

FIRSTSTEP

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Not-for-profit mental health, addiction and legal services hub in St Kilda.

firststep.org.au

About First Step

First Step is a not-for-profit mental health, addiction and legal services hub in St Kilda. We operate a bulk-billing GP and allied health clinic, a pro bono legal service and many other services free to vulnerable Victorians.

First Step brings compassion and non-judgement to accessible, non-residential primary care. We offer an integrated combination of services that is truly unique in Australia. We also maximise accessibility because all services are free at the point of delivery (no cost to clients) and you don't even need a referral.

At First Step we focus on Client Care, Collaboration & Integration.

Our services extend to all members of the general public that are in need, however our priority are those whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable. This may include those at risk of homelessness, addiction (both alcohol & substance) and those with poor mental health among others.

Addiction is concentrated in areas of disadvantage. Its timely and effective treatment benefits not only those suffering from addiction but our community as a whole.



We acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Yalukit Willam clan of the Boon Wurrung people and pay our respects to their elders both past and present. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.



First Step are committed to equity irrespective of cultural or linguistic background, sexual orientation, gender identity (LGBTI+), intersex status, religion or spiritual beliefs, socio-economic status, age, or abilities.

Client care



Our non-judgemental, wrap-around clinical team includes:

- › Care Coordinators and Case Managers
- › Drug and Alcohol workers
- › Addiction and mental health specialist GPs
- › Practice Nurses
- › Clinical and counselling Psychologists
- › Psychiatry
- › Mental Health Nurses
- › Infectious diseases specialists
- › Liver and Hepatitis C specialists and nurses
- › Lawyers

First Step specialises in supporting people with complex mental health issues or substance dependence (addiction) or both.

Drug use and psycho-social complexity of First Step clients

Drug Use Severity	Severe	26.2%		40.5%	
	High				
	Low	11.9%		21.4%	
	None				
		None	Low	High	Severe
		Psychological Complexity			

We have no geographical catchment for most services, are open after hours on some days and offer drop-in clinics as well as support groups.

At First Step we believe that addiction is generally a painful, long-term response to trauma. It is a health issue that must be treated with dignity and compassion.

For client referrals call (03) 9537 3177 or visit us at 42 Carlisle St, St Kilda.

Collaboration

The spirit of working together to achieve great outcomes runs deep at First Step. As individuals, as community health organisations and as a society we can achieve so much more if we work together.

A collaborative, co-located team (all on one site) is key to the relationship between clients and their clinical and legal team at First Step.

We collaborate internally through:

- ▶ GP-led Team Care Planning;
- ▶ In-house case conferencing and clinical meetings (easily facilitated by all working in the same building); and
- ▶ Care Coordinators and Case Managers.

First Step has developed many collaborative partnerships over the years with clinical organisations to achieve the best results for the people we work with. Collaboration can involve:

- ▶ Team Care: collaborative care of patients between First Step and other organisations (eg. Case conferencing and post-release care of patients shared with Alfred Health);
- ▶ First Step clinicians providing expertise and services to other organisations (eg. Our doctors attending clients at Windana Drug and Alcohol Recovery);
- ▶ Clinicians from other organisations attending First Step (eg. Gastroenterologists from St Vincent's Hospital); and
- ▶ Sharing expertise and customised database tools (eg. With St Vincent's Hospital) to maximise best practise patient monitoring across Melbourne.

First Step also collaborates with the corporate and philanthropic sectors to ensure its own financial future, and to enable our supporters to contribute to immediate meaningful outcomes as well as lasting change.



For clinical or philanthropic partnerships contact info@firststep.org.au

Integration

Poor mental health and the overuse of drugs or alcohol are enormous problems in Australia for which individuals, their friends and family, and society is paying a huge cost. In financial terms the cost is in the billions per annum; in terms of mental and physical suffering and the breakdown of relationships, the cost is unfathomable.

'Integration' refers to First Step's vision to get ahead of the issue by integrating consideration of mental health and substance dependence into every level of society.

First Step is constantly working on multiple levels to reduce the stigma around substance dependence and mental health and to advance progressive drug policy. In addition, First Step has two unique programs purpose built to advance our integration aims:

Workforce Wellbeing

Workforce Wellbeing is a unique program which combines elements of an Employee Assistance Program such as counselling, with workplace presentations on drugs, alcohol and mental health, SMS support, advice/support to managers and debriefing.

Mental Health Boot Camp

Mental Health Boot Camp is a 30-day program to maximise your mental health through a flexible combination of easy-to-implement activities. This can be done as an individual, a family, a workplace or any other group, and whilst receiving expert support from our clinical team you also raise funds for one of Australia's most unique and crucial services: First Step!



