

Food for Thought II: A consultation on safety and amenity with people who use drugs in North Richmond, Australia

Authors:

SHELLEY COGGER¹, CONOR SIBLY², LOUISE BASSETT³, ANITA DEBLASIO³, EMANUEL BRAZ¹, NICO CLARK^{1,4,5}

¹ North Richmond Community Health Medically Supervised Injecting Room, Melbourne, Australia, ² Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House, Melbourne, Australia, ³ Neighbourhood Justice Centre, Melbourne, Australia, ⁴ Addiction Medicine, Royal Melbourne Hospital, Melbourne, Australia, ⁵ Department of Pharmacology, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia

Presenter's email: shelleyc@nrch.com.au

Introduction: In 2017, North Richmond Community Health (NRCH) held a community forum with its Alcohol and Other Drug Program clients to gain feedback on the health and social services they wished to receive. The event (Food for Thought) included a barbeque and consultation based on the World Café method. In 2021, the Melbourne Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR) built on this process for a second consultation on safety and amenity in North Richmond.

Abstract body text: The consultation, conducted with other NRCH programs and external partner organisations, focussed on four question themes: belonging, safety, environment/amenity and activities/engagement. Forty-two people aged 20-73 years participated; all showed a high degree of awareness of local community issues. Key findings from our consultation with clients included feeling a sense of belonging, a desire to be known as individuals, and a keenness to be involved in a constructive dialogue around issues of importance to the community.

Discussions and Conclusions: The Food for Thought II consultation was the first of its kind to explore MSIR/NSP clients' perceptions of safety and amenity in North Richmond. Success factors included participants' positive responses to question themes, the ways in which they were engaged and enabled to provide their views and ideas, and collaboration with multiple partners. The consultation highlighted a collective imperative to work together in finding solutions to complex problems. This presentation is relevant to service providers wishing to engage people accessing their services in participatory processes as a means of inclusion in discussions affecting their daily lives.

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