean water.
- Check expiration dates, and throw away any food you think is old.
- Reheat leftovers thoroughly before you eat them.
- If you're traveling abroad and you're not sure if the water's OK to drink, stick to bottled water and avoid ice and unpasteurized drinks.

Source: WebMD.com

ACTIVITIES AT THE PLC

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NATURO PATHY & VITAMART

Naturopathy is the practice of complementary medicine drawing on the disciplines of herbal medicine and nutrition.

Our Naturopath is available by appointment each Thursday 5pm - 9pm

The Vitamart service provides subsidised vitamins for HIV+ individuals as prescribed by your health practitioner.

Vitamart: Tuesday to Friday Cost: As per vitamin price list.

ART CLASSES

Wednesday 10am - 12.30pm Cost: Free

Have you ever wanted to learn to draw or paint? Come and join our small and intimate art class. Liz, our resident art teacher, can help you discover your hidden artistic flair. Beginners welcome.

COMPUTER & INTERNET SERVICES

The Cyber Room is one of the most popular services offered at the PLC. It is open every day and is available to all clients. Every computer is connected to the internet and also has word processing and MS Office software installed. PLC clients must comply with the law and PLC policy when using the Cyber Room computers.

MUSCLES & CURVES

Wednesday 1:30pm - 2.15pm Cost: Free

Get yourself trimmed, toned and looking terrific in this weekly exercise class. Classes are facilitated by an experienced Personal Trainer and suitable for beginners and those with more experience.

Friday 11.00am to 12 noon Cost: Free

A fabulous form of exercise that is low impact, relaxing and helps build up your

core muscles, which can effectively and safely reduce back pain and help trim down those waistlines!

TUMS & BUMS

Tuesday 11.30am - 12.30pm Cost: Free

A structured, high-energy exercise class focusing on fitness and strength in a fun group environment.

YOGA

Thursday 4pm - 5pm Cost: Free

Relax, unwind, strengthen and stretch. An all over gentle workout for your body and mind.

MASSAGE

Relaxation massage eases stress from the body and assists the body's immune system functions. We offer several types of massage:

Cost: \$2 for PLC Clients with Health-Care Card / \$5 for PLC Clients without Health Care Card.

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HIV / AIDS LEGAL CENTRE (HALC)

HALC is a Community Legal Centre which has been operating since 1993, from the Positive Living Centre. HALC provides a free service and is part of VAC and is run by professional volunteers.

HALC volunteers are sensitive to the variety of issues that may face people living with and affected by HIV. HALC provides legal advice to people living with and affected by HIV/ AIDS within Victoria. People 'affected' includes partners, family members, close friends and carers, of a person living with HIV.

HALC can assist with a variety of matters:

- Making a Will
- Medical Powers of Attorney
- Enduring Powers of Attorney
- Criminal Law
- Family Law
- Employment Law
- Superannuation
- Centrelink Matters
- Family and Relationship Law
- Discrimination
- Migration
- Disclosure of Status for Insurance Purposes
- Equal Opportunity
- Debt
- Small/Civil Claims
- Unconscionable Conduct
- Contracts of Sale
- Tenancy

A range of information brochures are available.

APPOINTMENTS

Appointments with lawyers are only offered at the PLC every second Thursday from 7.00pm to 9.00 pm. Availabilities are limited. Alternatively, appointments for women are also available in a female friendly space, once a month, between 7pm and 9pm.

HALC will attempt to provide legal assistance within a reasonable period of time. Referrals will be offered under certain circumstances.

CONTACT US

If you would like to make an appointment to see a lawyer please contact HALC directly:

**HALC, 9863 0406
legal@vac.org.au.**

Alternatively, you can obtain a referral form from PLC reception. Please note: HALC **only operates once a week on a Thursday evening.** A representative will contact you on a Thursday evening between 6.30pm and 9.00pm. It is important that you are contactable during these hours after your initial contact.

INFORMATION

**If you require urgent legal advice, please contact:
St Kilda Legal Service 9534 0777
st_kilda_vic@clc.net.au
OR Victoria Legal Aid
1300 792 387
www.legalaid.vic.gov.au**

HIV PEER SUPPORT GROUP

HIV Peer Support Groups at the Positive Living Centre provide a safe and supportive environment where key topics about living with HIV are explored. Whether recently diagnosed, or living with HIV for a number of years, HIV Peer Support Groups can be a great way to meet other gay or bisexual men who share this life experience.

Other positive people just like you facilitate the groups. Our groups run for eight weeks at the Positive Living Centre on a Tuesday evening from 6 to 8pm.

INFORMATION

For further information contact Gerry at the Positive Living Centre on either 9863 0444 or e-mail: peersupport@vac.org.au

'GROW' AT THE PLC

GROW GROUPS. GROW IS A NATIONAL ORGANISATION THAT PROVIDES A PEER SUPPORTED PROGRAM FOR GROWTH AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT TO PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS AND THOSE PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTY IN COPING WITH LIFE'S CHALLENGES.

GROW is designed for people to take back control of their lives, overcome obstacles and start living a life full of meaning, hope and optimism.

GROW groups offer the opportunity for people to share challenges and solutions for recovery in a supportive and structured way.

Participants are also able to attend education and training sessions and participate in a range of social activities.

GROW is free to join and you do not need a referral or diagnosis! If you live with a mental illness, are doing it tough or alone then this could be for you.

The PLC group is 'Organised' by a one of our Peer Support facilitators who also has a long history with the GROW movement and is open to all PLC clients. Each meeting goes for 2 hours and will occur each Friday between 1-3pm, followed by time to chat over refreshments

INFORMATION

If you would like to know more about participating in a GROW Group, please contact Heather Morgan 9863-0444 Friday's 1-3pm

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NSP: NEEDLE AND SYRINGE PROGRAM

If you choose to inject drugs, do so as safely as you can. Unsafe injecting risks the transmission of blood-borne viruses such as HIV, hepatitis C and B, as well as dirty hits, bruising, blood poisoning and abscesses.

The Victorian Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) is a major public health initiative to minimise the spread of blood borne viruses, such as HIV and hepatitis C and B among injecting drug users and to the wider community. It began in 1987 and operates through and in a range of different service providers. These include:

- Primary NSP's whose sole function is NSP
- Community health services
- Hospital accident and emergency units
- Councils
- Drug treatment agencies
- Youth organisations, and

- Pharmacies.
- Secondary NSPs
- distribute needles and syringes
- sharps disposal containers
- sterile swabs
- condoms and water-based lubricant and provide health information.
- They also provide options for the appropriate disposal of used injecting equipment.

Secondary NSPs are unfunded programs operating within existing organisations, where the NSP is supplementary to the primary service objectives of that organisation.

VAC has two available outlets, one at 6 Claremont St. and one at PLC, 51 Commercial Rd. South Yarra.

INFORMATION

**Ref: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/aod/about/needle.htm>
<http://www.vac.org.au/sex-drugs-and-hivstis>**

DAVID WILLIAMS FUND

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VACOUNTRY

The DWF is now doing outreach at VACountry at The Community Hub, 34 Myers Street, Bendigo, on the fourth Monday of each month. Please contact Lynda to book an appointment on 98630444 or Harry from VACountry on 0437004680

ABOUT THE DWF

The DWF was established in 1986 to provide emergency financial assistance to people living with HIV (PLHIV) who are experiencing financial hardship. The fund relies upon donations.

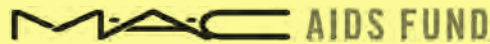
Services include:

- Financial advice and referral
- Study Assist
- Emergency Financial assistance
- Food Vouchers
- No interest loan scheme

Poverty affects a substantial number of PLHIV, and demand for assistance regularly outstrips the funding available. The Fund is totally reliant upon donations and the generous sponsorship of M·A·C Cosmetics - to ensure adequate levels of funding are available.

M·A·C Cosmetics

www.maccosmetics.com.au



DWF has limited funds and we need to ensure that all monies spent go to those in financial hardship. Please note we do not count Superannuation as money in the bank. The fund also understands that sometimes people are asset rich but income poor, so even if you own your own house, this does not affect applications. The fund is more concerned about those that have the funds in their bank but are asking the DWF to

assist them.

Being a member of the PLC does not necessarily mean you are registered with the DWF. To be registered with the DWF you must be on Newstart/ Austudy/ or a disability pension (Health care card) of some sort and verify that you are HIV+ by a doctor and be in financial hardship (we need the original doctors letter, not a photocopy). Registration forms must also be completed. Feel free to ring reception and book an appointment with the DWF coordinator if you would like assistance to register with the fund, or see your Social worker / community worker.

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING

The David Williams Fund offers financial advice and referral for people in financial hardship. Appointments are with Lynda Horn.

- Are you in debt?
- Need to know how to manage your money better?
- Being harassed by debt collectors?
- Want to know what your rights are?
- Want to know more about credit?
- Financial Goals
- Budgeting Debt
- Credit & Bankruptcy
- Need to know how to budget?
- Having difficulty with utility companies?

Book a financial counselling appointment with Lynda by calling reception on 9863 0444.

STUDY ASSIST

With improved medications, longer life spans and improved social accessibility many people living with HIV are considering various career options, including returning to study. The committee of DWF is proud to offer the **DWF Study Assist**, a way to support you to

gain higher education qualifications. Going back to study after years of unemployment can be difficult, especially the costs associated with returning to study. The **DWF Study Assist** allocation has been established to contribute towards the cost of further education, i.e. books, enrolment fees, short courses etc. Further, there are many equity scholarships associated with Universities / TAFE's / Colleges, which this project can direct you to. For more information, please make an appointment with the David Williams Fund Coordinator or check university / TAFE websites for more information.

The David Williams Fund is committed to working in a more holistic way to enhance health outcomes through skills development and information acquisition through further education. Ask reception if you would like a copy of a complete information document. Interview with the DWF coordinator are essential to be eligible for this service.

NO INTEREST LOANS SCHEME (NILS)

The David Williams Fund (DWF) is pleased to announce that we are partnering with Good Sheppard Microfinance to provide a No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) to HIV+ Victorians on low incomes.

Appointments will be available for loan interviews at the Positive Living Centre on Wednesdays (book through reception and get the information pack sent out so you know what to bring in).

NILS works through a process called 'circular community credit'. This means when a borrower makes a repayment to NILS, the funds are then available to someone else in the community. Funds are available to DWF clients because others have repaid their loans before. This is why a willingness and ability to repay the loan is so important.

We will be providing small loans (\$300-

\$1200) to eligible clients on low incomes (Centrelink or under \$45,000 per year). Applicants will need to show they are capable of, and willing to, repay the loans at around \$20-\$40 per fortnight without causing financial hardship.

EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (ER)

What we can assist with

Assistance may be provided for any item that will legitimately improve and enhance the health and well-being of PLHIV.

Items for consideration may include:

- Medical, Pharmaceutical, Dental and Optical expenses.
- Removal/storage expenses.
- Food vouchers.
- White goods, eg, refrigerator, washing machine.
- Funeral assistance

The fund does not assist with

- Legal, fines, loans/credit cards, pawned items & accounts already paid.

All applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis. No application is guaranteed. You can discuss your application with the DWF Administration worker to determine the likelihood of your application being approved. DWF application forms are available online **www.vac.org.au/dwf or to get one sent out, call reception on 9863 0444**

Eligibility

- Provide proof of HIV Status;
- Demonstrated receipt of a Social Security Benefit or Pension
- Demonstrated financial hardship
- Resident of Victoria.
- Provide a Centrelink income statement

VAC SERVICES

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VAC COUNSELLING SERVICES

Our counselling service provides professional, affordable counselling for individuals and couples who are affected by or at risk of HIV, and for members of the LGBTI community. We also offer a therapeutic groups program.

Counselling involves talking with an impartial listener in a confidential, non-judgmental, supportive and respectful environment. The counsellor will encourage you to work through issues with increased awareness and understanding. It can help you develop greater self-acceptance, personal insight, and make positive life changes and decisions. Counselling helps in a range of areas including:

New or recent HIV diagnosis or other health issues

- Living with HIV
- Living with HEP C
- HIV and relationships
- HIV positive friends, family members or partners
- Same-sex domestic violence issues
- Anxiety and depression
- Relationship issues
- Coming out
- Self-esteem
- Grief and loss
- Emotional, physical or sexual abuse
- Safe sex.

Be proactive. Getting counselling before you get into a crisis can sometimes prevent it from happening or reduce its effects.

Our counsellors are professionally trained in psychology, social work, counselling, couples therapy or psychotherapy. They are sensitive to the needs of people living with HIV and members of the GLBT community. All counsellors are bound by a code of practice privacy, confidentiality and duty of care policies. The counselling service is in South Yarra and easily accessible by train and tram.

The first session is free. From then on, fees are based on a scale depending on your income. A gold coin donation is the fee for Healthcare Card holders and those on a Disability Support Pension. Appointments

INFORMATION

**Monday to Thursday 9am – 8pm
Friday 9am – 4pm**

If you are unsure about seeing a counsellor, call our counselling service Client Liaison/Duty worker between 10AM-4PM Monday-Friday.

**Phone: (03) 9865 6700 or
1800 134 840
(free call for country callers).
If we are unable to answer your call, we will get back to you within the next working day. In case you are unable to speak to us and you are in crisis please call Lifeline on 13 11 14.**

COUNSELLING INVOLVES TALKING WITH AN IMPARTIAL LISTENER IN A CONFIDENTIAL, NON-JUDGMENTAL, SUPPORTIVE AND RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT.

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everything it has achieved. We're stepping into some big shoes and VAC is already working closely with the CAN Board and former staff on making the transition as smooth as possible, particularly around the delivery of key services. We're also hoping to keep the current CAN office as an LGBTI community hub. Current CAN members are also being offered [free VAC memberships](#).

VACountry will offer free confidential information, advice and support to the general community, both individuals and organisations, by telephone, email or in person. Our project staff and volunteers can assist in a number of ways such as providing referral information to a range of other general and specialist service providers including support groups, social groups, sexual health and other wellbeing services.

VACOUNTRY WILL OFFER FREE CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT TO THE GENERAL COMMUNITY

We will be working closely with DAC, BCHS, Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-Operative, Bendigo Health, Headspace, Cobaw Community Health, La Trobe University Queer Department, Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health and other providers locally to ensure we meet the needs of our community. Over the next few months we hope

to create a presence in the local area and develop relationships at a grassroots level. We will be planning a number of peer education events, forums and workshops that will look at programs for young gay men, healthy relationships, HIV-prevention technologies such as PrEP, drug use in the community as well as new treatment options for Hepatitis C. The key messages through all of our work will be harm reduction and HIV prevention.

VAC will ensure that our social marketing campaigns will be integrated and adapted to target communities living in regional and rural areas. VAC will also be delivering inclusive practice training across the region to support organisations to develop services that are inclusive of LGBTI people. This training will help practitioners and providers to understand the needs of LGBTI community consumers, and support organisations to improve existing services to meet those needs.

We will be running forums that aim to educate the community around blood-borne virus prevention, treatment and support. Volunteers are an integral part of how we deliver our programs and we will be holding information sessions and training

INFORMATION

VACOUNTRY have a project lead based in Bendigo.
Contact: harry.mcanulty@vac.org.au or 0437 004 680



THE VICTORIAN AIDS COUNCIL (VAC) IS PROUD TO INTRODUCE VACOUNTRY, OUR BENDIGO-BASED PROGRAM SERVING THE LODDON MALLEE REGION. VACOUNTRY WILL PROVIDE COMMUNITY-LED HEALTH PROMOTION INITIATIVES THAT SUPPORT OUR VISION OF A FUTURE WITHOUT HIV, AND A WORLD WHERE ALL SEXUALLY AND GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE LIVE WITH DIGNITY AND EQUAL RIGHTS, PARTICIPATING FULLY IN OUR SOCIETY.

We will be engaging with LGBTI and other communities to address stigma and discrimination, with a focus on prevention of blood borne viruses and sexually transmissible

infections. VACountry will also provide a range of support for people living with and affected by HIV and viral Hepatitis. Over the next few months we hope to have a vibrant program running from the Community Hub space at 34 Myers Street, Bendigo. The program will focus on the development of health promotion activities, peer education and social support groups for LGBTI people and community support programs for people living with HIV.

VAC is working with both Bendigo Community Health Services (BCHS) and the Country Awareness Network (CAN) to establish services in the area. CAN has done amazing work in this area for over 20 years, and first and foremost we want to celebrate and congratulate the organisation for



RE-WIRED 2.0

Peer Support Group

Wrestling with meth? Is it affecting your relationships and your life?

If you are a man who has sex with other men and want regular ongoing support to control, reduce or stop your meth use, then maybe the Re-Wired 2.0 peer support group is for you?

VAC runs a fortnightly peer led support group for men looking to change their meth use.

This small group will be held at

VAC, South Yarra

Touch base with VAC on 03 9865 6700 for program details.



Re-Wired 2.0

For more information or to register interest, please contact VAC on 03 9865 6700



ReVisioning

**DO
YOU
HURT
THE
PEOPLE
YOU
CARE
ABOUT?
BEHAVIOUR
CHANGE
PROGRAM
FOR GAY AND
BISEXUAL MEN**

Intake for the next ReVisioning Program is currently Open - please call VAC on 9865 6700, ask to speak with the duty worker OR email reversioning@vac.org.au to make enquiries about yours or someone you know suitability for ReVisioning.

VAC ALCOHOL AND DRUG SERVICES

INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING

Experienced counsellors can meet with you to discuss your concerns and goals around your alcohol or drug use.

You may wish to learn more about the effects of drug use on your health or mental health, find strategies to better control or reduce your drug use or access support to stop using completely and improve your well-being.

Whatever your goals, whether it is to control, reduce or stop your drug use, our counsellors will be able to help you with:

- Information about the effects of alcohol and drug use on your health and mental health
- Helping you to reduce the harms associated with alcohol and drug use
- Developing a plan and practical strategies to control or reduce your use
- Assisting you to plan to cease your drug use and provide you with strategies to prevent relapse
- Information and support for families affected by alcohol and other drug use
- Information and referral to VAC's therapeutic groups or other treatment services including residential or non-residential withdrawal and/or rehabilitation

RECOVERY SUPPORT

Sometimes, when a person is struggling with drug and alcohol issues, they may need support in other areas of their life like housing, accessing health or mental health services or connecting with community supports like social groups and activities.

Our Care & Recovery Coordinator can work with you to look at the different areas of your life and help you to create a plan and work out goals to help you move forward, not only

in relation to changing your drug and alcohol use but in other areas of your life.

Working with our Care & Recovery Coordinator you will be supported to:

- Develop a holistic support plan and develop achievable goals in different areas of your life
- Access residential and non-residential alcohol and other drug withdrawal services
- Link in with health and mental health services
- Access Centrelink services
- Access employment services
- Connect with education providers
- Connect with community supports, including social and living skills groups, to help you in your recovery

Our Care & Recovery Coordinator will be able to help you access services by organising referrals and where needed, take you to appointments and introduce you to other service providers. They will also support you on your journey to help you stay on track and access services as your needs and goals change.

INFORMATION

For more information on our Alcohol and other Drugs Service, you can call VAC on 9865 6700.

If you would like to access our Counselling or Care & Recovery Coordination services, please call 1800 906 669 for a free and confidential assessment.

FEEL LIKE YOU'RE GOING UNDER?

Are you dealing with issues related to alcohol and other drugs?

Call VAC on 1800 906 669

COUNSELLING SUPPORT GROUPS RECOVERY SUPPORT DRUG INFO



GET RE-WIRED

Therapeutic Group

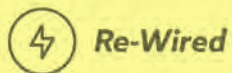
Is meth getting your life off track? Get professional support.

If you are a man who has sex with other men and want support to control, reduce or stop your meth use, then maybe the Re-Wired therapeutic group is for you?

VAC runs a FREE 6 week structured therapeutic group program for men looking to change their meth use.

This small group is held at **VAC, South Yarra**

Touch base with VAC on 03 9865 6700 for program details.



For more information or to register interest, please contact VAC on 03 9865 6700



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VAC HEALTH PROMOTION SERVICES

PEER EDUCATION PROGRAM

YOUNG & GAY

Young & Gay is a free, 6 week workshop for guys who are attracted to other guys. This workshop is for guys aged 26 years and under. This is a great opportunity to meet new people while talking about sexuality, sex and sexual health. Topics for discussion include self esteem, stereotypes, coming out, relationships, HIV, STIs and safe sex.



To find out more, visit www.www.vac.org.au/young-and-gay or call 9865 6700.



MOMENTUM

Momentum is a free, 6 weeks workshop for men aged 27 years and above. This workshop offers a welcoming, confidential and informative environment to meet new people and discuss topics on sexuality, sex and sexual health. This includes homophobia, coming out later in life, relationships, HIV, STIs and safe sex.



To find out more, visit www.www.vac.org.au/momentum or call 9865 6700.



RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships is a free, 6 weeks workshop for men of all ages to talk about topics on establishing and maintaining a relationship. This is a great opportunity to share your experiences while receive helpful hints on communication, conflict resolution and talking about sex with your partner/s.

To find out more, visit www.www.vac.org.au/relationships or call 9865 6700.

GAY ASIAN PROUD/TALK ASIAN

Gay Asian Proud is a social support network for gay Asian men, their partners and friends. We meet once a month in a social setting. Our activities include yum cha, dinner, movies and picnics.

To find out more, visit www.vac.org.au/gay-asian-proud or call 9865 6700.

Talk Asian is a monthly workshop for gay Asian men only to get together and talk about topics relating to sexuality and race/ethnicity. To find out more, visit www.www.vac.org.au/talk-asian or call 9865 6700.

JOY FM

94.9FM



FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T KNOW, WELL WELL WELL IS A SPOT DEDICATED TO HIV AND MENS HEALTH EVERY TUESDAY ON JOY

Program at VAC have a weekly spot on Joy FM radio. Well, Well, Well is on JOY every Tuesday from 12PM when you can tune in and hear all the latest about HIV and men's health in general, along with snippets of news and events happening around town. And all of this is interspersed with music chosen by the presenters themselves.

INFORMATION

So tune into Joy on 94.9 for 'Well, Well, Well' on Tuesdays at noon.

EVERYDAY HEALTHCARE FOR EVERYBODY!

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, INTERSEX AND QUEER PEOPLE ARE ALL WELCOMED AT THE CENTRE CLINIC! WE OFFER EVERYDAY HEALTHCARE FROM THE COMMON COLD TO SPECIALIST SEXUAL HEALTH AND HIV TREATMENT - AND WE BULK BILL. CALL 03 9525 5866 FOR AN APPOINTMENT

 VAC|CENTRE CLINIC

THE CENTRE CLINIC



The Centre Clinic is a medical clinic administered and supported by VAC. It is a General Practice with a special interest in HIV and Sexual Health.

The clinic is committed to achieving the best possible standards of preventative, ongoing care and treatment.

Our aim is to give our patients the highest possible quality of care, by ensuring excellence in all aspects of our practice. We endeavour to provide patients with the best and most current treatments, methods, materials and equipment within our resource capabilities to ensure that patients receive the high quality of service they have come to expect.

CLINIC SERVICES

Services available include:

- The Centre Clinic is a fully bulk billing clinic. This means that we bill Medicare directly for services provided to patients. There is no cost to patients for this service. There are charges however, for some vaccinations and treatments. Your doctor will make you aware of any charges before

treatment is offered.

- Health and medical care for people living with HIV/AIDS
- HIV monitoring
- Antiretroviral treatment and advice
- PEP – Post HIV Exposure Prophylaxis
- Sexual, general, emotional and psychological health
- STI testing and treatment
- HIV testing & counselling with results in one week
- Hepatitis screening and vaccination
- Specialist HIV dietician service
- Accredited acupuncturist service
- Condoms and lubricant for sale

INFORMATION

Please ring 9525 5866 for an appointment. Appointments are preferred. For more information about the clinic:

The Centre Clinic is located at the rear of 77 Fitzroy Street, St.Kilda, on the corner of Fitzroy and Loch Streets. Melway Ref. p58 A9. www.vac.org.au/medical-services

VAC SERVICES

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Victorian AIDS Council



OUR AIM IS TO GIVE OUR PATIENTS THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE QUALITY OF CARE, BY ENSURING EXCELLENCE IN ALL ASPECTS OF OUR PRACTICE.

We're recruiting

An investigation into the barriers to accessing HIV community and support organisations for African-born women living with HIV in Victoria, Australia.

PWV wants a better understanding of difficulties to accessing support services for African-born women living with HIV. It is hoped that this understanding will be of benefit specifically to African communities.

If you are a woman living with HIV who was born in an African country, you may be interested in taking part. If you would like to know more, please contact Heather in Peer Support.

Heather: Peer.Support@positivewomen.org.au

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TELEPHONE COUNSELLING, INFORMATION AND REFERRALS



Switchboard is a volunteer organisation which provides a free, confidential and anonymous telephone counselling, referral and information service for the Victorian and Tasmanian lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) communities and their supporters.

The telephones are answered by trained volunteers who themselves identify as LGBTIQ and we receive calls from a wide range of people; some may be experiencing problems at work, in their relationships, with family or who are coming out; not to mention callers who simply want a referral to other community organisations and groups.

We also do speak to the family and friends of people who might identify as LGBTIQ; and receive calls from health and welfare professionals.

Please explore our website and feel free to call our counsellors to seek any information you need or to discuss any issues.



www.switchboard.org.au

GROUPS FOR POSITIVE PEOPLE



CIRCUIT @ THE ALFRED

A fun, structured or individualised exercise group focusing on cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength & flexibility. Accommodates ALL fitness levels.

When: Monday 3:30pm, Tuesday 11:00am, Wednesday 3:30pm, Thursday 2:30pm & Friday 12:30pm

Where: Physiotherapy Gym Level 4 Philip Block The Alfred
Cost: Free

HYDROTHERAPY @ MSAC

A fun, water-based exercise group run in a relaxing (& warm!) hydro pool.

When: Thursday 12:30pm
Where: Melbourne Sports & Aquatic Centre: Aughtie Drive, Albert Park (Wellness Zone, level 3)
Cost: \$4.95 casual. Less with 'club card'

PHYSIOTHERAPY DEPARTMENT
P: 03 9076 3450
F: 03 9076 543

LIVING POSITIVE VICTORIA

LIVING POSITIVE VICTORIA (LPV) IS COMMITTED TO THE GREATER AND MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT OF PEOPLE WITH HIV IN ALL OUR PROGRAMS, EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES. IF SUPPORT IS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE (I.E. CHILD CARE, TRANSPORT COSTS, ETC.) PLEASE CONTACT US TO DISCUSS WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE.

PHOENIX WORKSHOP FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE NEWLY DIAGNOSED WITH HIV

Gay/Bisexual including Trans Men
We also have Phoenix workshops for Women and Heterosexual/Bisexual including Trans Men.

This successful weekend workshop for people newly diagnosed with HIV is where you can get valuable information on HIV as well as hear others in a similar situation share their experiences with you.

We look at how HIV affects your immune system and what your CD4 and viral load counts actually mean. We also look at the latest in treatment options. You'll have an opportunity to share with others your feelings and issues around your new HIV

identity and what it means to you as well as explore strategies to deal with them. We discuss the issues around disclosure, sex and relationships. And much much more!

For more information contact Vic Perri 03 9863 8733 or vperri@livingpositivevictoria.org.au

NAPWHA'S GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN IS HERE!

This is the first of 8 intimate videos of our positive peers revealing what contributes to their own good quality of life. They talk about enjoying great moments, healthy pursuits and the importance of being on the right HIV treatment. The style is gentle and honest and is designed to encourage people to take action in their own lives. The campaign website www.goodqualityoflife.com.au showcases more videos including our peers discussing various aspects of living well with HIV and other content on how to be happy, healthy and connected.

TREATING YOUR HEP C COINFECTION IS NOW EASY (CO-EC)

Are you living with HIV and Hep C? Now is your chance to access the new and improved



hep C treatments through an important study in Victoria.

The Burnet Institute and partner clinics are conducting a study around hepatitis C treatment for people living with HIV. You can help us assess the benefits of increasing the number of people being treated, how the new treatments can benefit your health, and be part of the solution to eliminate Hep C coinfection.

How it works:

- You can be treated at the clinic of your choice (6 different options) with any of the now available treatments chosen by you and your doctor.
- You get a study nurse who will help answer all your questions and make your treatment as simple as possible.

- For your convenience, you can choose to attend a GP clinic rather than a hospital.
- Most treatments will take 12–24 weeks.

Want to take part in the study or need more information? Visit coecstudy.com.au or email co-ec@burnet.edu.au or contact the clinical research team on (03) 3 9076 6908.

In the meantime, we would like you to do a short survey. The survey is designed to uncover potential barriers to optimal hepatitis C care and outline the emotional impact of the disease. It should take around 10-15 minutes to complete and can be printed out or accessed here - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5R9XM86>



LIVE FOR THE MOMENTS

Good quality of life starts with the right HIV treatment

Discover how at goodqualityoflife.com.au

napwha NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

CATHOLIC AIDS MINISTRY

Activities at St. Mary of the Cross Centre
23 Brunswick St. Fitzroy

Monday Lunch served at 12.30
Cuppa from 11am,
Taize prayer 12.15

2017 Annual Retreat, 23 to 25 June
To be held at Amberley, Edmund Rice
Centre, Lower Plenty.
RSVP & Payment by June 5
\$60 waged \$30 unwaged.

Catholic HIV/AIDS Ministry
CatholicCare
Mary of the Cross Centre
23 Brunswick Street Fitzroy 3065
Ph. (03) 8417 1280
Fax (03) 8417 1299
E am23@ccam.org.au

MULTICULTURAL HEALTH AND SUPPORT SERVICE

The Multicultural Health and Support Service (MHSS) is a free and confidential service for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds with issues relating to sexual health and viral hepatitis.

We can help by:

- answering any questions you may have on HIV, hepatitis and STI
- going with you to get tested for infections
- helping you to access health services
- assisting you and your family to remain safe and healthy

Our bi-cultural community workers can talk to you over the phone or meet you in person. You can speak to a male or female worker, whichever you choose.

INFORMATION

Contact us:

P: +61 3 9418 9929

F: +61 3 9421 4662

E: enquiries@ceh.org.au

Visit our website for more information

www.ceh.org.au/mhss.aspx

WORKING OUT

WorkingOUT is specialist job service for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or intersex identified people with a disability. It is a unique job service in Australia catering to the LGBTI community.

In this free Government-funded program, LGBTI jobseekers with a disability will be able to access the support they need to find and keep sustainable and worthwhile employment. An experienced Employment Consultant with a background in LGBTI community work can tailor a range of services each job seeker will need to meet their work goal. This can include assistance with:

- Career counselling
- Training options to fill skills gaps
- Job search techniques and preparation
- Preparing a professional resume
- Job interview practice and support
- Referrals to other agencies
- Coming out in the workplace (or choosing not to)
- Ongoing support to make the new job a success
- Disability and/or Sexuality Awareness Training for colleagues in the workplace

WorkingOUT can be accessed from an office in the Melbourne CBD or the Positive Living Centre. WorkingOUT can assist job

seekers to join the program, or can organise a transfer from another DES provider if a job seekers is not satisfied with their services and would benefit from a more understanding approach. WorkingOUT is also available for LGBTI workers with a disability who feel that their job is in jeopardy and would like some support overcoming barriers or issues.

INFORMATION

Check out

www.senswide.com.au for more information or to apply for service. Alternatively, call 03 9015 5155 to speak with someone directly, or TTY 9614 3070.

WorkingOUT is a Disability Employment Service. Potential clients must meet Centrelink eligibly criteria. Working out is a new initiative from SensWide Employment, a division of the Victorian Deaf Society.

POSITIVE WOMEN VICTORIA

Positive Women Victoria (PWV) is the only community based organisation specifically funded to support women living with HIV in Australia.

PWV provides support, information and advocacy for women in Victoria living with HIV. For over twenty five years PWV has responded to the changing needs of women living with HIV, recognising the impact gender has on the way women experience HIV and addressing the specific needs and emerging issues that affect women and HIV in Victoria.

PWV was set up by and for women living with HIV. Positive Women Victoria is funded by the Victorian Department of Health to provide health promotion to women living with HIV.

INFORMATION

Positive Women Victoria
Coventry House
Suite 1, 111 Coventry Street
Southbank VIC 3006
Tel: 9863 8747

www.positivewomen.org.au

STRAIGHT ARROWS

Men, Women, Children, Partners, Families – You are not alone.

Straight Arrows is a not for profit organisation governed by and for heterosexual people living with HIV and is Victoria's lead agency for heterosexuality and HIV. We offer peer support, information, advocacy, health promotion and referrals for HIV positive heterosexual men, women, their partners and families. In recognition of our members' diverse needs, we provide a safe and comfortable environment that is completely confidential. SA can assist, facilitate, and/or advocate on your behalf. We provide regular lunches, dinners and outings.

INFORMATION

Visit our website
www.straightarrows.org.au

Suite 1, 111 Coventry Street
Southbank 3006 VIC
You can contact the
Straight Arrows office
on 9863 9414 for further
information.

PHOENIX

for women

A WORKSHOP FOR WOMEN LIVING WITH HIV



PHOENIX IS FOR WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN RECENTLY DIAGNOSED OR LIVING WITH HIV FOR SOME TIME AND ARE READY TO CONNECT IN A SAFE AND CONFIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT

Meet other women living with HIV and receive the latest information from the healthcare profession on treatment, relationships, disclosure and wellbeing

"What a confidence booster - I didn't think I needed this but I was so wrong"

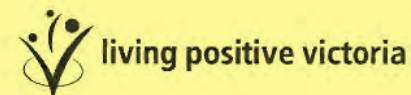
"Meeting and talking with others in the same situation makes all the difference"

Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea will be provided
Childcare is available

Financial assistance for long distance travel can be arranged

BE INFORMED. BE EMPOWERED. THRIVE.

To find out more email peersupport@positivewomen.org.au
or call 03 9863 8747



WISE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Founded in Australia in 1992, WISE Employment is a not-for-profit community service organisation, with branches across Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

ABOUT US

WISE Employment Service is an area wide, free service where individuals can access suitable and sustainable employment opportunities. Our program aims to assist people who may be living with a disability or one or more medical conditions to re-enter the workforce and obtain employment that matches their skills and capabilities, as well as being mindful of personal circumstances and support needs. Our approach is strength based and focuses on individuals capabilities. No two people are the same and with that in mind, our tailored service creates employment opportunities through working closely with employers to promote the skills and attributes of our clients.

Our consultants do 'Reverse Marketing', which means we attempt to obtain access to current vacancies before employers advertise. This allows individual advocacy to take place and ensures the job requirements match a person's skills set and needs. As part of this function, WISE also offers wage incentives to potential employers to assist participants in getting a foot in the door and helping them establish their career and a future employment pathway.

ABOUT YOU:

At WISE, we assist you with either full or part time employment, however to be eligible for our service you must be willing to work a minimum of 8 hours per week. You also need to attend Centrelink for a Job Capacity Assessment (JCA). For those that have heard of the JCA it can be common to see it as a daunting process. We will work with participants to answer all your questions and concerns regarding this process, can attend JCA appointments with you to advocate and ensure a fair, accurate assessment is completed, and that all the medical and personal circumstances are taken into account.

For further information or enquiry: Please contact the WISE Disability Employment Case Manager in Prahran on 9529 3688. As WISE Employment Service is an area wide service, they will be able to refer you to an office in your local area.

**Alternatively, feel free to visit the office:
Level 2/159 High Street
Prahran 3181
P: 9529 3688
WISE Employment Service offers a monthly outreach service at the PLC.**

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MELBOURNE SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE



THE MELBOURNE SEXUAL HEALTH CENTRE IS VICTORIA'S LEADING CLINIC FOR THE TESTING AND TREATMENT OF SEXUALLY TRANSMISSIBLE INFECTIONS.

Sexual Health Centre (MSHC) are experienced specialists in all aspects of sexual health, so clients visiting MSHC can be assured of high quality professional and non-judgmental care. Melbourne Sexual Health Centre also provides support to community based health professionals via online resources and on-site education and training opportunities.

**580 Swanston Street,
Carlton Victoria 3053**

**Tel: 9341 6200 Free call:
1800 032 017 (Toll free
from outside Melbourne
metropolitan
area only)**

**TTY: 9347 8619 (Telephone
for the hearing impaired)
Fax: 9341 6279**

www.mshc.org.au

THE GREEN ROOM

The Green Room provides specialist HIV care for people living with HIV. The team specializes in HIV and comprises doctors, nurses, counselors, pharmacists, a dietician, research nurses and psychiatry. Referrals can be made for social work, support work and other community based workers.

Appointments are necessary and doctors are available from Monday to Thursday. It is ideal that you also have a GP for assistance with general health care and non HIV related conditions. Referral to The Green Room is not necessary. To discuss your HIV health care site options call 93416214.

**The Green Room is located
at the Melbourne Sexual
Health Centre at 580
Swanston Street Carlton**

Ph: 9341 6214

HIV CALD SERVICE

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Victorian AIDS Council



THE HIV CALD SERVICE PROVIDES SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUALS LIVING WITH HIV FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS. INDIVIDUALS SUPPORTED BY THE SERVICE COME FROM DIVERSE CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS AS REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS, INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS, PARTNERS AND WORKERS. THEIR JOURNEYS ARE COMPLEX AND CHALLENGING.

and discrimination. The co workers meet with the individual in the community, and this often occurs in a café where they can speak to the individual in a relax and somewhat non- threatening environment.

For referrals or consultations, please contact M. Plain, Co ordinator, HIV CALD service on 9076 3942/0404 028 552.

PHOTO: Bernadette, Nastaran, Ismail, Priya, Maureen (coordinator) – Seated Tehiya, Tina and Annie (absent Ngun)



USEFUL NUMBERS

- Alfred Hospital 9076 2000
- **Alfred Hospital I.D. CLINIC** **9076 6081**
- Alfred Social Work Department 9076 3026
- **Beyondblue** **1300 22 4636**
- CALD Service Alfred Hospital 90763942
- **Catholic AIDS Ministry - Contact Marg Hayes** **8417 1280**
- Centre Clinic 9525 5866
- **Centrelink (Employment services)** **13 28 50**
- Centrelink (Disability, Sickness and Carers) 13 27 17
- **Counselling VAC** **98676700**
- David Williams Fund - Contact Lynda 9863 0444
- **Dental Service "Dental Plus"** **9520 3177**
- Gay & Lesbian Switchboard 9663 2939
- **Green Room** **93416214**
- Harm Reduction Victoria 9329 1500
- **Hepatitis Infoline** **1800 703 003**
- Hepatitis Victoria 9380 4644
- **HIV/HEP/STI Ed & Resource Centre (Alfred)** **9076 6993**
- HIV / AIDS Legal Service (HALC) 9863 0406
- **HIV Peer Support at the PLC - Contact Gerry** **9863 0444**
- Launch Housing 1800825955
- **Housing Plus (previously AHAG)** **9066 1401**
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- **Melbourne Sexual Health Centre** **9341 6200**
- Monash Medical Centre 9594 6666
- **Multicultural Health & Support Service** **9342 9700**
- Northside Clinic 9485 7700
- **Partner Notification** **90963367**
- PEP Hotline 1800 889 887
- **Living Positive Victoria** **9863 8733**
- Police Gay & Lesbian Liaison Officer 9247 6944
- **Positive Living Centre** **9863 0444**
- Positive Women Victoria 9863 8747
- **Prahran Market Clinic** **9514 0888**
- Royal District Nursing Service HIV Team 1300 334 455
- **Royal Melbourne Hospital / VIDS** **9324 7212**
- SensWide Employment 86207155
- **Straight Arrows** **9863 9414**
- Turning Point Drug and Alcohol Service 8413 8413
- **Victorian AIDS Council** **9865 6700**
- Wise Employment 95293688

USEFUL WEBSITES

LOCAL SITES

- www.afao.org.au
- www.aidsinfoline.org
- www.beyondblue.org.au
- www.communitylaw.org.au/stkilda
- www.downanddirty.org
- www.getpep.info
- www.hrvic.org.au
- www.livingpositivevictoria.org.au
- www.napwa.org.au
- www.northsideclinic.net.au
- www.pozpersonals.com
- www.prahranmarketclinic.com
- www.pronto.org.au
- www.protection.org.au
- www.stayingnegative.net.au
- www.thedramadownunder.info
- www.top2bottom.org.au
- www.touchbase.org.au
- www.vac.org.au
- www.wheneversexhappens.co

OVERSEAS SITES

- www.aidsmap.com
- www.i-base.info
- www.managinghiv.com
- www.medscape.com
- www.pozpersonals.com
- www.thebody.com



PROVIDING INTEGRATED AND COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES FOR ALL PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV

A PROGRAM OF THE VICTORIAN AIDS COUNCIL