ReWired: changing the chemsex narrative through peer based responses for same sex attracted men who use methamphetamine

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Background: ReWired 2.0 is a fortnightly peer-led, goal-based support group for men who have sex with other men (MSM) who want to change, manage or stop their methamphetamine use. The group has been running since 2017, and alternates between face to face and zoom to enable a range of participants to engage with the service.

Description of Model of Care/Intervention: Run by volunteer peer facilitators at Thorne Harbour Health, this Victoria-wide group offers an LGBTI+ culturally specific response to chemsex, blending principles of queer affirmative practice, a sex positive approach, and harm reduction. The ReWired 2.0 group explores themes including self-stigma, internalised homophobia, sober and safer sex, and connecting to community. These approaches enable participants to address issues of intimacy, identity and substance use concurrently.

Effectiveness/Acceptability/Implementation: Drawing on a recent program evaluation, peer facilitator experience and participant reflections, this paper will explore the importance of culturally specific responses to chemsex presentations among MSM.

Conclusion and Next Steps: It will explore the importance of peer-based lived expertise, the effectiveness of the group in supporting change among participants and offer reflections on how this model that might be adapted by other LGBTI+ specific services.

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