

A recovery support for young people (16-24 years)

What have young people asked for?

An engagement hub or space to go for immediate support with basic needs, and ongoing one-on-one support with a whole-of-life focus and capacity building.

A place to belong with access to a peer network and social opportunities for ongoing support if needed.

ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

I may be at risk and need urgent support

I may face significant barriers to accessing services, including a lack of transport

It is likely I will not have a diagnosis and may even fear having a diagnosis

- Access is offered through immediate contact via various platforms (phone, texting, physical drop-in) and with long service hours – 10am-2am, or 24/7
- Ability to self-refer without the consent of parent/guardian
- No diagnosis required
- Outreach into schools and communities, opportunities for drop-in as well as centre based appointments

RECOVERY SUPPORTS

I may be looking to leave caregivers for the first time, in order to deal with my distress

While I have traumas to unpack, I often present with a practical need which should be addressed first (e.g. having a shower, food security, a safe home) and have limited knowledge of service options available

I need help navigating supports and services (Centrelink, employment, housing), maybe as I move out of the family home

I need to feel a sense of belonging and community connection

I need to feel heard and validated. I may have experienced discrimination, and do not like to be judged, labeled or misunderstood

- The young person is the primary client – only involve others if the young person requests
- Brokerage funds available to support young people in steps to gain independence
- Supported referrals, advocacy and practical help to access clinical and other whole-of-life supports are vital (strong referral pathways). This may include housing, pathways into skills development, life skills and employment opportunities
- Staffing includes peer workers plus support from professionally trained adults including youth workers and social workers, with the Youth Work Code of Ethics used as a basis for engagement (e.g. empowering approaches)
- Skills and capacity building can be delivered in group format, and include financial skills, self care, being an advocate, taking care of mental health, and peer sex education
- Option to drop in and connect with other young people over shared interests (and some structured activities), and including linkage to sobering up spaces if needed, as well as offering safe social spaces without the presence of alcohol and other drugs
- Deep listening and allowing the young person to speak about their experiences as equals are useful tools for recovery
- A culture that is very inclusive, celebrating diversity, with no discrimination of any group. Youth voice, representation and peer involvement are all built into ongoing service delivery in authentic ways

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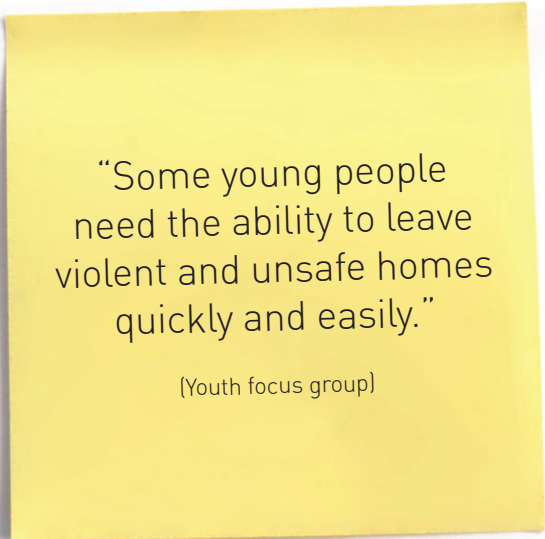
MODEL DEVELOPMENT – BRINGING IN THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

Mental health is one of the greatest concerns for Western Australian young people, with the impacts of COVID-19 only heightening that concern. Youth services are under-resourced, and many young people are not well supported by existing mental health services, especially during the night or when young people may be experiencing a crisis.

This model, building on work developed in co-design workshop 1, was co-designed in a focus group. Participants aged 16-24 had both lived experience and advocacy experience, and included Aboriginal and CaLD young people, and youth with disability and from the LGBTIQ+ community.

Young people raised concerns about high suicide risk, so services with immediate intake are essential – no fees, no diagnosis needed, no waiting periods and the ability to self-refer without family involvement.

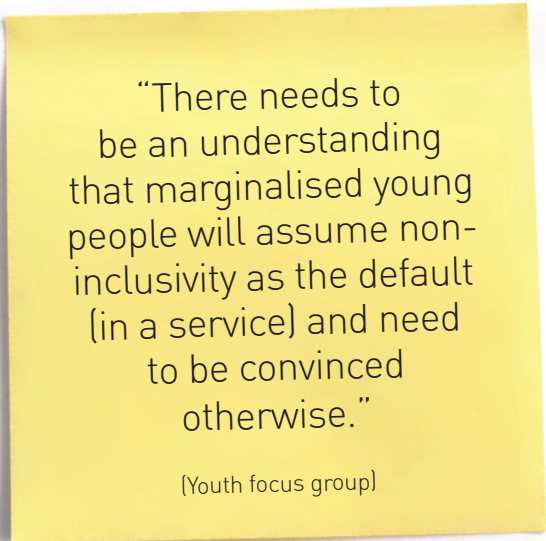
Long hours, either 24/7 or 10 am until the early hours of the morning, are needed.



“Some young people need the ability to leave violent and unsafe homes quickly and easily.”

[Youth focus group]

This ties in with the importance of physical accessibility, both in terms of location and being disability-friendly, and genuine, proactive diversity responsiveness so that everyone feels safe, welcome and important. Spaces and supports that can enable young people to feel at ease with their identity and feel connected to each other within a safe community are vital for staying well and for recovery.



“There needs to be an understanding that marginalised young people will assume non-inclusivity as the default (in a service) and need to be convinced otherwise.”

[Youth focus group]

Young people seek staff with a balanced mix of skills, with strong emphasis on peers who are relatable, as well as staff with experience and qualifications and a mix of young and older adults.

Young people described social issues that made them feel vulnerable, unsafe or unwell, especially during times of transition. Practical assistance with the social determinants of mental health – such as food security, stable housing and employment – is needed, as is navigating access to other services that are safe for young people in all their diversity.

Brokerage funds will enable immediate concerns to be addressed.

“Young people may present to a service or community supports with needs that may need to be met before being able to grapple with mental health concerns.” Service provider interview

Life opportunities – such as affordable education and employment pathways – are key to young people having hope for their future and a sense of their place in the community.

“An employment pathway that involved paid work experience or support in writing applications... would help provide young people with stability, purpose, empowerment and a foundation from which to address mental health distress.”

Aboriginal focus group

Finally, young people need to have a voice: a say in how the service is run, and the ‘ability to express themselves without fear’.