

GROUP INTERVENTIONS FOR LGBTI (LESBIAN, GAY, BI, TRANS AND INTERSEX) PEOPLE USING ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUGS (AOD)

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Introduction / Issues

Illicit drug use is significantly higher within the LGBTI population than the heterosexual population.

Most prevalent substances seen in MSM (men who have sex with men) client presentations at VAC (Victorian AIDS Council) are alcohol and methamphetamine. 11% of the MSM population report using methamphetamine compared to 2% of the general population. Alcohol is the most frequently used drug within LGBTI communities. These communities' report significantly higher rates of alcohol use disorders than the general population, with LB women reporting the highest rates.

VAC offers specialist programs (ReWired & DrinkLimits) that combine evidence based approaches to addiction and harm reduction techniques within a clinical treatment group setting. The model adapts existing best practice substance use interventions.

Method / Approach

VAC offers free, eight week treatment programs where participants learn skills and strategies' to modify their AOD use and better manage mental and physical health. Programs directly address issues that are specific to these vulnerable minority populations.

Key Findings

Evaluation demonstrates the efficacy of the Rewired and DrinkLimits programs with significant reductions in substance use and psychological distress, measured by the DUDIT, AUDIT and K10 respectively, from baseline to both end of treatment group. The Personal Wellbeing Index showed an increase in wellbeing for the same periods.

Discussions and Conclusions:

The success of these programs reinforces the need for specialist programs targeting vulnerable minority programs. These results demonstrate that programs could be further expanded to include vulnerable, minority groups such as Trans and Gender Divers persons and Intersex communities.