



UnitingCare Cutting Edge's **Diversity Project** [Greater Shepparton] – a local perspective

PRESENTERS:

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Our Vision:

An inclusive community where all are valued and supported to participate fully in life.

Our Mission:

Serving People, Building Communities,
Unlocking Full Potential



The “Diversity Project” aims to create a safer, more inclusive, and healthier community for young people aged 10 – 25yrs in the City of Greater Shepparton (& beyond) who are same-sex attracted, intersex and/or gender-diverse (SSAIGD).

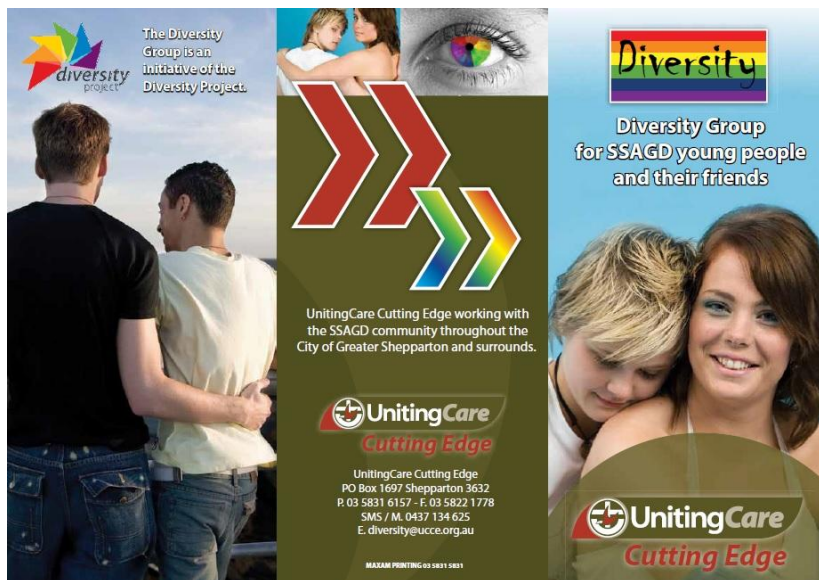
Funded by Victoria’s Department of Health, the project has two components:



The first provides support for young people whose access to appropriate health, education and housing are impacted by homophobia, or who, as a result of “coming out” have suffered relationships breakdown and/or discrimination. Intensive support and case management is available to young people whose physical and mental health has been adversely affected by such discrimination.

The second component is geared toward health promotion, where resources are produced and offered to schools, clubs, volunteer groups, health and community welfare providers to create more inclusive spaces, combat homophobia, and help young people feel safe to talk openly about their sexuality and gender with respect to their health, education or economic needs.

The “Diversity (SSAITGDYP social-support) Group” continues to run fortnightly alongside both components of the Project.



The Diversity Group is an initiative of the Diversity Project.

Diversity Group for SSAGD young people and their friends

UnitingCare Cutting Edge working with the SSAGD community throughout the City of Greater Shepparton and surrounds.

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What is the Diversity Group?
The Diversity Group is a social-support group for young people who identify as SSAGD (same sex attracted or gender diverse) (and their friends) who are experiencing anxiety, depression and/or other significant mental health issues, which are impacting on their quality of life. Young people who reside, work or frequent services in the City of Greater Shepparton and surrounds are eligible to participate.

What we do
The Diversity Group aims to improve health outcomes for young people through provision of structured and socially based activities.

The activities may include:

- Cooking
- Watching Movies
- Attending Festivals
- Walking/Swimming
- Guest Speakers
- Health Promotion
- Group based discussions on:
 - Relevant Issues
 - Harm Minimisation
 - Safety
 - Relationships

Supporting our SSAGD young people

Fees
The Department of Health funds this program. There are no fees charged by the program. A contribution may be requested for some activities arranged by the project worker.

Interpreters
Interpreters are available upon request.

Referrals or Questions?
Contact project worker on 03 5831 6157 or SMS 0437 134 625 or email diversity@ucce.org.au
Referrals can be made by a family member or friend, or an agency/school. Interested individuals can self-refer.

Established 1998



The Department of Health calls it the Same-Sex Attracted and Gender-Questioning Youth Support Program. We at UnitingCare Cutting Edge call it, simply, the “Diversity Project”. The “Diversity Project” aims to make the City of Greater Shepparton (and beyond) a safe place for all people, free of homophobia and discrimination. Moreover, the “Diversity Project” works to ensure that young people grow and develop while feeling safe to talk about their feelings, thoughts and identities, and seek the right help when they need it.





One on One Support
Diversity Project Case Workers
Over the past 2 years we have had client
contacts of over 620 -
ages ranging from 14 to 25



Out of those **620** contacts
30% of those have been complex
77 referrals to other agencies and health care
providers have been made

40% of clients are under the age of 18

44% of complex cases are under the age of 18

37% of complex cases are under the age of 14

3.6% of clients are Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander

13% of clients have been closed due to a move to a capital city (regional and rural attitudes)

69% have experienced bullying or abuse

(7.2% physical, 61% verbal, 3% sexual)

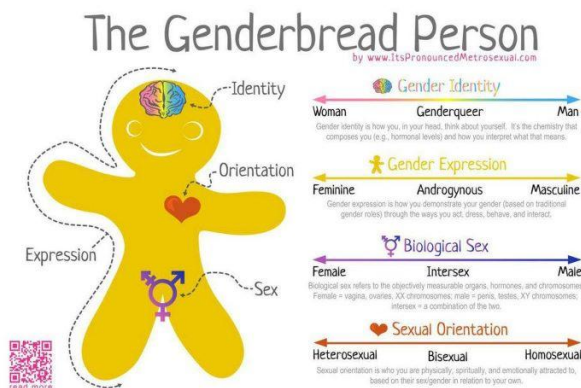
41.3% are homeless or at risk of homelessness

72.7% were bullied at school/part-time employment



Health Promotion & Community Development

- * Sexuality education in schools (Nathalia to Euroa, Catholic too)
 - sessions include Genderbread person, healthy relationships
 - * PD with teachers in schools – “that’s so gay”
- * Inclusive Practice training with organisations/groups of workers
- * Support young people to get involved, travel, run groups/events
 - * Sexual & Reproductive Health & other Networks
 - * “Mooroopna Cares. No Bullying.” Initiative & other projects



Youth participation in the Diversity Project

Why have young people involved?

Youth lead – all activities relevant to their needs/concerns

Young people gain...

- Greater ability to foster youth self determination
- Confidence, self-esteem and improved mental health
 - Skills and experience – Leadership training
- Greater awareness of the issues that young people face from their perspective
 - Identity building
 - A challenge
- Problem solving, conflict resolution and goal setting skills
 - Networking and community awareness
 - Sharing best practice skills and experience



Youth participation in the Diversity Project

Who are involved?

- Young people between the ages of 14 – 25 including
 - Indigenous and multicultural young people
 - Students and allies (including teachers)
 - Community workers and volunteers





About the projects...
Think About It Project
Rainbow Alliance
Diversity Group
OUTintheOPEN Festival



THE AIM OF THE PROJECTS

- Have young people participate in the design and implementation of sexual and social health promotion activities for themselves and other young people in their communities.
- Young people also had a desire to ensure the projects extended beyond their own peers into their broader communities.



Who designed them?

All the projects were designed by the young people

Think About It Project – SSAITGDYP

Rainbow Alliance – Year 11 students (Cobram)

Diversity Group – SSAITGDYP fortnightly

OUTintheOPEN Festival – whole LGBTIQA community



At what stages were young people involved?

Think About It Project – (Mar 2012 – Mar 2013)

Rainbow Alliance – (Jul 2012 - Current)

Diversity Group – (Freedom 1998 - Current)

OUTintheOPEN – (Jun 2011 – Current)



Ongoing surveys...

Over the course of 2 years, approximately 70 young people have participated in development of four projects which aimed to promote inclusiveness and target homophobia. Using an online survey and face-to-face interviews, these people reported on what motivated and sustained them in their participation in the design and implementation of each project, and what barriers existed for further participation.



Survey results

- Young people reported that a sense of social connection and group identity were the most significant contributing factors in project participation.
- Factors that inhibited participation included lack of transport to planning events and meetings, other education and employment commitments, and more significantly, not being open about their sexual orientation to parents and other family members.

More...



Survey results (cont.)

- Furthermore, young people were more likely to be involved in a project if they were asked what they wanted the project to achieve, rather merely what they wanted the project to look like.



Young people said...

Diversity Group / Think About It Project

“ They are a group of like-minded people, a place I can feel safe and comfortable .”

“ The fact that it is designed for and is comprised of GLBTI people and it offers a support for people in these areas.”

“It would open a lot of doors for me and help me through the tough times .”

“Meeting more people, making friends, going to events, and maybe helping to organise some.”

“Continue to feel comfortable in my skin.”

“Good support system. Being able to volunteer & help out also.”

“Learning more about MY community.”





Young people said...

Rainbow Alliance (Cobram Sec. College [CSC])

“I got interested in this group because it doesn’t matter if you’re str8 or gay or bi – everyone has the right to belong in an environment with no bullying. “

“The rainbow group shows that CSC want to support the rights for every individual person ... and THAT, I’m interested in!”

“This group interested me because everyone deserves to be individuals and thus, with the developing of this group, we can make this happen. “

“I like that the Rainbow Group is a group of people – all different – coming together for a purpose – stand up to bullying.”



Young people said...

OUTintheOPEN Festival

- * Good morning Facebookers, back to work for me after a four day weekend. I had a great weekend at the first Out Inthe Open Shepparton Festival. A big round of congratulations to the organisers for a truly amazing weekend of events. :-)
- * Makes you proud to live in Shepparton ... well done to everyone involved
- * the festival had such a great atmosphere, everybody had smiles, WODONGA CAN WE HAVE ONE IN OUR TOWN, PLEASE..
- * I am already excited about the next one !!
- * Fantastic ! A huge achievement after a lot of hard work to bring it together. Well done. Be proud, be very proud !!



What the results mean for how we do things in the Diversity project...

- Social connectedness and access to resources remains an important contributing factor to young people's participation in community advocacy work.
- Community leaders, champion school teachers/welfare staff are important



What the results mean for how we work with young people in community development activities...

- Young people, even though they are well-connected to a community service, still rely on family support to remain involved.
- Young people's participation requires the development of personal relationships and networks of support, and a sense of involvement in the creation of a vision for community development.



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