



The Minority Voice of HIV Positive Women in Australia



Presented by

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Women's Health State wide
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Women & HIV Statistics

The global picture

- 🎗️ Half 30.8 million are women
- 🎗️ Primary cause mortality of women (15-44 in sub Sahara Africa, Latin America, Caribbean, African - American women)

In Australia

- 🎗️ 10% of HIV population are women
- 🎗️ stable over 10 years
- 🎗️ increasing numbers from high prevalence country or heterosexual contact with person from high prevalence country



An HIV positive woman in Australia

- ⌘ Age mean: 39
- ⌘ Not specific geographic locations widely dispersed throughout cities
- ⌘ Is a parent or cares for another HIV person
- ⌘ Two thirds women surveyed reported unwanted disclosure in health setting
- ⌘ poverty a daily issue with 90% had trouble with daily cost of living

From HIV Futures 5 La Trobe University research



Difficulties Accessing Services in Tasmania

- > Limited medical HIV Specialist and dispensing outlets for medications
- > 1 degree of separation in small state and disclosure is a risk
- > Little opportunity for peer support



A Tasmanian positive woman says...

“Getting to go to retreats keeps me sane’

“I don’t know how I would survive without the support of positive networks”

“Life here is like a blocked in little world”

“Traveling to Victoria opens up a different world”

“ Even my family don’t know that I’m positive”

3 approaches that have worked in SA

> Enabling environment



> Arts in health

“I loved the power of the community focused project and the consultation that occurred throughout. I felt trust, acknowledged, having some power and ownership. My words were respected and valued”.
“Songs in the Blood” Project participant

> Peer support model

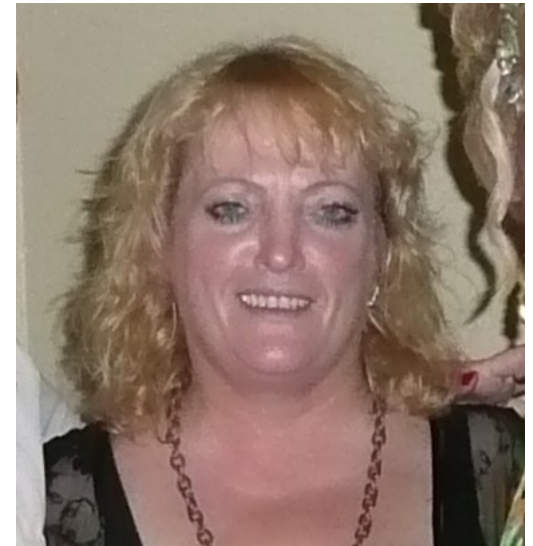
“ What made such a difference to me was talking to another woman who had had a similar experience .. it was a defining experience. I trusted her and was inspired by her”

Personal Story/Journey

“Listen to our voices
Learn about our lives
Consider our ideas”

International community of positive women

- > Diagnosis
- > Treatment
- > HIV today





Why peer support works?

HIV does not discriminate people do

“No matter where an HIV positive woman lives disclosure is still the biggest issue”

“ I have learnt about strength, courage and resilience from the diversity of HIV positive women”

The key threads for a strong and empowering women's community are peer support, networking and support groups









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