

The Program

The Victorian Nurses Health Program

has been established to ensure that a full time professional service is available to address the needs of nurses suffering with substance use health issues.

It is a fully independent legal entity with a five member Board of Directors. It is supported by the Nurses Board of Victoria and the Australian Nursing Federation; however it operates independently from these two organisations.

For out of hours phone support relating to drug and alcohol issues, the program recommends that Nurses telephone:

Directline – 1800 888 236.

Directline is a 24 hour anonymous telephone support service offering counseling, information, education and referral to treatment and other support services.

Victorian Nurses Health Program

Level 8, Aikenhead Building
27 Victoria Parade
Fitzroy Vic 3065

Phone: 03 9415 7551

Fax: 03 9415 7559

Monday – Friday
8:30am – 5:00pm

Email: admin@vnhp.org.au

Or visit us at: www.vhnp.org.au

Confidentiality

The **VNHP** values participants confidentiality and unless compelled by law or with consent, the names of participants are not divulged to anyone. The program complies with the privacy act. We conduct it with the utmost discretion. Anonymous enquiries are welcome and can be attended to without the requirement of identification of the caller.



VNHP is an independent, discreet support service for nurses and students of nursing with concerns relating to alcohol and drug issues.

VNHP includes support for mental health issues associated with alcohol and drug use.

Tel: 03 9415 7551

www.vnhp.org.au

The Challenge

The practice of nursing offers no protection from illness, including alcohol and other drug (AOD) problems. Research data indicates that the prevalence of AOD problems among nurses is about the same as that of the general community; however nurses do have some particular challenges.

The community is very sensitive towards health problems among nurses and there is often reluctance by the nurse to admit to substance use problems. Nurses inform us that they can be uncomfortable in the role of health service user and these factors can contribute to late presentation for treatment or worse still, no presentation for treatment at all.

An Opportunity

The **VNHP** will emphasise the importance of early presentation into the program. We hope and expect that nurses with potential or actual problems will self-refer.

The reality is, however, that many will be “assisted self-referrals” – that is, they will come to us voluntarily, but on the advice or encouragement of a professional colleague, manager, family member or friend. In some cases referrals will be made by the Nurses Board of Victoria.

The **VNHP** will conduct assessments and coordinate intervention for nurses and students of nursing presenting with problems relating to alcohol or other drug use.

We will develop individual management plans and coordinate treatment, including the arrangement of appropriate referrals. We will supervise the aftercare and follow up and when required, plan and assist the participant’s re-entry to work.

The emphasis will be on a team approach. The management of these problems may require a range of therapeutic interventions, and the appropriate expert assistance will be obtained in each individual case.

Advice and referral will also be provided to family members and where appropriate, work colleagues (if this support relates to a specific participant, the participants consent is required).

The program will assist in the development of a supportive social network, which may involve existing support groups in the general community or the opportunity to join the **VNHP** support group if appropriate.