

Getting on top of sexual health

Engaging young men in Sexual Health through a dedicated Men's Sexual and Reproductive Health Service

Joseph Ronfeldt¹ (presenter), Dr Glenn Duns^{1,2},
A/Prof Darren Katz², Prof Meredith Temple-Smith¹

¹Department of General Practice and Primary Care, University of Melbourne

²Men's Health Melbourne



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Disclosure of interest:

There is nothing to disclose

This research was conducted on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation

Image: View of the Yarra Birrarung looking towards the CBD of Melbourne/Naarm



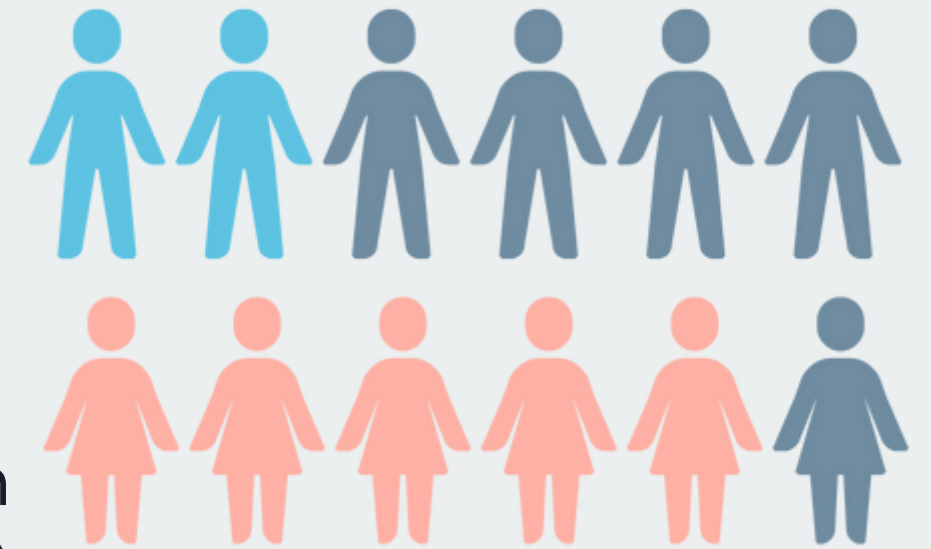
Background

Young men have poor **sexual and reproductive health (SRH)** utilisation

Young women and **men who have sex with men** engage more routinely with health services, in part due to their SRH needs (e.g. prescriptions for contraception or PrEP).

Young, **mostly heterosexual** men, by comparison, **miss out on treatment or screening** for

- Sexual health conditions - including STIs and sexual dysfunction
- Other conditions which may first be signaled by a sexual health condition, such as cardiovascular disease or poor mental health.



Only 35% of young Australian men have ever spoken to the GP about sexual health compared to **85%** of young women (1)

Background

Young men would be interested in attending a hypothetical
‘dedicated men’s health service’ (DMHS)

Vincent *et al.* *BMC Public Health* (2018) 18:1078
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5992-6>


BMC Public Health

RESEARCH ARTICLE

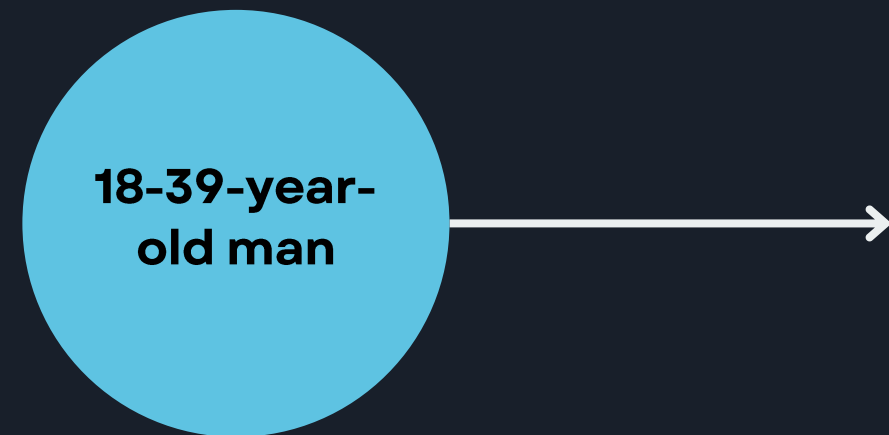
Open Access

Health behaviours of Australian men and the likelihood of attending a dedicated men’s health service

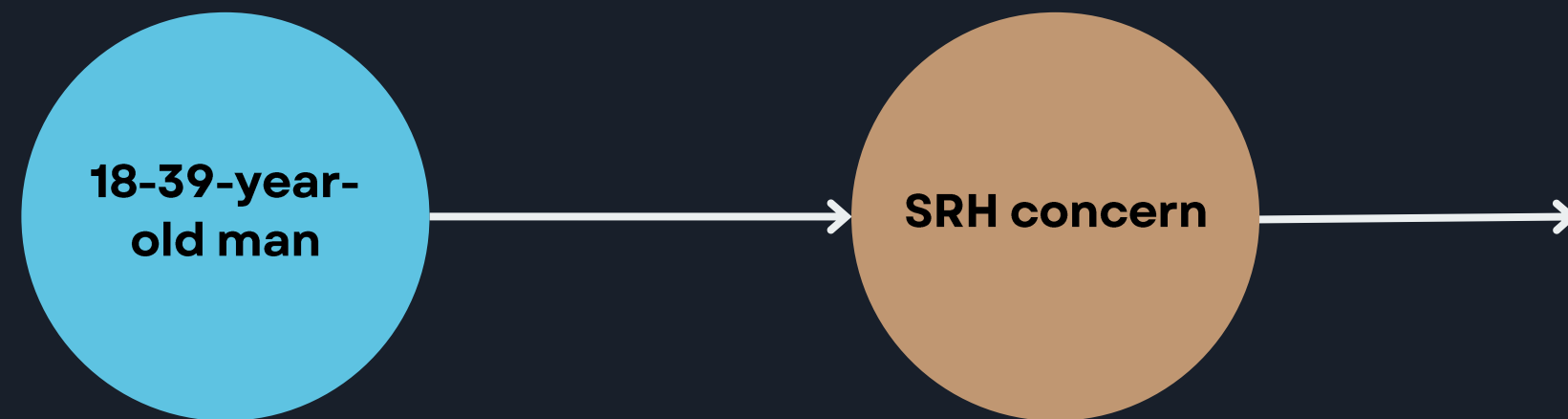


Andrew D. Vincent¹, Phoebe G. Drioli-Phillips^{1,2}, Jana Le^{1,2}, Lynette Cusack³, Timothy J. Schultz³, Margaret A. McGee^{1*} , Deborah A. Turnbull^{1,2} and Gary A. Wittert¹

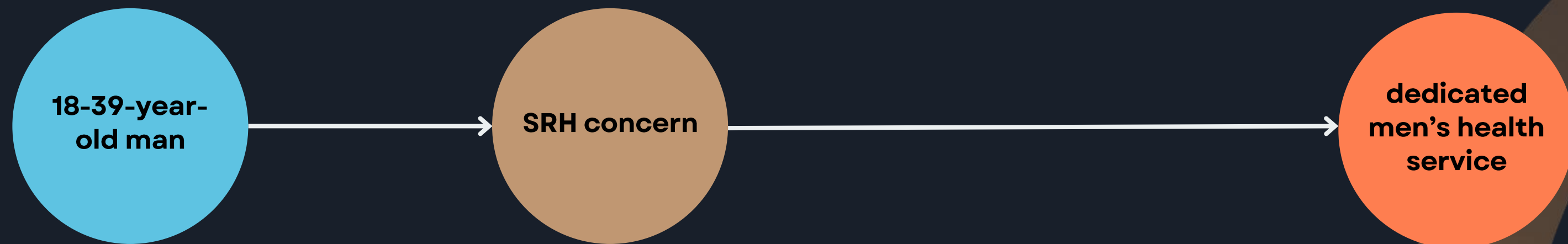
Why do **young men** aged 18 to 39



Why do **young men** aged 18 to 39 with a **sexual health concern**



Why do **young men** aged 18 to 39
with a **sexual health concern**
attend a **dedicated men's health
service**?



The clinic



**dedicated
men's health
service**

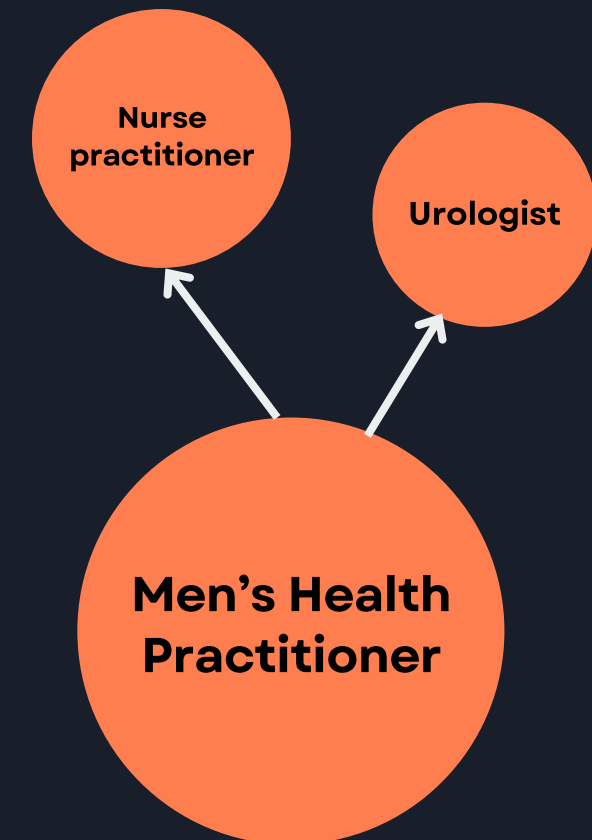


The clinic

Men's Health Melbourne

Multidisciplinary clinic in the Melbourne CBD

Men's Health Practitioner: GP with a special interest in men's health.





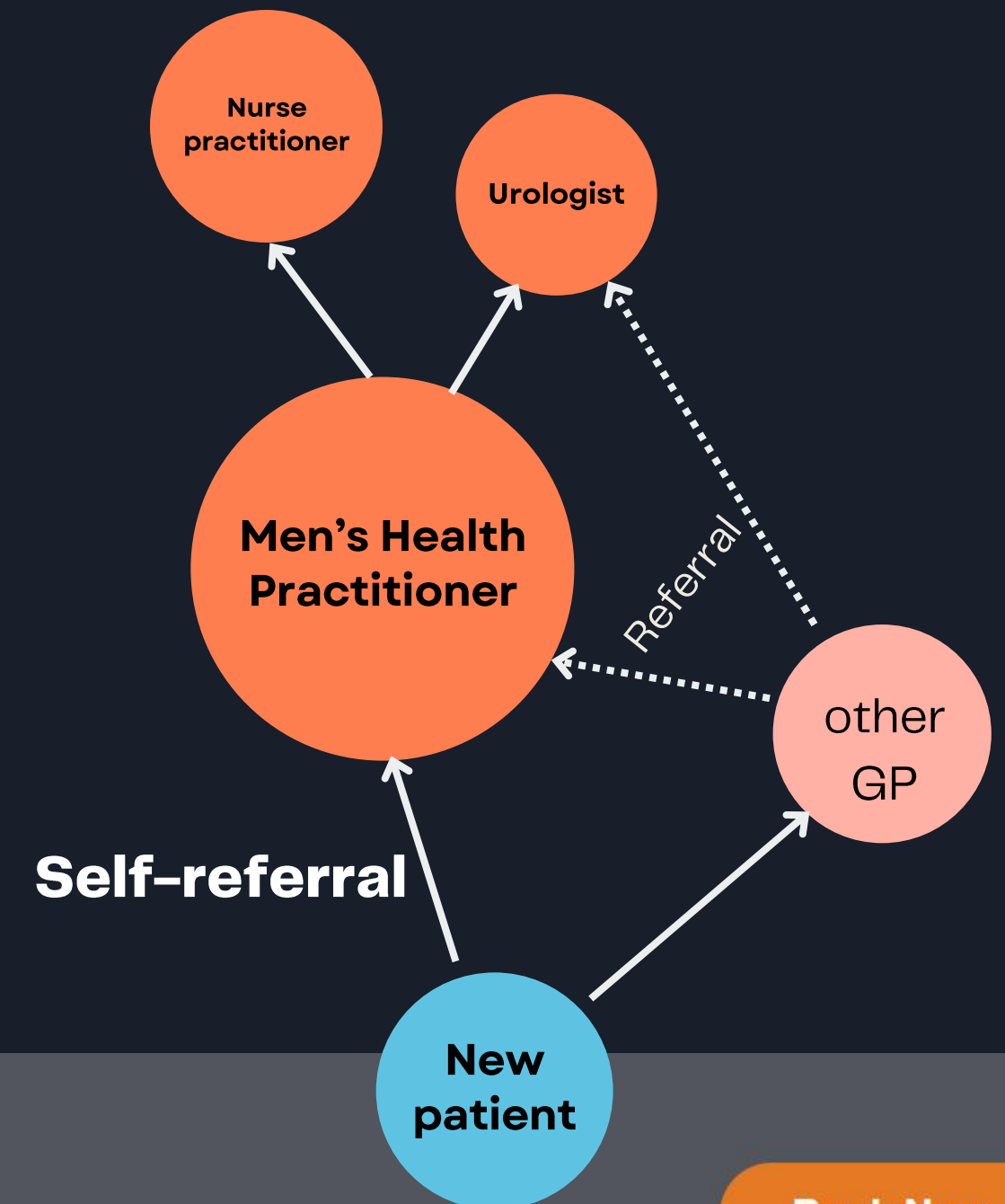
The clinic

Men's Health Melbourne

Multidisciplinary clinic in the Melbourne CBD

Men's Health Practitioner: GP with a special interest in men's health.

Option to self refer from the clinic website





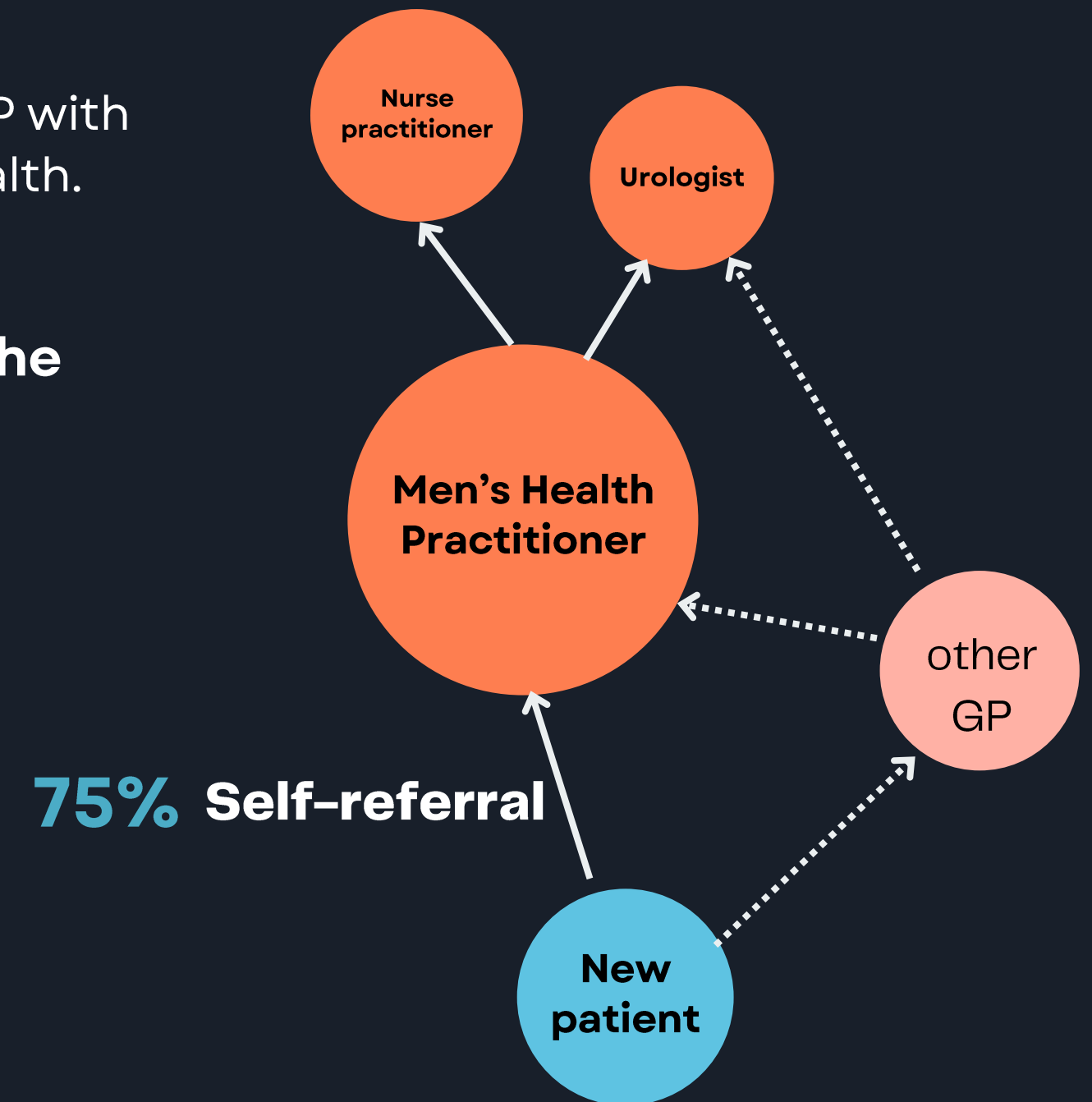
The clinic

Men's Health Melbourne

Multidisciplinary clinic in the Melbourne CBD

Men's Health Practitioner: GP with a special interest in men's health.

Option to self refer from the clinic website





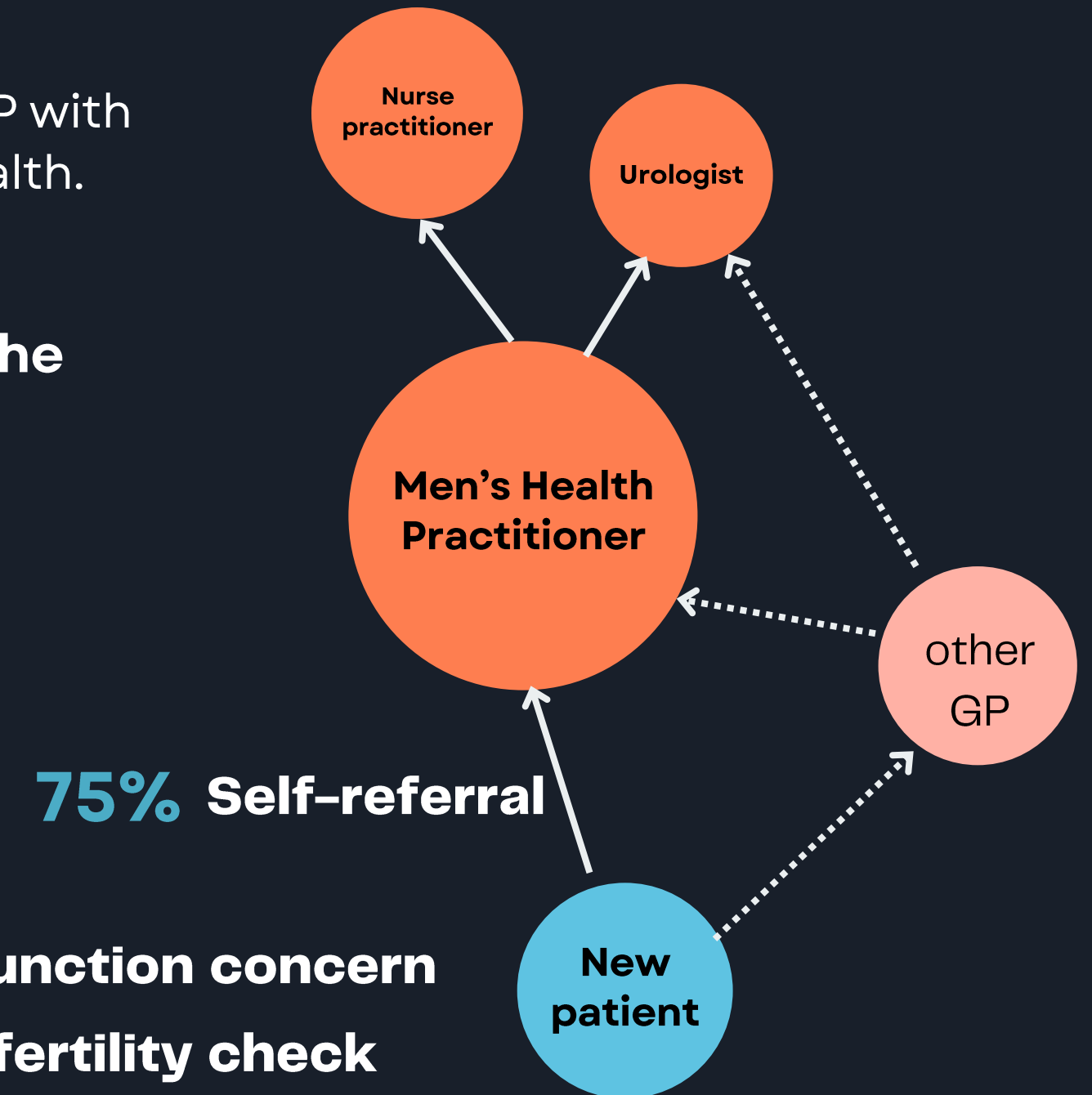
The clinic

Men's Health Melbourne

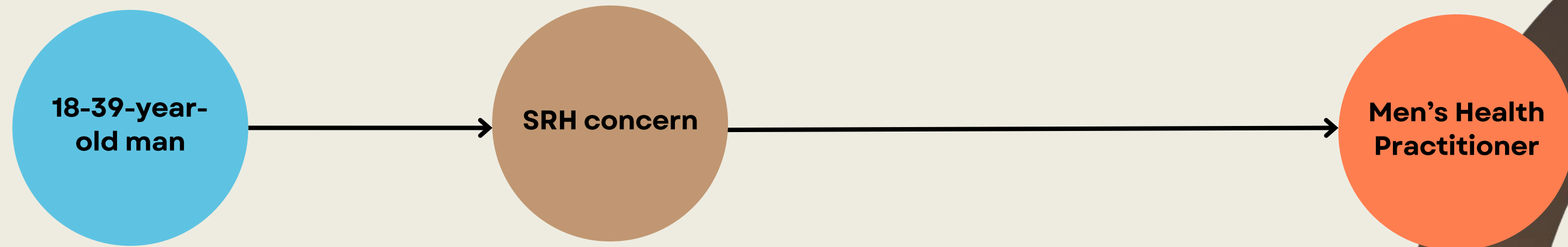
Multidisciplinary clinic in the Melbourne CBD

Men's Health Practitioner: GP with a special interest in men's health.

Option to self refer from the clinic website



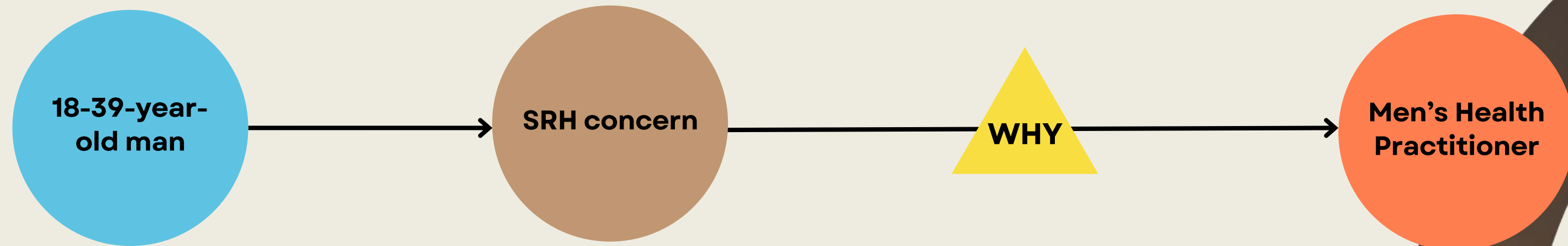
Methodology



Methodology

Qualitative

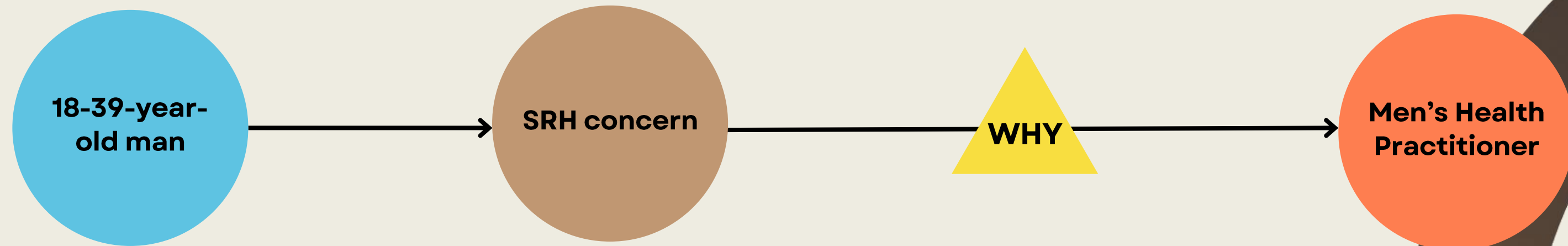
- **12** semi-structured one-on-one **interviews** on Zoom
- **Thematic analysis** - yielded 4 key themes



Methodology

Qualitative

- **12** semi-structured one-on-one **interviews** on Zoom
- **Thematic analysis** - yielded 4 key themes



Results

- **12** participants

Median age 34

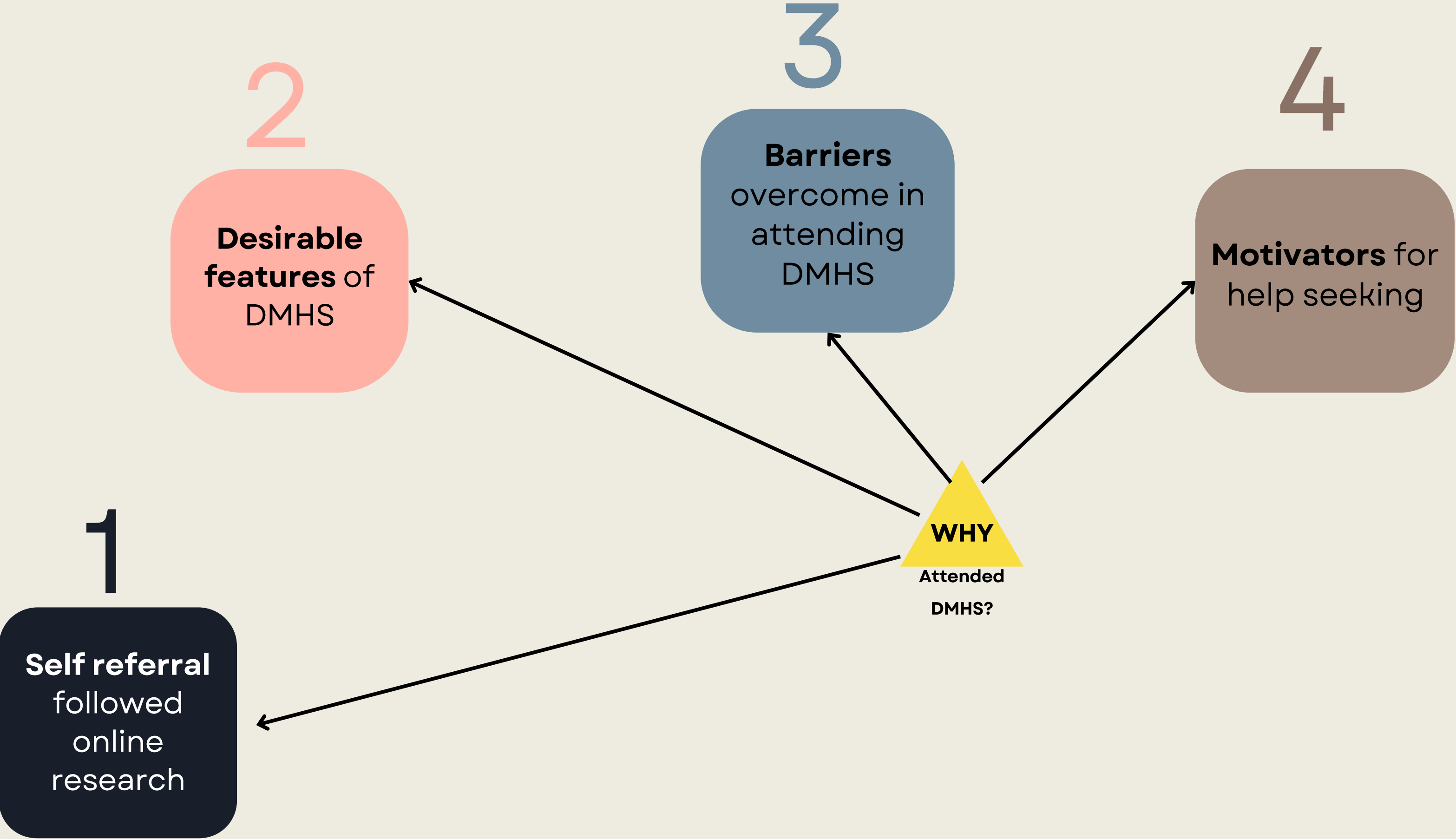
Majority

- Self-referred (n=10)
- Heterosexual (n=11)
- Tertiary educated professionals (n=12)

**18-39-year-
old man**

WHY

Results



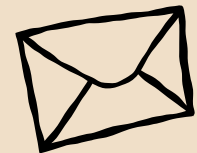
Desirable features of DMHS



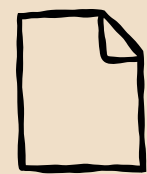
Specialised, expert care

They feel that they're in the **right place** and then can really...
open up all the questions. **Open up the Pandora's box** ...
and ask away.

Edward, 28



Privacy



Transparency



Holistic approach

*Pseudonyms have been used

Barriers overcome by attending DMHS

3



Disengagement from general practice

I'm very bundled into that... male stereotype where ... **you've neglected GPs for the most part of your life**, and only gone out of absolute necessity

Brett, 31



Sexual health is hard to talk about

I don't believe anything can make it easy to talk about. Like to be honest.

Frank, 39



Masculinity

Sexual performance or ability is like an intrinsic part of masculinity. If you are having like **issues**, it's like that **makes you less of a man.**

Isaac, 22



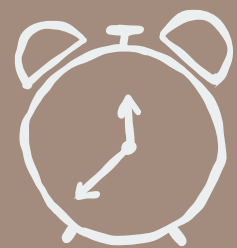
Alienation from sexual health

I feel like a lot of the **awareness and the messaging are pointed towards...gay men**, but I feel like then, because I'm straight...these things should not apply to me...I don't know where to go for help.

Dan, 39

Motivators

for help seeking



Transition point in life

When I met my wife ... okay, gotta get this...sorted...

Gabe, 39



Taking action over health

...it's more important to talk about it than it is to be embarrassed about it

Gabe, 39

The sooner I **get on top of these things** the better

Isaac, 22

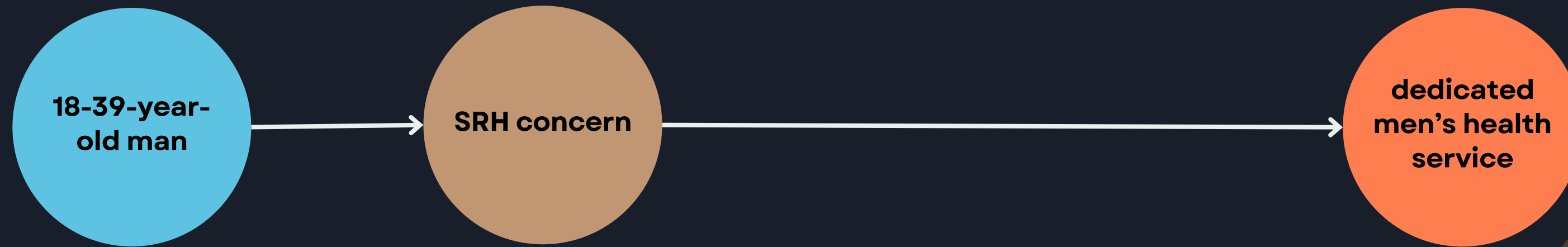
I don't want to just manage okay. **I want to be**, like, **peak.**

Dan, 36

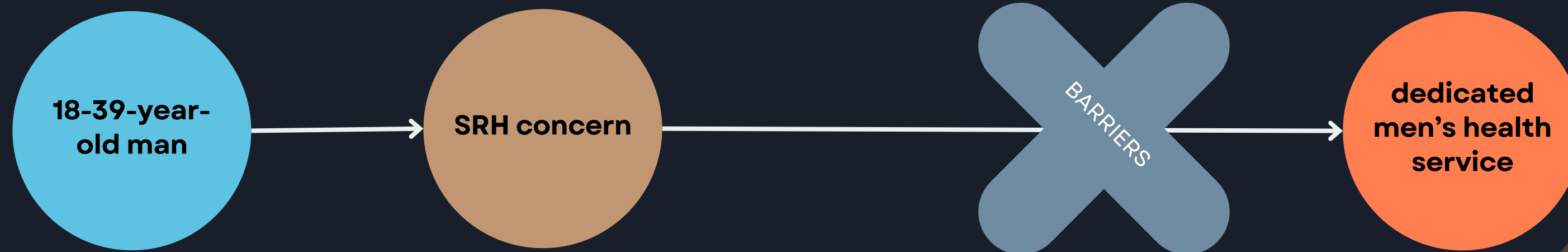


Does the DMHS model help young men positively reframe gender norms that stigmatise help seeking ?

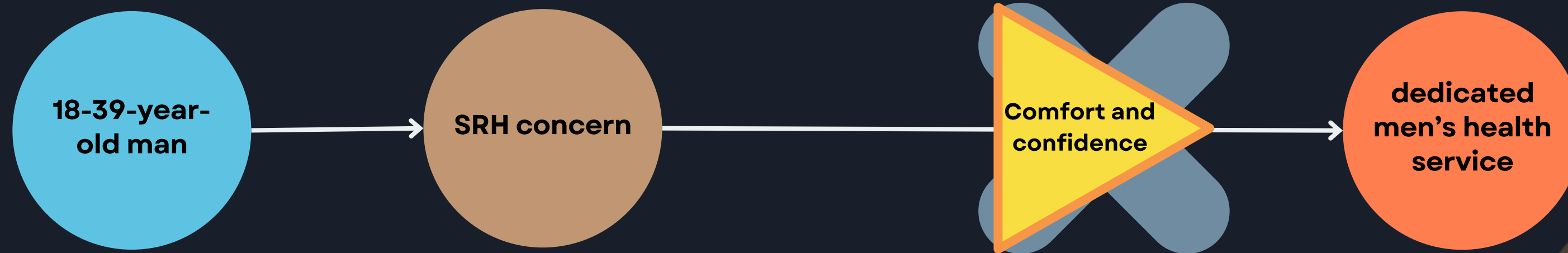
Why do **young men** aged 18 to 39 with a **sexual health concern** attend a **dedicated men's health service**?



Why do **young men** aged 18 to 39 with a **sexual health concern** attend a **dedicated men's health service**?

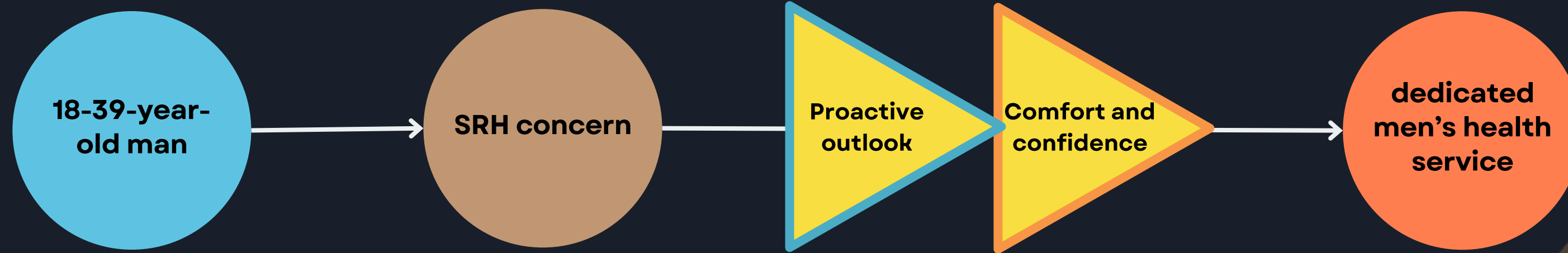


Why do **young men** aged 18 to 39 with a **sexual health concern** attend a **dedicated men's health service**?



Attending a **men's health expert** brings confidence to stigmatised and uncomfortable SH conversations.

Why do **young men** aged 18 to 39 with a **sexual health concern** attend a **dedicated men's health service**?



Attending a men's health expert brings confidence to stigmatised and uncomfortable SH conversations.

Engaging represents a shift to a more proactive outlook towards sexual and general health.

References

- 1 . Bittleston, H., Hocking, J., Temple-Smith, M., Sanci, L., Goller, J., & Coombe, J. (2024). What sexual and reproductive health issues do young people want to discuss with a doctor, and why haven't they done so? Findings from an online survey. *Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare*, 40, 100966.
- 2. Vincent AD, Drioli-Phillips PG, Le J, Cusack L, Schultz TJ, McGee MA, et al. Health behaviours of Australian men and the likelihood of attending a dedicated men's health service. *BMC Public Health*. 2018;18(1):1078.
- 3. Men's Health Melbourne. <https://www.menshealthmelbourne.com.au/>
- 4. Shand T, Marcell AV. *Engaging Men in Sexual and Reproductive Health*. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Global Public Health. 2021.