

Hidden in Plain Sight?

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Creating a culturally-appropriate peer navigation model to facilitate engagement with people living with HIV from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Background / Purpose

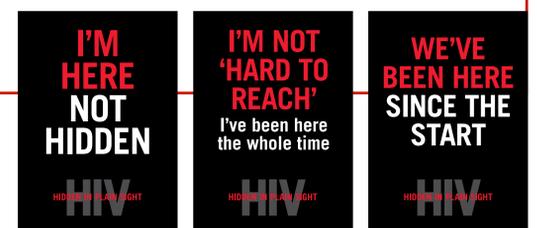
- Culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) people born overseas have been identified as an emerging priority population in the NSW HIV Strategy.
- Members of these diverse communities are often categorised as 'hard-to-reach/hidden'.
- There are **few culturally appropriate, peer-based programs** to engage people around health seeking behaviours, facilitate engagement with healthcare services and address stigma and discrimination.



Approach

- To address some of these challenges in heterosexually identifying CALD PLHIV, Positive Life NSW (PLNSW) created a discrete peer-support program using a peer navigation model **led by experienced peer navigators from CALD backgrounds** to build capacity of CALD PLHIV.
- CALD Peer Navigators are the role-models, sharing their own lived experiences to improve the health, quality of life outcomes and increase health literacy and capacity of CALD PLHIV to self-advocate.
- CALD Peer Navigators use a range of different tools and modes of communication to address social isolation, stigma/discrimination, system navigation, peer support and program follow-up.

Engaging Peer Navigators from the CALD community has provided a deeper understanding of culture, sensitive to the developing needs of this priority population.



Outcomes / Impact

- Increasing engagement of CALD PLHIV into Peer Navigation services delivered by PLNSW and ongoing community consultation have increased our reach and rapport within these diverse and marginalised communities.
- Supporting CALD PLHIV physically, emotionally, socially and psycho-socially increases CALD PLHIV self-confidence to
 - have agency in their own healthcare decisions
 - address social determinants, loneliness, connection, and retention into healthcare.

Innovation and significance

CALD Peer Navigation strengthens CALD PLHIV communities through peer education and role modelling which

- **reduces** the effects of stigma and discrimination
- **raises** awareness of multi-morbidities and encourages an active health dialogue, and
- **increases** community members' acceptance of HIV.

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