

‘Positive Talk for Positive Health’: Piloting a Telephone Support Service for People Living
with HIV

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BPsych (Hons)

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Clinical Psychology at the School of Psychology, University of Newcastle,
Australia

November 2019

Declarations

Statement of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library**, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the conditions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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Acknowledgement of Collaboration

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis has been done in collaboration with other researchers from the University of Newcastle (UON) The larger project design, and ethics application were conducted collaboratively by Professor Jenny Bowman (UON) and Karen Nairn (HNELHD), Todd Heard (HNELHD), and Glen Ferrero (ACON). I assisted the project team in survey and intervention manual development, support caller recruitment, project delivery, and data collection. I was primarily responsible for the review of literature, data analysis, and writing of the manuscript contained within this thesis. My work was forwarded to my supervisor Jenny Bowman for review, and amendments were made based on feedback received.

21.11.2019

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Jenny Bowman for providing her guidance, insight, and patience during this project and throughout my time at University. I have greatly appreciated the support I have received over the years and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities studying at The University of Newcastle has provided. I would also like to thank Todd Heard, Karen Nairn, Glen Ferrero, Cath Adams, and Maya Lindsay for their work, enthusiasm, and passion for the Positive Talk for Positive Health Service.

Thank you to my friends, colleagues, and clinical program peers who have been part of this journey. I look forward to spending more time with you soon. A special thanks to Catt Smiley, Jesse Bourke, Jessica Gordon, Mitch Jones, Karen Calabria, and Bec Moseley. The support and encouragement you have all provided has been vital in helping me get to the finish line. Finally, thank you to my parents for believing in me unconditionally.

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Manuscript is formatted to comply with the Instructions for Authors from the Journal of
AIDS Patient Care and STDs (see Appendix A).

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Word Count: 6174

ABSTRACT

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) has progressed from an acute illness to a chronic condition that requires ongoing care. Telephone based programs have shown potential for providing support to people living with HIV and have been described as an intervention modality that may overcome traditional barriers to care. The current study explored the acceptability and feasibility of a pilot telephone support program utilising a single group, pre-post design. Participants were invited to complete a baseline and follow-up survey, in addition to an exit survey providing feedback on program satisfaction and acceptability. The program consisted of six, monthly information support calls aimed at increasing treatment adherence, psychosocial wellbeing, and support service access of people living with HIV in two New South Wales (NSW, Australia) health districts. The sample included 24 participants who commenced the program and 21 participants who completed the full intervention, demonstrating an 88% retention rate. Almost all participants (94% (15/16)) rated the program information as very or fairly useful; and two-thirds (69% (11/16)) reported accessing support services as a result of information received during the program. This study provides the first preliminary support for the feasibility and acceptability of a HIV-specific telephone intervention within an Australian setting and provides directions for future research in HIV care.

Key words: HIV Treatment; Adherence; Telephone Support; Feasibility