

DIRECTIONS ACT

DIRECT NEWS



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Special points of interest:

- Big Purple Party Bus
- "Women walking proudly" and Playgroup
- Safe sex information
- No Charge Healthcare at DIRECTIONS ACT
- Mobile NSP coming to a suburb near you
- What do clients say about DIRECTIONS ACT?
- Communicating with young people

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Minimising the Harm - Youth Binge Drinking

DIRECTIONS ACT is proud to announce the *Party Safe* Project, an initiative made possible through our successful application for funding through the National Binge Drinking Strategy.

This strategy is an initiative of the Federal Government, building on community concerns about the impact that binge drinking has on society and young people in particular.

DIRECTIONS ACT recently introduced its *Party Safe* Project which aims to minimise the harms and risky behaviours associated with binge drinking by young people in the Canberra region.

Party Safe is a wide ranging initiative targeting young people who are most likely to binge drink and may be more likely to be involved in risky behaviours such as unsafe sex, violence or injury, drink driving and inability to recognise safety issues. *Party Safe* aims to inform and support safe drinking habits as well as reduce levels of damaging behaviours that can affect a young person's life.

DIRECTIONS ACT is very aware of the importance of engaging young people to

help them modify their risky behaviours. This is especially important during the teen years and early adulthood when experimentation with alcohol and partying most commonly occur.

Engagement is the key to helping young people make safer choices; information and resources help reinforce the message.

The *Party Safe* Project aims to reduce the harms of binge drinking for young people through developing information resources such as booklets and *Party Safe* packs containing information about safe drinking.

A key aspect of DIRECTIONS ACT's *Party Safe* initiative will be implemented via the "Big Purple Party Bus". Our new mobile *Party Safe* vehicle will attend places where young people gather, such as music festivals, university events, nightclub zones and other hot spots around Canberra.

DIRECTIONS ACT staff will provide young people with ready access to support, information and resources. This will include referral to health services, handing out free water and distributing safe sex information and resources such as free condoms.

Additionally, we are fortunate to have formed a partnership with St John Ambulance ACT and look forward to providing subsidised First Aid training for young people with a *Party Safe* emphasis. This will help young people know how to help in an emergency and recognise danger and safety issues.

Other community groups will also partner DIRECTIONS ACT in the *Party Safe* Project with resources and personnel to help in the *Party Safe* vehicle.



For more information on the *Party Safe* Project, contact :

DIRECTIONS ACT
on 6 122 8000.
www.directionsact.com

Maysoon... 'women walking proudly'

Sometimes we all need a little assistance to get the best possible care for ourselves and our children. Maysoon is open to all women who wish to improve their health and wellbeing in a safe and accepting environment.

Maysoon is an Arabic word meaning 'woman walking proudly.' DIRECTIONS ACT offers this program to women, with young children, who are using alcohol or other drugs or are in recovery. Pregnant women or women who have children with Care and Protection orders are very welcome.

FREE on-site CHILDCARE is provided.

The Program will include lots of fun activities, tasty lunch, menu planning for health family meals, pampering, learning new skills and helpful information all provided by professional and friendly workers, including a peer support worker.

- Sessions will be held on Thursdays over 8 weeks from 10:00am – 1:00pm.
- Term One starts on **12 February** and finishes on **2 April 2009**.
- Venue - DIRECTIONS ACT, 1 Bradley Street, Woden (opposite the Bus Interchange).
- Only cost is a gold coin donation.



Contact Ineke at DIRECTIONS ACT for more information 6122 8000.



New Playgroup starting soon!

DIRECTIONS ACT is offering a playgroup for young children whose parents have substance use issues. It is called 'Sing & Grow' and uses music in a fun and stimulating way. Attending 'Sing & Grow' is an opportunity for parents to participate in hands-on activities that can assist their children to learn new and different ways to interact and play with other children. It is a fun way to stimulate, develop and nurture family relationships in a safe environment.

Children will enjoy playing with instruments, singing songs and playing with other children.

- Sessions will be held weekly over 10 weeks and will go for approximately 1 hour each.
- The group will have a maximum of 10 families attending.
- Sessions will be held at DIRECTIONS ACT in Woden (next to the Bus Interchange).
- Sessions are facilitated by an experienced music therapist and a DIRECTIONS ACT staff member.



For more information and to register, contact Ineke at DIRECTIONS ACT on 6122 8000.

Safe Sex...Always

Protect yourself, protect your partner, protect your friends

Safe Sex

Safe sex means taking care to reduce your risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI), unplanned pregnancy and ensuring that you and your sexual partner feel safe and comfortable. Practicing safe sex will protect your health and well being because you can't tell whether someone has an STI based on how they look, dress, behave or who they have slept with.

Be aware that:

- Using condoms and water-based lubricants reduces and prevents the spread of STIs and HIV.
- Thinking 'it won't happen to me' does not offer any protection.
- People with STI's and HIV often don't know they are infected.
- STIs and HIV exist in all countries and cultures and can affect anyone.
- Safe sex prevents unplanned pregnancies.

Sexual Assault

"Sexual assault" in everyday language is a general term which includes rape, indecent assault or any unwanted physical contact. Agreeing to one type of activity such as kissing doesn't mean there is a 'green light' for other sexual contact. It's OK to change your mind and say "no" at any stage.

Unfortunately, the "Silly Season" often means that people drink more than they do at other times of the year. When people are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, they are more likely to make poor decisions and do things that they will feel ashamed of later. People are also more vulnerable to becoming a victim of sexual assault; if you're not in control of yourself, you won't be able to control the situation.

Think about ways to keep safe and out of trouble; alcohol and/or drugs and sex can be a dangerous mix.

Reducing the risks might include:

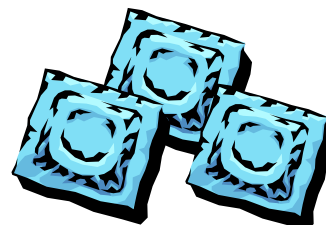
- Plan to go out with a group of people you feel safe with and who you know have your best interests at heart.
- Look out for yourself and your friends - good friends make sure that their friends are safe and make safe choices.
- Have transport plans to make sure you can get there and back safely, and carry enough money for a taxi.
- Let someone (parents, housemate, etc) know where you are going, and when you'll be home. If your plans change let them know.
- Avoid being alone or isolated with someone you don't know well. If you start to feel uncomfortable, go with your feelings, and get to a safe place as fast as you can.
- Ensure your mobile phone has enough credit so you can call someone if you need to.

Drink Spiking

Drink spiking occurs when alcohol or other drugs are added to a person's drink without their knowledge or their consent. This results in the victim becoming drunk or drug affected unexpectedly and makes them more vulnerable to sexual assault. There are a number of drugs that might be used to spike drinks, including sedatives or GHB, which might make the victim dizzy, drowsy, and/or affect their memory. However, the most common substance used to spike drinks is extra alcohol.

Be aware of drink spiking and always:

- Buy your own drinks so you know what you're getting.
- Never leave your drink unattended while you're out.
- Don't let strangers or "new friends" buy drinks for you.



Where to get help

Sexual Assault 6247 2525
 Domestic Violence 6280 0900
 Relationships Australia 1300 364 277
 Mensline Australia 1300 78 99 78

DIRECTIONS ACT 6122 8000
 Junction Youth Health Service 6232 2423
 National Domestic Violence and Sexual
 Assault helpline 1800 200 526

Althea Wellness Centre - Stage 2 Now Open

We are really pleased to announce that Stage 2 of the Althea Wellness Centre was officially opened on Monday 5th January. This final stage of Althea completes DIRECTIONS ACT's vision of holistic health. The Wellness Centre will provide better health outcomes for people with alcohol or other drug issues.

In addition to the clinics we have been running at Althea for the past 6 months, the opening of the Medical Clinic provides our clients and their families with access to a General Practitioner and a Practice Nurse from Monday to Thursday between 2pm and 5pm. Services from the Medical Clinic are at no charge for people with a health care or pension card, with a nominal fee for those who are working. Children under 16 years of age can access the Medical Clinic at no charge.

The Medical Clinic will run on an appointment system, with emergency slots held open each session should the need arise for immediate treatment of a client. In order for the clinic to run as efficiently as possible for the benefit of clients, it is important to notify us if a longer appointment is required or if an appointment is no longer needed.

A range of clinics are currently available, including:

- Medical Clinic
- Sexual Health Clinic
- Hepatitis C Wellness Program
- Mental Health Clinic
- The Youth Junction Clinic
- Naturopathic Healing Clinic



MOBILE Needle and Syringe Program (NSP) Update

The Mobile NSP has been a long time in the pipeline and we finally managed to kick off the program on the 14th of October. Things have been very slow to take off and as most of us know, it takes a lot of patience and consistency for people to feel comfortable and engage in new initiatives. We have promoted the service through our NSPs in Phillip and Civic. Also, the NSP staff have been informing all clients when they come in to pick up equipment. We have also sent information out to all of the Canberra pharmacies that sell safe injecting packs. We are also following up the possibility of promoting the Mobile NSP at the Methadone Clinic.

As Belconnen Health Centre is Canberra's busiest secondary outlet (giving out 4 & 8 packs), we have picked up the Belconnen area (days and times yet to be confirmed). The Tuggeranong Health Centre gives out the least number of safe injecting packs as a secondary outlet and Fyshwick has a pharmacy that acts as a secondary outlet although they are rarely accessed for safe injecting packs. Therefore we have ceased operating in Tuggeranong and Fyshwick. As the need arises in future for us to resume the Mobile NSP service at either of these sites, or at any new sites that are identified, we will be more than willing to schedule these in our timetable.

We are currently developing a survey for DIRECTIONS ACT's NSP clients to gather their feedback and opinions on the Mobile NSP initiative. We really want the Mobile NSP to be a viable part of our program and if there are alternatives or changes to the current arrangements that will better serve our clients, we will again re-evaluate and see what we can do to make the service more relevant and appropriate to our clients' needs.

Mobile NSP Timetable

DAY	TIME	LOCATION
Tuesday	9:00am to 11:00am	Gungahlin — Carpark on the corner of Ernest Cavanagh & Gozzard Streets
Friday	2:00pm to 3:30pm	Dickson — Carpark on the corner of Badham & Antill Streets

DIRECTIONS ACT Client Satisfaction Survey Results

DIRECTIONS ACT has a clear commitment to best meet the needs of its clients. As part of our culture of continuous improvement we undertook our inaugural client satisfaction survey.

The client satisfaction survey ran for two weeks in late May 2008 and was forwarded to clients who approached our four main programs. These were: Needle and Syringe Program (NSP), Outreach and Health Promotion, Counselling, and Arcadia House Detox and Withdrawal Services. We were thrilled that 80 clients completed the survey, covering a wide demographic across the responses. Of the 80 respondents to the survey there were 46 males and 34 females, ranging in age from 20 to over 60 years old.

The survey sought to capture our clients' experience of our client focused programs, with a focus on staff professionalism, level of service provided and service delivery. Across all programs surveyed the responses were almost unanimously positive, confirming that we are on the right track in our approach to assisting clients who seek our help.

40 respondents indicated that they found DIRECTIONS ACT staff to be "professional" and added comments such as:

"Very good service I got exactly what I wanted out of it." (Counselling)

"Happy staff, very friendly." (Outreach & Health Promotion)

"The staff at NSP... are great because they don't judge and are kind and generous with knowledge." (NSP)

"The level of care and professional service was outstanding." (Arcadia House)

We were also very pleased with the responses relating to clients' satisfaction with the specific program they accessed at DIRECTIONS ACT, with 41 indications of satisfaction, including 28 responses of "very satisfied". Again, a number of clients chose to expand on their answer by adding comments such as:

"They are excellent all the time and give great information. They give the impression that they care." (NSP)

"It's really a very supportive environment." (Arcadia House)

"Fun and outgoing staff." (Outreach and Health Promotion)

"Your counsellors are fantastic and compassionate and I am very satisfied with their service." (Counselling)

No client commented that they were not satisfied with the program they accessed at DIRECTIONS ACT.

In terms of overall service rating, the client responses speak for themselves, with 64 responses of "Excellent", 12 of "Good" and 4 of "Satisfactory". As with the program specific question, no client found the service to be unsatisfactory.

The survey allowed for any additional comments or suggestions beyond the limits of the questions, and many clients used this opportunity to let us know how they feel about our organisation. A week prior to the survey, our NSPs were required to reduce the limits of safe injecting equipment in response to an increase in demand. As this was a very recent change within the program, a number of clients expressed concern about the new

limits. Clients' feelings have since settled down as they have become used to the new limits.

Some clients regretted the closing of East Row in Civic and enquired about reinstating a drop-in centre. Unfortunately there is no current equivalent in Canberra, although increased funding would improve the chance of this happening in the future.

Suggestions and comments from our clients were extremely positive and it is evident that DIRECTIONS ACT has come a long way in recent years. Despite the many changes, and the addition of many new programs, the ethos of our organisation has been retained.

The survey results, pleasingly, show that overall our clients find DIRECTIONS ACT's staff and service to be respectful, courteous and professional across the entire organisation.



"We're here to help."

Minimise drug related harm and promote self respect and dignity for all

DIRECTIONS ACT

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Our Mission

To promote and maximise the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities affected by Alcohol and Other Drug related harms.

To improve health, social and economic outcomes by reducing the harmful effects of illicit drug use in the ACT and region.

Aims

To implement intervention, assistance and support services to drug dependant persons, their significant others, extended families and the broader community through the optimisation of all available resources within the organisation and the community.

To utilise evidence based community education methodologies to minimise the adverse community impact of drug misuse.

Our Programs

- Counselling Services
- Needle and Syringe Program
- Community Education
- Arcadia House Detox and Withdrawal Services
- Treatment Support Service
- Support Groups
- Primary Health Care
- Resources
- Outreach and Promotional Activities



DIRECTIONS ACT

Drug
Information
Referral
Education
Counselling
Treatment
Intervention
Options
NSP
Service



Talking with Teens about Binge Drinking

Almost every teenager will experiment with alcohol. Most will not develop a problem but some will drink to excess and put themselves in danger. The Australian Drug Foundation (ADF) states that support and open dialogue reduces the likelihood of problems emerging, and that “a parent’s most valuable asset is good, open communication within their family”.

The ADF suggests that parents ensure they are well informed about drinking and other drugs. However, if you don’t know the answer to a question your child asks, be honest. Find out, or help your child to find good resources.

Just as importantly, keep lines of communication with your child open. Get to know your child’s friends, and their friends’ parents. Make opportunities for family time, whether that be eating dinner or doing activities together.

Facts about binge drinking

Alcohol is the most commonly used drug in Australia but is not always viewed as being a problematic substance. The negative consequences of alcohol dependence or of binge drinking, however, can be severe. Problematic drinking can cause a range of short and long term harms – including assaults, brain damage, and death.



For more information or to someone to talk to, call DIRECTIONS ACT on 6122 8000.