

Intersections matter: how overlapping identities shape access to support

Living with HIV does not happen in isolation. For many people, it is just one part of a much bigger picture, one that may also include AOD use, mental health challenges, migration, language barriers, cultural background, gender identity, sexuality, trauma, and financial pressures. When these experiences overlap, they can intensify vulnerability and make it harder to find support that truly fits.

Research and community voices tell us that these intersecting identities matter deeply. For example, experiences of anxiety and distress after AOD use can become entangled with feelings about HIV status, creating a cycle that affects both mental health and overall wellbeing. For those navigating migration and cultural pressures, the intersection of HIV status and substance use can sometimes feel inescapable, with social pressure, community expectations, and fear of judgement all playing a role.

Unfortunately, many services are not yet designed to respond to this complex, overlapping needs in a way that feels safe, relevant, or accessible for everyone.

That is why it is so important to know what kind of support is available depending on your situation — and to feel empowered to ask for it. You have the right to seek care that understands the full complexity of your life, not just one part of it. Building confidence around asking for the right support is a process, and it is okay to take it one step at a time.

If you are not sure where to start, Queensland Positive People (QPP) can help you navigate your options. You can self-refer at www.qpp.org.au/self-referral and we will work with you to find the support that best fits your needs.



Queensland Positive People

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