

Victorian AOD system

October 2020



Who is VAADA?

- The peak body for funded alcohol and other drug (AOD) services in Victoria
- Membership comprises health and community organisations, as well as individuals who have an interest in prevention, treatment, rehabilitation or research that minimises the harms associated with AOD use

Our vision:

A Victorian community in which the harms associated with alcohol and other drug use are reduced and well being is promoted

Today's presentation

- Services during COVID-19
- Current initiatives

AOD Services during COVID

- Services have remained open but many with reduced capacity
- Many outreach services suspended, but those still providing a service have reported increased demand (e.g. Taskforce)
- Some face-to-face appointments, but continued screening and use of PPE. Many counselling staff still working from home
- Family Drug Help – increase in calls
- Variable response to telehealth:
 - Difficult to engage new clients
 - Most existing adult clients have coped reasonably well
 - Youth have been harder to engage – prefer outreach

AOD Services during COVID

- Resi Withdrawal units have remained open, but with considerably less capacity (in most cases 50%)
- 2 units were closed temporarily following positive COVID tests (one client and one staff member)
- Long waiting lists for both Resi Withdrawal and Resi Rehabilitation. (e.g. youth withdrawal 8 – 10 weeks, adults 6 – 7 weeks – September 2020)

AOD Services during COVID – VAADA survey

- Our survey revealed across the funded treatment types there were 2385 people waiting for treatment on any given day.
- 1:4 were waiting for a comprehensive assessment and treatment plan
- Over 600 were waiting for residential programs (inc youth)
- We intend on running the survey quarterly and from there we intend on determining trends (including the impact – ongoing) of covid.

AOD Services during COVID

- Currently less demand for Resi Withdrawal and Resi Rehab, because of long waiting lists. There is a growing cohort of individuals with unmet need/risk – concern about what will happen post COVID
- Group work/day habs – variable depending upon facilities and access to videoconferencing. Some groups postponed
- Staff fatigue – working from home, not wanting to take leave, additional pressure on managers with regular supervision and check-ins

AOD Services during COVID

- Association of Participating Service Users (APSU) survey: Victorian AOD Service Users' Needs and Experiences during the COVID-19 Crisis:

<https://www.sharc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/COVID-19ExperiencesReport.pdf>

- Changes to pharmacotherapy were seen as the only positive outcome of COVID - consumers to pick up additional take-aways, telephone consultations and for 3rd parties to collect

Current initiatives in the AOD sector

- Alcohol and Drug Research Innovation Agenda (ADRIA) – Victorian government funded research grants initiative managed by Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and VAADA. Eligibility will include:
 - Based in Victoria, Focused on AOD, Conducted by or in partnership with agencies funded by DHHS to deliver AOD related services and/or programs (including harm reduction).
 - Applications can be made up to \$200,000 for projects over a 4 year period
- For further information and to view the guidelines please go to: <https://www.vaada.org.au/adria/>
- Application process has been delayed by COVID – hope to launch later this month

Current initiatives in the AOD sector

- \$140,000 for phones and data for eligible AOD clients. Funds disseminated by Australian Community Support Organisation in September 2020. Part of the Telstra Connect program.
- AOD Comprehensive Assessment Tools are being updated by Turning Point and VAADA collaboratively to include questions directly related to the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM). The updated tool will be released shortly with a training component.

Current initiatives in the AOD sector

- Rapid Point Project – DHHS (Tom Lyons) and University of Melbourne (John Fitzgerald):
 - Monitoring drug use patterns through examining the contents of needle/syringe bins, waste water and emergency department data through blood results.
- Resources
 - MDMA (ecstasy) and Psilocybin (mushroom psychedelics) rescheduling submission: https://www.vaada.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/SUB_TGA-psilocybin-and-MDMA_VAADA_28092020.pdf

Service Providers Conferences

Webinar 1: Telehelp! Tools and Techniques for telephone and video consultations for AOD Treatment

Date: Tuesday 20th October 11:30am-1:00PM

Moderator: Dr Naomi Crafti, Course Coordinator Grad Cert Telehealth, Adjunct Senior Research Fellow, Monash University

Speakers: Associate. Professor Robert Ali Adelaide Medical School & Professor Steve Allsop National Drug Research Institute (NDRI) Curtin University, authors of ['Telephone and Video Consultations: How to Identify and Respond to Substance Use – A Guide for Health Professionals'](#). Panel Conversation will include James Szetzo, team leader at Reconnexions.

Service Providers Conferences

- **Webinar 2: Harm Reduction Innovation and Challenges: What we can learn from other jurisdictions**

Date: Tuesday 27 October 2020 10:30am – 12:30 pm

- **Webinar 3: COVID-19 and the AOD Consumer**

Date: Thursday 12th November 10:30am – 12:00 pm

- **Webinar 4: Trauma, AOD and Youth Treatment**

Date: Thursday 19th November 10:30am – 12:00 pm

➤ VAADA YouTube channel:

➤ <https://www.vaada.org.au/aod-tv/>

Further Information

Jane Moreton

Phone: (03) 9412 5608

Email: jmoreton@vaada.org.au

Web: www.vaada.org.au

Thank You