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We acknowledge the traditional owners of lands and waterways on which we meet today.

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We pay our respects to elders past and present, acknowledging that sovereignty was never ceded.

Acknowledgement of  
Country

# PEER-LED INTERVENTIONS

Enhancing  
engagement &  
outcomes for  
trans and queer  
communities

# The “Problem”

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Chem-sex AKA Party n Play

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Stigma and shame

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HIV

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Limited treatment options

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No pharmaceutical treatments  
for withdrawal

# The “Problem”

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Minority stress

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Poor healthcare experiences

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Family rejection

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Neurodivergence

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Poverty

- The peer-led support interventions we use comply with many of the Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use Guidelines (2022)
  - Do no harm
  - Focus on engaging the client in treatment
  - Adopt a holistic approach based on treating the person not the illness
  - Adopt a client centred approach
  - Adopt a trauma informed care approach
  - Emphasise collaborative nature of treatment
  - Express confidence in the effectiveness of treatment
  - Adopt a non-judgemental attitude
  - Adopt a non-confrontational approach
  - Involve peers

## Effective treatment

# ReWired 2.0

- In 2014, invitation from THH (VAC) and LPV to be involved
- Discussions about CHEM-sex, what could we do about it?
- Psycho-ed. Group, On-going Support Group
- REWIRED Manual, esp safety, a/h support, duress etc
- SMART Group Facilitation Training (@THH)
- Early 2015 REWIRED Support Group started
- Late 2015 REWIRED Therapeutic Group started
- Referral process (via TG or via THH ax team)

# TAPS

- Established as an online group in 2020
- Peer led initiative
- A response to elevated patterns of use in the TGD community
- Based on the established ReWired 2.0 structure
- Referral process (via TG or via THH ax team)
- Peer group facilitation training combined with RW 2.0 facilitators
- Focuses on all substance use rather than one substance

# Group Process (based on SMART)

1. Welcome, acknowledgement
2. What is REWIRED 2.0/TAPS?
3. Group agreement
4. Check-in (how are you feeling, previous goals, what brings you here, what should we discuss tonight?)
5. Working time (based on check-in OR pre-planned)
6. Check-out (how you feeling now, goal(s) for fortnight, what resonated/'aha' moment, self-care)

- Ideally interviewed by current facilitators
- Maybe self identified or shoulder tapped
- Sometimes selected from within the group,
- Sometimes selected by external means (community ads)
- Must have attended at least 2-3 sessions
- Go through formal THH checks (eg WWC, Police etc)
- Groups are usually (99.9%) co-facilitated

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## Facilitators

- Personal Goals (why do I want to facilitate RW2.0 group?)
- Safety (importance of Group Agreement)
- Role of the facilitator / working with Co-facilitator
- Unconscious bias, privilege, intersectionality
- Tuckman's Group Formation
- Working with Challenging Individuals
- Individual facilitation demonstrations and assessment

# Facilitator Training

# Invited Personal Testimonials

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*"In gay support groups we can talk about addiction and sex but not meth, there's so much anti-meth stigma even in our community. In straight support groups, for example NA, or SMART groups, we can talk about addiction but not sex – well, I personally don't feel comfortable talking about what I get up to. In REWIRED we can talk about any and everything, CHEM-sex, the lot... and we do."*

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*"For me attendance (at REWIRED) is an act of bravery, of self love and a commitment to self-discovery. REWIRED works for me by allowing me to connect with others who are going through or have been through similar experiences."*

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*"It's (REWIRED) a safe space and I always feel positive after a session, knowing I've done something really beneficial for myself and my journey through substance abuse."*

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*"It's been 5 years since I was here last, but I was starting to slide. I came back cos I knew that nobody would judge me or think less of me. Plus I always feel heard and safe here."*

# Invited Personal Testimonials

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*"It keeps me accountable, helps me feel a part of the community, provides a safe place for me to share, and allows me to get advice and support from people living through similar experiences"*

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*"It helps me talk about my meth use and I get a feeling of community & some useful information"*

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*"Community. Accountability. Connection."*

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*"It gives me connection to the gay community, gives me tools, allows me to share experiences of mental health. I love the energy."*

- “Evidence suggests that a peer-supported community program focused on self-determination can have a significant positive impact on recovery from substance addictions and homelessness.”
- “Peer-led intervention can reduce self-stigma and stigma pressure and might improve recovery and empowerment. It increases self-efficacy and willingness to seek professional help, but has no significant effect on clinical symptoms and withdrawal. HOP intervention has positive effects on disclosure-related confidentiality and pain.”
- “Peer interventions may be effective in preventing tobacco, alcohol and possibly cannabis use among adolescents, although the evidence base is limited overall, and is characterized mainly by small studies of low quality.”
- Peer-led social support groups can be invaluable for suicide-bereaved individuals, but attention must be paid to the structure, conduct, and training of group leaders and members in order to optimize outcomes.
- GIPS may be a viable service model of supported housing that represents a recovery-oriented approach that can be scaled up to address homelessness

## Literature Review

# Conclusions

- Peer support groups help to build community connections and support networks
- Peer support helps to address stigma and shame, creating a safe environment for sharing and help seeking
- The structure and training of peer facilitators contributes to the success of the group itself
- The ReWired 2.0 and TAPS groups provide community with a culturally safe space with which to share their experiences and seek out others with similar experiences
- It is important to provide these spaces as part of individuals recovery journeys as they increase self-determination and can help individuals to feel more empowered to seek out other forms of professional help

QUESTIONS



# References

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