



THE CONNECTION

- The Connection is a peer-based, Aboriginal drug user service run *by and for* Aboriginal young people to address the health, social and legal needs of Indigenous young people.



THE CONNECTION

- Primarily focused on Aboriginal drug users but also provides services to non-Indigenous drug users who have connections to local Indigenous communities.
- Based at the Civic bus interchange, with CAHMA and AIVL
- Open Monday to Friday 10am-4:30pm



THE CONNECTION SERVICES

- Peer Support
- Referrals
- Representation & Advocacy
- Information & Education
- Internet access



THE CONNECTION

- Auspice by AIVL
- Now operates with direct support from CAHMA (Management, contract negotiations, training, supervision and support)
- Funded by OATSIH (office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health)



The Connection's
TABOO PROGRAM

WHAT IT'S ABOUT...

- ◉ The aims of this project are many and varied, but essentially, we want to empower a small group of young Aboriginals with the knowledge and skills to act as peer educators within their communities.

CAHMA



IT'S ABOUT...

- ◉ Sharing information between equals
- ◉ Based on idea that people learn best when they are interested or affected by the information
- ◉ Easier to be honest between peers
 - Eg easier to talk about drug use with a user than a non-user
- ◉ Peers have access to people who otherwise may not be reached by services
- ◉ Peers often respect other peers knowledge and experience
- ◉ It's about *equality of interaction*– not about 'expert/novice' or 'teacher/student' difference - it's an *exchange* among equals
- ◉ Peer education respects both peer's experience and knowledge
- ◉ It's about *wanting* to learn and inform - voluntary and willing ...The focus needs to be on things the person *wants* to learn
- ◉ It is relevant to a person's life ...if it's relevant to a person it is more interesting to them and more likely to be remembered.

WHO ARE PEERS...

- ◉ When we talk about peers today we are meaning:
 - Young People (16-25yr olds)
 - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders
 - People who are using or have used drugs

THE ROLE OF A PEER EDUCATOR?

- ◉ Help keep the community informed and educated with up to date information that will help reduce harms.
- ◉ Help educate and inform organisations and services of changes or issues within the community that may lead to better service delivery outcomes.
- ◉ Develop skills and experience within peer networks that enhances the capacity of individuals and communities to participate in the management of issues that affect them and to respond to the challenges that they may face.

THE PROGRAM AS A WHOLE

- ◉ Become effective Peer Educators
- ◉ Learn skills in advocacy, community development and harm reduction
- ◉ Have Fun and be social
- ◉ Learn skills in radio
- ◉ Present a monthly radio-show radio program on 2XX FM in conjunction with CAHMA's 'News from the drug war front' radio show.

PLEASE STAY TUNED
FOR MORE ON THIS
PROGRAM

THANK YOU

