

Case study: Goldfields Public Health Unit (PHU) Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) Staff Orientation Program

The Goldfields PHU provides both a needle and syringe exchange program (NSEP) and NSP. All new staff and student nurses at the PHU spend time with the Regional NSP Coordinator as part of their orientation to learn about the programs, BBVs, brief interventions and safe sharps disposal. Preconceived ideas and perceptions are discussed, along with the rationale behind having NSPs in all community health centres and hospitals in the Goldfields. The insights and benefits that staff and students on placement receive from this orientation is highlighted by the following quotes:

“I had my knowledge developed, my opinions challenged and my views opened during my time with the Regional NSP Coordinator in the NSEP. I believe that having the opportunity to learn about this program and understand the harm reduction approach has tremendously shaped my future nursing practice. I have challenged my idea of a ‘drug user’ and have learnt that their story is not black and white and the choice to start or stop is never simple.”

“Often it is said it takes ‘a certain type of person to do your job’ but they are reminded it only takes the ability to look past the drug use and see the person with a reminder my job is not to ‘save’ everyone but to meet consumers where they are, here and now, and address their needs – a chat, equipment, referral or a bottle of water. We all have that ability as a human being.”



People using the NSEP can access a variety of equipment

The NSEP in Kalgoorlie is a confidential and non-judgmental service run by the Goldfields PHU

