

STARTING OUT: SEXUAL HEALTH PEER EDUCATION FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Authors: Loc Nguyen & Anna Barker

For more information, contact LNguyen@acon.org.au or ABarker@acon.org.au

“I enjoyed getting to meet other queer people specifically in a queer-led workshop. I felt actively celebrated and safe in Starting Out. This is rare even in LGBTQ spaces. It was really cool to see all the sexual health information for trans people.”

“Learning about sexual health was useful as it hadn't been taught in school - but what was talked about was very hetero-cis-normative. ... I valued being able to openly discuss sexual health and pleasure safely with their peers, which wasn't possible at school.”

Young LGBTQ+ people increasingly identify with fluid sexualities and gender identities

- 40% of LGBTQIA+ people under 26 identifying as multi gender attracted.¹
- 25% identifying as trans and/or gender diverse.²

Changing priority populations in NSW's HIV response

- The NSW HIV Strategy 2021-25 now lists 'partners of priority populations' as a priority themselves.
- However, traditional peer education programs have focused on gay, bisexual, queer men and other men who have sex with men (GBQMSM).
- There is a need for HIV and sexual health promotion that speaks to the experiences of all partners of GBQMSM and other priority populations.
- This includes women, non-binary people and trans and gender diverse folks.

Using 'parts & practices' in HIV and sexual health promotion

- 'Starting Out' adapted HIV and sexual health information to fit the needs and experiences of young LGBTQ+ communities (ages 18-26) of all genders.
- We used a "parts and practice" model. This meant information on HIV and STI testing, prevention and treatment were all delivered by talking about the body parts and sexual practices of participants, rather than focusing on gender and sexuality.
- Discussing sexual health using this approach affirms young LGBTQ+ people's diverse experiences and does not make assumptions about the genders and sexualities of the participants or their sexual partners.
- This model ensures young LGBTQ+ people have the correct health information to make informed decisions based on the sex they are having.

Starting Out saw an increase in uptake of young trans and gender diverse people in ACON's HIV and sexual health peer education programs

8

workshops delivered between July 2020 and June 2022.

51

participants attended.

39%

of participants were trans or gender diverse (compared to 8.9% for ACON's workshops for GBQMSM).

SCAN TO FIND OUT MORE



1. Hill A Q, Lyons A, Jones J, McGowan I, Carman M, Parsons M, Power J, Bourne A (2021) Writing Themselves In 4: The health and wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ young people in Australia. National report, monograph series number 124. Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University.
2. Hill, A. O., Bourne, A., McNair, R., Carman, M. & Lyons, A. (2020). Private Lives 3: The health and wellbeing of LGBTQIA people in Australia. ARCSHS Monograph Series No. 122. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University.