

PHOENIX - THE WORKSHOP FOR NEWLY DIAGNOSED ADAPTING TO DEVELOPMENTS IN HIV.

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Background:

Phoenix is a peer-led workshop for people newly diagnosed with HIV in Victoria. It provides

the latest HIV information, peer support and capacity building for managing a new diagnosis in the context of rapid development in treatment, care and epidemiology. Workshop content focuses on disclosure, sex, relationships, emotional health and resilience, and managing stigma. It aims to build resilience, educate, provide social connection and build a stronger HIV community.

Approach:

Phoenix workshops are facilitated by peer volunteers, with support from health promotion staff who provide ongoing training and development in health promotion and peer education and support standards. External presenters, such as medical and mental health care practitioners also provide up-to-date information. Process and impact evaluation approaches draw from the W3 Framework (www.w3project.org.au) focusing on quality of community engagement and peer interaction during workshops and impact on resilience, quality of life and engagement with peer support services, community and peer networks, and healthcare systems and service providers for participants post workshop.

Outcomes:

Phoenix participants gain increased self-confidence, knowledge and understanding of their new identity as people living with HIV. Evaluation data demonstrate higher levels of resilience and quality of life measures, and greater engagement with health professionals and the wider HIV community. In 2016/2017 adaptations to workshop content, format and duration have increased access and community engagement with subpopulations of people newly diagnosed with HIV, particularly women and people from migrant backgrounds.

Innovation:

'The uniqueness of Phoenix is that it remains an effective and relevant peer-based approach to health promotion for a wide range of people newly diagnosed with HIV, including women and people from migrant backgrounds. Maintaining high-quality community engagement, peer interaction and program monitoring, evaluation and adaptation have been vital to its sustainability and ability to keep pace with rapid advancements in HIV treatment, care and shifts in epidemiology.