

Nishant Dougall

They/Them

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Key Selection Criteria Responses - Peer Test Facilitator

Essential

1. Demonstrated sensitivity towards issues faced by gay, bisexual, queer men and gender diverse people and in particular the fears and concerns about, and barriers to, HIV/STI testing.

As a queer, neurodivergent, gender-diverse person of colour, I have lived experience of discrimination, stigma, and barriers to accessing support. I have navigated the healthcare system and encountered challenges in accessing appropriate and inclusive care. I have actively sought out peer support and community resources to address my own health and wellbeing needs. Through these experiences, I have developed a deep understanding of the fears and concerns that gay, bisexual, queer men, and gender diverse people may have about HIV/STI testing, and I am committed to providing sensitive and culturally appropriate support.

2. An understanding of the impact that receiving a HIV diagnosis has on an individual and the role that the Peer Test Facilitator plays in ensuring that the person is supported throughout this process in a manner that encourages engagement in treatment and HIV peer support services.

My ex-partner, who has a diverse cultural background (part Sicilian, part Chinese), received a HIV diagnosis. Due to his upbringing, he was generally reluctant to seek help and support for any health and wellbeing issues. My task was to support him through this process in a way that encouraged engagement in treatment and HIV peer support services. This was particularly challenging due to his initial belief that a diagnosis was a death sentence, his ongoing journey with his identity, his concerns about confidentiality due to his immigration status, and his interest in chemsex. I researched various options, including specialist care in Palermo, Italy, which addressed his financial concerns and allowed him to seek support in a culturally familiar environment. I also found a chemsex peer support group at my local sexual health clinic, which proved invaluable in helping him connect with others and address his substance use. He realised he wasn't alone and found the support he needed to navigate his diagnosis and make positive changes in his life, including addressing his chemsex use.

3. An ability to establish rapport quickly and confidently with people from a wide range of cultural backgrounds to effectively elicit information for the purpose of

accurate HIV/STI risk assessment and providing peer health education & referral to relevant support.

My twelve months as a Peer Support Group Facilitator at Thorne Harbour Health have taught me valuable lessons about establishing rapport with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. I have learned that building rapport is not a one-size-fits-all approach. What works for one person may not work for another, and it's essential to be sensitive to individual needs and cultural differences when establishing trust and creating a safe space for sharing information. This experience has reinforced my ability to adapt my communication style and approach to meet the unique needs of each person I interact with, ensuring they feel comfortable and respected throughout the process.

4. An understanding of the potential ethical challenges and high interpersonal boundaries needed in order to operate without compromise in this role.

My experience working in community services, particularly in outreach and peer support roles, has given me a deep understanding of the potential ethical challenges involved. I have learned the importance of maintaining professional boundaries, respecting confidentiality, and avoiding conflicts of interest. I understand that peer support roles require a high level of sensitivity and discretion, and I am committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in my work.

5. An understanding of intersectionality within the community: i.e. how social stratification such as sexuality, race, faith, disability and/or gender identity can be a barrier in accessing services within the MSM community and to take these into account when working with service users.

My lived experience as a queer, non-binary person of colour with multiple nationalities, ethnicities, low socioeconomic status, disability, and mental health conditions has exposed me to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation. Through my studies in community services and exposure to the concept of intersectionality, I gained a deeper understanding of how social stratification impacts individuals and communities. This understanding has transformed my approach to support work, enabling me to better empathize with and advocate for clients facing complex challenges.

6. Demonstrated understanding of the principles of, and requirement for, confidentiality relating to any client engagement or interaction.

During my community services diploma, I completed a subject on legal and ethical considerations, which included extensive study of privacy and confidentiality. My task was to understand and apply these principles in a practical setting. I participated in a role-play assessment where I practiced explaining confidentiality to a new client, emphasizing the sensitive nature of their information and the limited circumstances under which it might be disclosed. This training has ingrained in me the importance of confidentiality and how to communicate it effectively to clients. I have consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to confidentiality in my professional roles, ensuring client details are kept secure, never disclosing personal information to unauthorized individuals, and actively reminding colleagues of the importance of confidentiality.

7. Demonstrated ability to engage competently with IT software programmes.

In my various roles, I have consistently demonstrated a high level of competence with various IT software programs. I am proficient in using Microsoft Office suite, including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, for tasks such as creating documents, managing spreadsheets, and developing presentations. Additionally, I have experience using project management software to track tasks, manage timelines, and collaborate with team members. I am also adept at using various online platforms and tools for communication, research, and information management.

8. Ability to convey warmth, openness, empathy, compassion and concern for the wellbeing of clients.

In my role as a Client Support Worker at Diamond Valley Community Support, I provided psychosocial support and material aid to people in crisis, integrating social justice principles into a person-centred, strengths-based, person-led approach. I used strong interpersonal skills to build rapport, actively listen, and provide meaningful support to clients. My approach was always focused on conveying warmth, openness, empathy, compassion, and concern for the wellbeing of clients.

Desirable

- **Current driver's licence:** I hold a valid Victorian driver's license.
- **Applicants with spoken proficiency in languages other than English such as Mandarin, Vietnamese and Bahasa Indonesia will be highly desirable and will have an added advantage as this skill may assist in disseminating health information to community members whose English is not the first language:**

While I am not proficient in any languages other than English, I have a deep understanding of the significant barrier that language can present for individuals from diverse backgrounds. My experience working on the diversity team at headspace opened my eyes to how deficient and lacking the majority of services and supports are in terms of cross-cultural communication, particularly when it comes to health information. I have learned that simply translating information is not enough, as there is a high possibility of information getting lost in translation or failing to resonate with the target audience. This experience has reinforced the importance of utilizing resources and services specifically designed for individuals from multicultural backgrounds. I am familiar with online resources that cater to various language groups and can recommend appropriate materials based on an individual's first language. Additionally, I am aware of the valuable services provided by TIS National (Translating and Interpreting Service) and would not hesitate to utilize their expertise when necessary.

In the context of the Peer Test Facilitator role and PRONTO, I understand the crucial importance of clear and accurate communication. I am committed to ensuring that vital health information is conveyed effectively, and I am confident in my ability to navigate the challenges posed by language barriers to provide inclusive and culturally sensitive support.

- **Previous experience using medical software and/or appointment booking systems:**

While I don't have hands-on experience with specific medical software used in healthcare settings, I am a fast learner and highly proficient with technology. I have always quickly grasped new systems and software, and I am confident in my ability to do so in this role.

In my previous role as a Business Banker at NAB, I managed a portfolio of approximately 100 small local businesses. This involved extensive use of an appointment booking system called Siebel (made by Oracle) to schedule client meetings and manage my schedule effectively. I am also familiar with various communication and data management tools, including CISVIC. I am confident that my experience with these systems, coupled with my strong computer literacy skills, will enable me to quickly learn and adapt to any medical software or appointment booking systems used in this role.

My understanding of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems is further strengthened by my studies - one of the subjects I completed in my business degree focused solely on CRMs, providing me with in-depth knowledge of their importance, purpose, and functionality. I am well-versed in the benefits of CRM systems for managing client interactions, tracking data, and streamlining processes.

- **Demonstrated experience in one or more of the following areas:**
 - **Peer support frameworks and peer-based interventions:** I have experience facilitating peer support meetings regarding AOD issues.
 - **Qualifications relating specifically to Health Promotion, Public Health, Nursing, Community Services or Peer Education:** I have completed a Diploma of Community Services at Melbourne Polytechnic.
 - **Previous experience in a community-based organisation:** I have volunteered with Thorne Harbour Health and headspace.
 - **Previous experience in phlebotomy:**