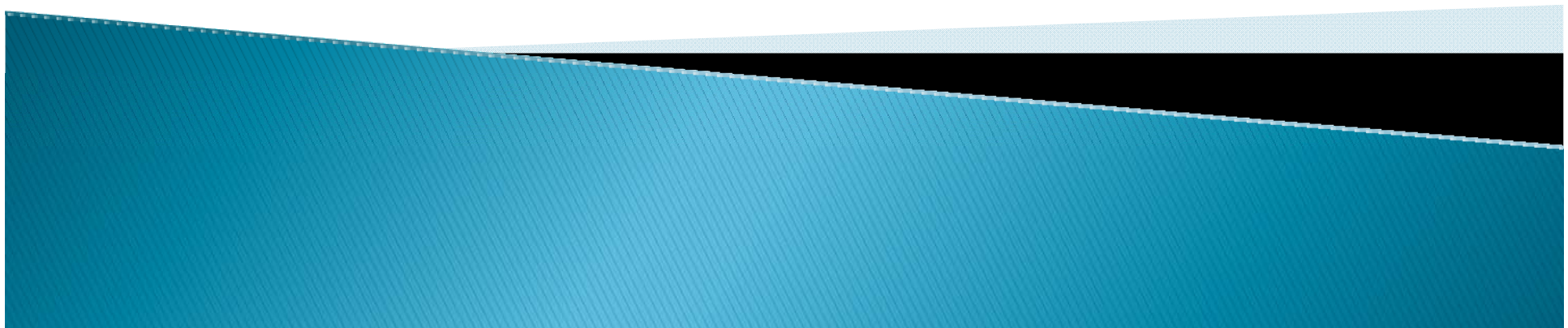


Hep C Education in the Adelaide Womens Prison

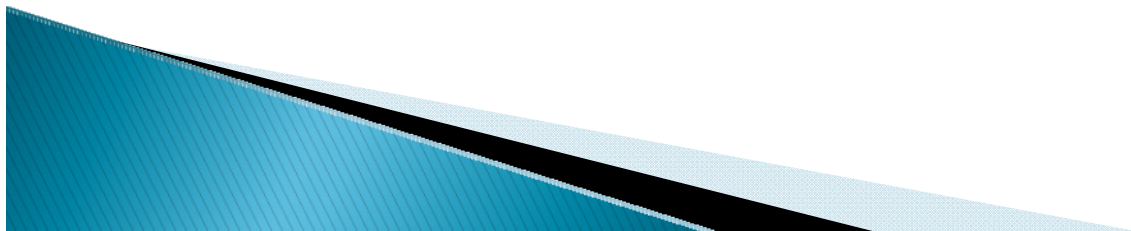
Maggie McCabe

National Hepatitis Health Promotion Conference: Grass Roots to National Action
October 2009



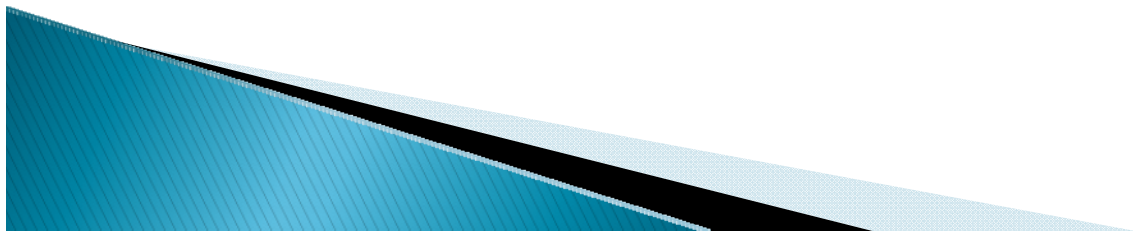
Getting in

- ▶ **Women's Circle of Health** 3 x a year (maximum of 6 hours of hep C education a year) running 3 years
- ▶ **Aboriginal Womens Art Group** one off, 7 weeks, invited by professional services (total of 21 hours of hep C education) first time this year
- ▶ **Peer Support Program** – 3 weeks, invited by professional services. Peer Support program being trialed by Correctional Services soon to be implemented (total of 9 hours of hep C education) first time this year
- ▶ Attending the AWP is not made easy – prison politics amongst prison officers
- ▶ 2009: 36 hours hep C education
- ▶ 2008: 8 hours hep C education



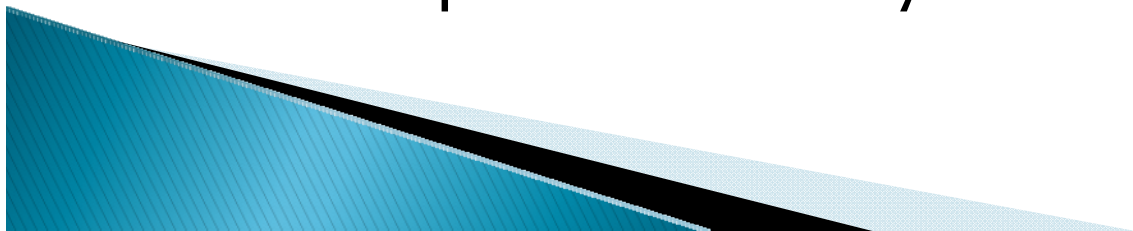
Women's Circle of Health

- ▶ HCCSA partnership with SHiNE SA and the HIV Women's Project
- ▶ provide health education to prisoners who choose to attend
- ▶ Program relies on AWP to promote it within the jail
- ▶ Women enjoy these sessions as we involve art, self care activities and biscuits
- ▶ Participants receive certificates of attendance.
- ▶ Participation needs greater recognition from AWP



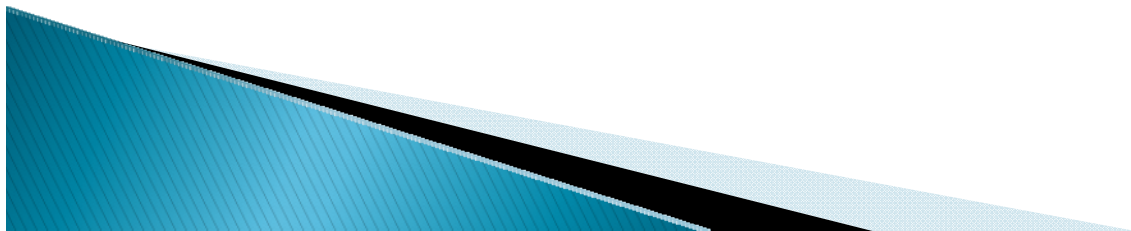
Aboriginal Womens Art Group

- ▶ Health promotion through the Arts which was conducted by HCCSA educator & peer educator and a visual artist
- ▶ Thursday morning all Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander female prisoners get together
- ▶ Unable to exhibit or photograph the womens work
- ▶ The only time the women were able to use art materials was during scheduled times with us
- ▶ Consistent workshops assisted with building trust with participants which is hugely important with hep C community education



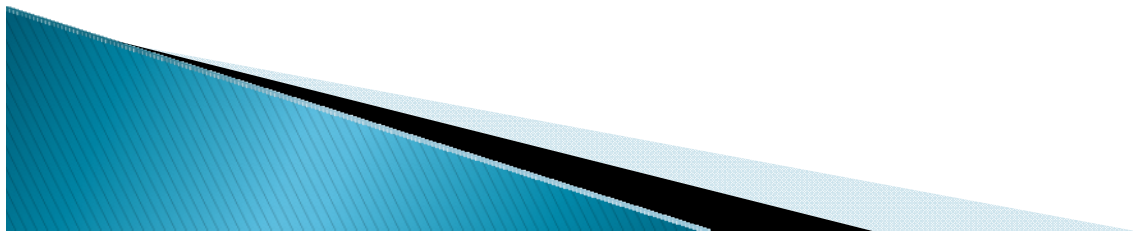
Aboriginal Womens Art Group

- ▶ Invited by professional services
- ▶ Previous Arts in Health program I had run during the Adelaide Fringe that focused working with homeless & at risk persons who inject drugs
- ▶ The AWP needed people from health organisations to fill in as the woman who had been working with the Thursday morning had become unwell



Aboriginal Womens Art Group

- ▶ Arts in health is fun, healing and creates social inclusion
- ▶ For HCCSA workers we were able to provide education in an informal, consistent & non identifying manner
- ▶ The women were able to relax, create and participate in painting which alleviated the boredom of prison



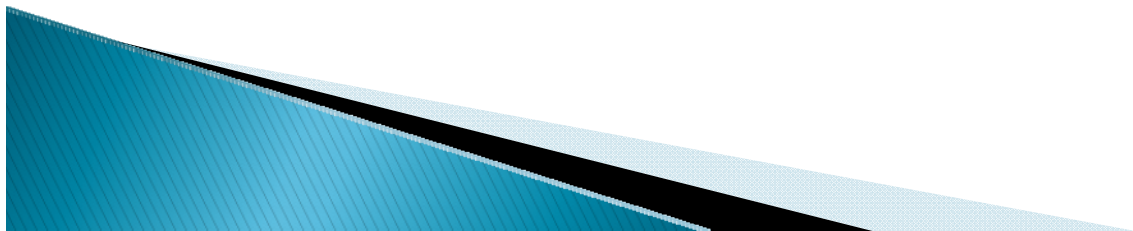
Aboriginal Womens Art Group

- ▶ The art work was rich in cultural significance
- ▶ Provided a bridge for the women to address issues around home and family
- ▶ Educate HCCSA workers about Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander culture
- ▶ Educate HCCSA workers more about the obstacles prison imposes upon hep C prevention (hep C low priority)
- ▶ Highlight the need for culturally appropriate health care for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women in prison & when exiting jail



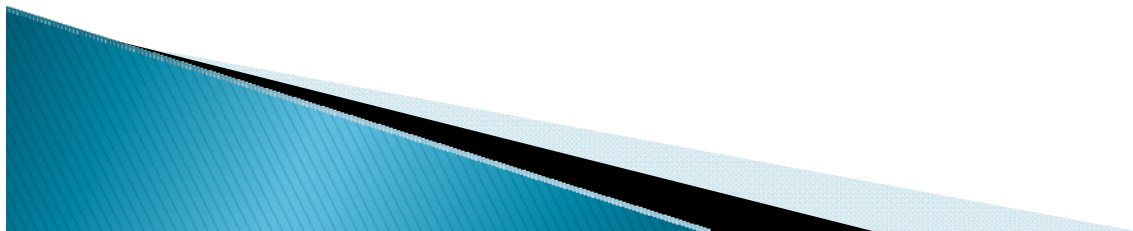
AWP Peer Support Program

- ▶ Following the Aboriginal Womens Art program we were asked back to provide education in a more formal manner
- ▶ Used resources that had been created in consultation with prisoners such as, *Staying Safe In Prison*
- ▶ Ongoing resource development and peer education inside the jail will be useful in acknowledging HCV prevalence in our jails




AWP Peer Support Program

- ▶ Many of the women who participated were not directly affected by hep C (were not at risk) but were really enthusiastic to learn more about the virus as it affects all prisoners
- ▶ Some of the women had been through treatment and were willing to talk about their experiences with hep C in the prison health system
- ▶ Some women disclosed hep C status toward the end of the training session (attained trust)

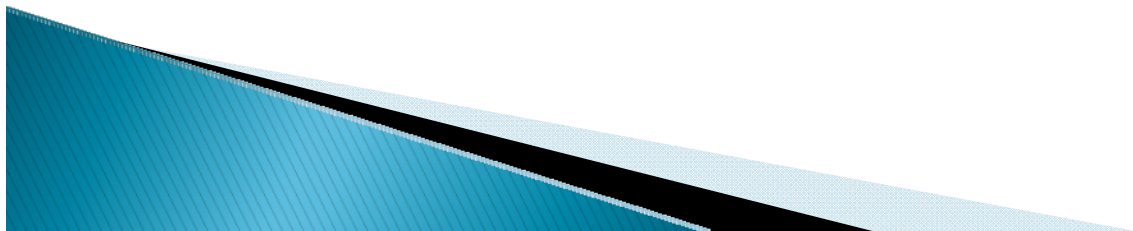


AWP Peer Support Program

- ▶ The women agree that hep C affects them all. Even if they choose not to shoot up or have a tattoo in prison, they wanted to know how to support other women by:
 - Understanding transmission as sharing your living space with someone with hep C is likely (>60% prevalence in women's prison)
 - Being empathetic (knowledge is power)
 - supporting prisoners on treatment
 - With being tested and getting test results (both antibody & PCR)
- 

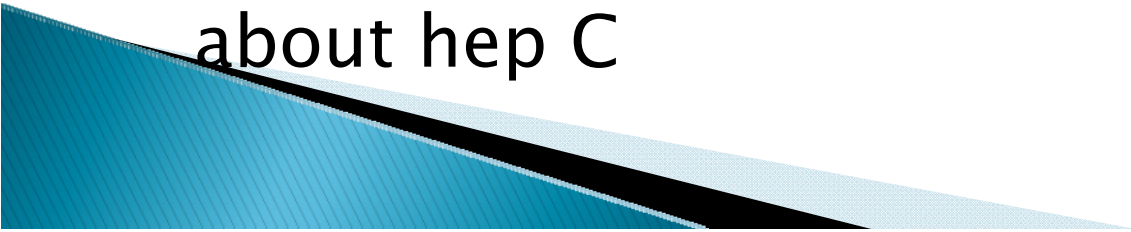
AWP Peer Support Program

- ▶ It is 5 months since the participants graduated and there are good signs that this program will be implemented.
- ▶ Obstacles are prison officers & their union not wanting the program to go ahead.
- ▶ The AWP PSP is a pilot program that has been trialed interstate
- ▶ If it proves to be successful training of Peer Eds in other SA prisons will occur



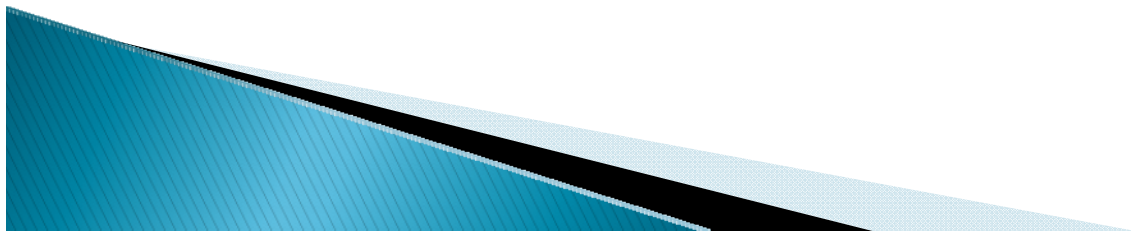
Attendance and participation

WE NEED

- ▶ The support of prison workers to promote and respect prisoners participation in hep C education
 - ▶ Prisoners attendance to be acknowledged upon their case notes that are reviewed by parole
 - ▶ Support from Correctional Services for prisoners to partake in resource development to educate themselves and other prisoners about hep C
- 

How to be and not to be

- ▶ Resources need to be developed by prisoners for prisoners
- ▶ Need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HCV education and resources that are culturally appropriate
- ▶ Need for ongoing culturally appropriate resources about hepatitis for CALD communities
- ▶ Awareness to levels of health literacy and literacy in general
- ▶ Respect for the poverty of prison and need to educate women how to inject and tattoo safely with their limited resources



Why bother?

- ▶ It would be easy to deliver a bare minimum and conform to the oppressive weight of the prison culture
- ▶ Prisoners who are eligible to do hep C treatment generally do well **HOWEVER,**
- ▶ **until NSP's and sterile tattooing equipment are made available to prisoners, hep C infection and reinfection within the prison population will continue to grow**
- ▶ prisoners welcome hep C education as it is so relevant to the lives of all women in jail

