

Positive Connections

HIV peer navigation in a sexual health centre setting



Lived experience is part of the care team.

Peer navigation creates a practical bridge between clinical treatment, community support and everyday life.

Cameron Darling (Meridian) and Ming Lee (Canberra Sexual Health Centre, Canberra Health Services)

Why it matters

Advances in HIV treatment have transformed health outcomes, yet people living with HIV may still encounter barriers that clinical care alone cannot resolve:

- stigma and social isolation
- difficulty navigating complex health systems
- delayed linkage to care or loss to follow-up
- gaps between clinical and community services.

The pilot model

Initially one day per fortnight from January 2026 (half a day per week) onsite at Canberra Sexual Health Centre.

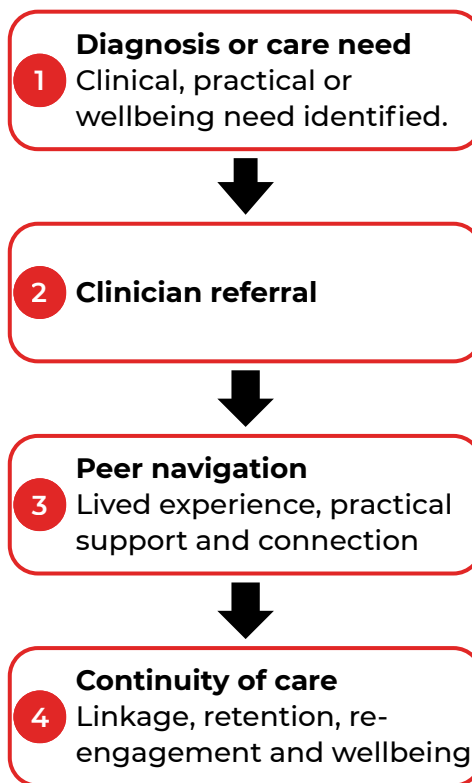
- trained peer navigator with lived experience of HIV
- working alongside clinicians as part of coordinated care
- person-centred and trauma-informed support.

How people connect

Clinicians identify people who may benefit through:

- direct consultation
- PozQoL scores
- multidisciplinary discussion.

The care pathway



What support looks like

- one-to-one engagement
- treatment education and adherence support
- healthcare system navigation
- links to community and social services.

Early impact

increased **engagement** with HIV services

stronger **retention** and re-engagement

improved **health literacy** and self management

closer clinical–community **integration**

Pilot outcomes remain under evaluation.

Measuring what matters

PozQoL

Quality-of-life outcomes are considered alongside service engagement indicators and client experience.

Why this is innovative

Positive Connections embeds peer navigation in routine sexual health care, improving accessibility, responsiveness and continuity by integrating lived experience into clinical practice.

Support is tailored to each person's priorities, not a fixed pathway.

Clinical care
+
peer expertise

A scalable model for more equitable, person-centred HIV care

Key takeaway:

Peer navigation strengthens continuity of HIV care by combining lived experience, clinical partnership and person-centred support.