

Sustainable Sexuality & Relationships Education

Building young people's knowledge to make informed and empowered decisions



Young Women's Sexual Health Services

Informal partnership between **Goulburn Valley Health**¹, **The Bridge Youth Service**² and **headspace Shepparton**³ to increase vulnerable young women's access to sexual and reproductive health information, education and services in Shepparton.

The **GV Health Sexual Health Nurse Practitioner** initially meets with young women in groups and programs offered by *The Bridge Youth Service*. Young women book a sexual health appointment with the youth service to see the Nurse Practitioner in a private, comfortable space on site at *The Bridge Youth Service*. The fortnightly health appointments are bulk billed for those with Health Care and Medicare cards and vary from 30 to 45 minutes depending on individual needs and prior bookings. Young women requiring follow up health care can be registered as **headspace** Shepparton or *GV Health* clients to access bulk billed clinical and pathology services.

Sexual Health Information, Education and Services

What is delivered:

Guided by the young woman, the Sexual Health Nurse Practitioner provides consultations at the youth service setting for sexual health assessments and screening, information, education, prescriptions and referrals.

Sexual health appointments can provide:

- Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education and resources to build health literacy
Examples: anatomy and physiology...self-care...menstruation...conception... pregnancy
- Sexual health assessments and screening
- Detailed contraception information with examples, choices and prescriptions
- STI testing with results to the young woman
- Follow up clinical care, services and referrals

Key to success:

An emphasis on establishing and maintaining respectful relationships between vulnerable young women and partner professionals allows time for effective communication and the development of trust. As clients of *The Bridge Youth Service*, young women accessing sexual health consultations have continued access to worker advocacy, support and additional youth services on site. Those requiring clinical and pathology services can choose to see the same sexual health practitioner in a partner setting, minimising the need for additional assessments.

Regional young women often marginalised by mainstream health and community services have increased access to needs based information and education with safety, respect and choice⁴.

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Enablers for vulnerable youth engagement and sustainability

- ❖ Youth centred services and programs where vulnerable young women and marginalised youth are priority groups for partners.
- ❖ Comprehensive youth services available with integrated sexual health information, education, resources, health care and treatment.
- ❖ Accessibility: welcoming staff and spaces with free or low cost services and resources.
- ❖ Safety and respect: emphasis on building trust and respectful relationships between staff and young people that are *private and confidential, inclusive and culturally sensitive*.
- ❖ Time for client centred practice to promote effective listening and communication: *information sharing... relevant education... strengths based resources*.
- ❖ Strong networking and collaboration with local agencies and youth service providers
- ❖ Shared organisational goals and clear referral pathways.
- ❖ Qualified, experienced professionals with specific and complementary knowledge and skills.
- ❖ Organisational trust, flexibility and outreach with opportunities for Sexual Health Nurse Practitioner to integrate sexual and reproductive health information, education and services in a range of youth settings.

More information:

Suzanne Wallis

Sexual Health Nurse Practitioner

Goulburn Valley Health

Suzanne.Wallis@gvhealth.org.au

¹ Goulburn Valley Health Shepparton: <http://www.gvhealth.org.au/>

² The Bridge Youth Service Shepparton: <http://www.thebridge.org.au/>

³ headspace Shepparton: <http://www.headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/headspace-shepparton>

⁴ YACVic 2013, *Young People and Sexual Health in Rural and Regional Victoria*, p.4 <http://www.yacvic.org.au/policy-publications/publications-listed-by-policy-area/33-rural-regional-and-urban-fringe-issues/521-young-people-and-sexual-health-in-rural-and-regional-victoria>