

MODEL POLICIES

1. Sexual Health Policy

Purpose: This policy ensures all clients of (insert service name) have access to the information and support they need to achieve optimal sexual health and wellbeing. It outlines the rationale for developing a safe, non-judgemental and sex positive environment that provides the best possible sexual health outcomes for young people.

Definitions: Sexual health: sexual health is "...a state of physical, emotional, mental and social wellbeing in relation to sexuality... Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence."¹

1.1 Statement of rights

Young people have the right to decide freely on all matters related to their sexuality without coercion, discrimination and violence, and with respect for others. This encompasses people's right to explore their own sexuality free from shame, fear and guilt.

1.2 Sex positivity

(Insert service name) commits to a sex-positive approach that is informed by an understanding of mutual rights and responsibilities. Sex positivity focuses on life-enhancing and pleasurable aspects of sexuality and not just the risks. It includes being non-judgemental, using inclusive language, promoting choice, and supporting people to be aware of their choices.

1.3 Information

Young people have a right to accurate reproductive and sexual health information and education, and a right to access confidential service provision. This enables informed decision making with respect to their sexuality and sexual health.

(Insert service name) will provide sexual health programs and information individually and in groups as appropriate to their clients' needs.

1.4 Holistic intake, assessment and casework

(Insert service name) will support clients to provide appropriate information about sexual activity and sexual health concerns as part of holistic intake, assessment and casework processes.

1.5 Referral

(Insert service name) will maintain a comprehensive listing of sexual health clinics, youth friendly general practice and youth health services for referral of young people seeking sexual health information, testing and treatment.

Young people referred to these services will be supported to prepare for and attend appointments. They will also be supported with follow up on any outcomes of the consultation such as further testing, treatment or contact tracing.

1.6 Condom distribution

(Insert service name) recognises that distribution of condoms, dams and other protective materials is an effective response to individual and community health.

(Insert service name) will provide free access to readily available condoms, dams and other materials and the information required to use them effectively.

1.7 Partnerships

(Insert service name) will form partnerships with organisations and individuals that will support service capacity to provide sexual health interventions.

(Insert service name) will develop formal partnerships with NSW Health agencies to ensure workers are legally permitted to provide condoms and other materials under Section 34 (1) of the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act.

1.8 Child protection

In delivering sexual health interventions for young people including condom and dam distribution (insert service name) will assess risks associated with child protection issues including mandatory reporting and previous trauma.

Staff will apply the child protection policies of (insert service name) if sexual health interventions result in client disclosure. This will be done with an understanding of the law as it applies to consensual sex between young people of similar ages.

(Insert service name) recognises that staff concerns about disclosure of sexual and other abuse are not a rationale for avoiding sexual health interventions but rather require a risk assessment and action plan.

1.9 Healthy physical environment

To ensure young people feel comfortable discussing and seeking advice about their sexual health (insert service name) will provide a welcoming and inclusive environment that is respectful and inclusive of cultural, sexual and gender diversity.

1.10 Consultation and participation

Young people, their families, carers and significant community members, such as Aboriginal Elders and culturally and linguistically diverse community leaders, are key partners in promoting and supporting sexual health and wellbeing initiatives.

(Insert service name) will provide these partners with information about, and opportunities to contribute to, the development of sexual health initiatives.

1.11 Learning and skills development

(Insert service name) will support staff to access resources, tools and professional learning to enhance their knowledge and capacity to deliver and promote sexual health programs and information.

¹ WHO (2006a). Defining sexual health: Report of a technical consultation on sexual health, 28–31 January 2002. Geneva, World Health Organization.