

The importance of consistency and trust when delivering health promotion sessions

This supports the information in [this film](#)

Peer model and 'the power of the peer' or shared experiences



- It is often useful to have volunteers, staff or clients acting as '**champions**', demonstrating trust in the people and services involved.
- If you're talking about particular topics (e.g. women's health, screening for certain ages/genders), it may be that there is someone who can relate or engage better with the clients. **Consider who this may be.**
- **Be honest** – sharing your own reservations, positive experiences of engaging with health can help the process – but you must also acknowledge your own boundaries and what you are and aren't comfortable sharing.
- Most Groundswell volunteers and staff have been homeless themselves, it is never an expectation but they often find **sharing this experience helps create trust** and break down barriers. One Groundswell caseworker said:
"When I meet with a client for the first time, I connect with them by talking about my own experiences of homelessness. They say, 'Oh, you've been homeless.'" They gel with you then. Once they've found out you've been a rough sleeper yourself, everyone's sort of on the same level."

Relationships are key



- Talking about health is personal and can be **frightening or overwhelming**. Ensure **trusted staff** from the service are involved, especially if you're bringing in external people.

Participation - being led by your people



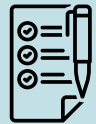
- What are their **priorities**, and can you respond with a suitable health promotion session? Maybe you could **work together** on it and deliver something that meets people's needs.

Respecting choice - giving time and space



- People need **time** and **information** to make **informed choices** about health and these topics can be very overwhelming.
- Don't be offended or annoyed if someone won't engage or says no. It isn't a no forever and **respecting someone's choice is crucial**.
- Let people know how they could join a future session, or that you are there to talk if they need ("My door is always open", or "This is my number").

Preparation



- **Let people know** in advance what is happening.
- In some cases, would it be helpful to have an informal session for key people to attend in advance to **listen** and **inform**?

Don't break promises



- It's hard in this sector – but trying to stick to agreed times is really important, as is **consistency** in staff or volunteers.
- Talking about health and engaging with a system that they may have had bad or traumatic experiences with is a big deal. Repeatedly being let down can often bring back bad memories.
- **Don't promise something you can't deliver**. Try to check in following a conversation to show you remember, listened and want to help.

Please note, for consistency and brevity we use the term clients in these resources. This refers to anyone experiencing homelessness who may be in attendance at a health promotion session. Other terms may include residents, guests, beneficiaries, individuals or service users. We encourage you to use people's names and ask their preference when you are working face to face.



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