



## Support and Understanding HIV/AIDS

### Living with HIV/AIDS

Living with HIV/AIDS or knowing someone you care for is living with HIV/AIDS can be difficult at times. This can be especially true if you are from a culturally and linguistically diverse background. Sharing your worries with someone about a difficulty can make it easier and less confusing.

### Would you like assistance or a support worker:

- To help you understand information about your health (or the health of the person you care for)?
- To talk to about your situation and concerns?
- To help a family member understand about your situation?
- To help your doctor or social worker understand your needs?
- To go with you to appointments?

Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service (MHAHS) can provide the help that you need. We have male and female support workers, called co-workers, from Asian, African, European, Middle Eastern and South American backgrounds who understand what it is like to be living with HIV/AIDS and dealing with cultural issues. These co-workers can provide on-going emotional support and help you to access other useful services. You can arrange meetings with your co-worker at times that suit both of you.

### Who will know about my situation?

You may be worried about asking for a co-worker from your own cultural background or community because you are worried that people from your community will find out about your situation.

Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Service takes the following steps to maintain your privacy:

- You do not have to give your real name
- Our support workers know the importance of not telling anyone what you discuss without your permission
- Our co-workers are bound by strict laws and penalties that govern all health professionals in Australia
- We will not pass on information about your situation to any other agency without your permission
- Our co-workers are involved in a wide range of professions and are not known in the community solely for their work in HIV/AIDS which helps you to keep your privacy.

Some people in the community have prejudices about people living with HIV/AIDS. Our co-workers are sensitive to these issues and have been carefully selected and trained. Remember that if you are still worried about your privacy you can ask for a co-worker from a different cultural background to your own.

### Your rights

As a client of our service you have the right to be treated with respect and expect privacy and confidentiality. If you feel you have not been treated appropriately by staff of the MHAHS you have the right to make a complaint. You may contact the manager of the MHAHS either by phone or in writing.

### What will it cost?

There is no cost to you. We do not need to see a Medicare card or any other form of identification.

**How can I make contact?**

You can contact us, or ask your doctor or social worker to contact us on (02) 9515 1234 (during office hours). Our co-workers are not based full time at our office but we can arrange a time for you to meet one of them. If you want to speak to us in your own language, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 - for the cost of a local call. Ask for the interpreter and wait on the line. When the interpreter comes on the line, ask him/her to call our phone number for you. You will then be able to speak to us in your own language via the interpreter.

This brochure is available in English and community languages on our website [www.mhahs.org.au](http://www.mhahs.org.au)

**Useful Contacts**

Call 131 450 if you want to use an interpreter when you call any of these services.

HIV Information Line: 02 9332 9700 or 1800 451 600

ACON: 02 9206 2000

Sydney Sexual Health Centre: 02 9382 7440