

## **Consumer Engagement through Peer Work**

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**Introduction:** Our program offers:

- Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Assessment and Counselling
- Mental health screening and assessment Counselling
- Peer Support/Mentoring
- Whole of Health Nursing Assessment with a Registered Nurse

**Method:** THRIVE is a whole of health counselling program for people experiencing substance use concerns including mental and physical health concerns.

Project HOPE at EACH has Peer Support which provides support from those who have had or have a lived experience of substance use or mental health concerns and aims to give people in our community a choice of ways to have their voice heard, to improve what we do and share with the community that recovery is possible.

**Key Findings:** Our team works toward reducing stigma in the community for people and families living with substance use and mental health concerns to give people the best opportunity for health, hope and a meaningful life. We provide opportunities for people to share their lived experience of substance use and mental health concerns at forums, conferences and training workshops.

**Discussions and Conclusions:** We recognise the Peer Support Leaders provide and engage with alcohol and other drug consumers in a way that is different from typical treatment, as it is peer led and offers connection, shared experiences and develops positive relationships that demonstrate the possibility of change. Peer Leaders are at varying stages of recovery and support consumers by meeting twice a week as a group.

**We would like our poster presentation to showcase how consumer engagement through Peer Support can encourage and celebrate the talents and skills of the group members, and peer support leaders.**