

Welcome Pack

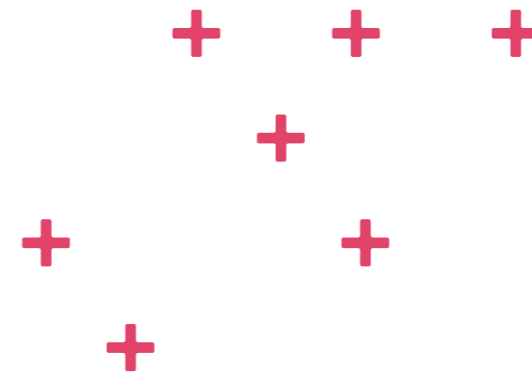
For Families and Community



Welcome to YSAS

If you or your young person need an interpreter to link in or receive support from YSAS, speak with a worker and we can organise it for free.

We are here to support you and your young person. This welcome pack helps explain what we do and how we do it.



YSAS is a non-for profit service that works with young people and their families/carers and the community to provide support with substance misuse, criminal activity, mental health and wellbeing, engagement with school and employment, and family relationships.

We understand the importance of including families, carers and the community when working directly with young people, as research tells us this often leads to improved outcomes. At YSAS we are always looking for opportunities to include a young person's broader support network, however the extent to which we do this depends on many things, such as the young person's age and their willingness to engage if family are involved.

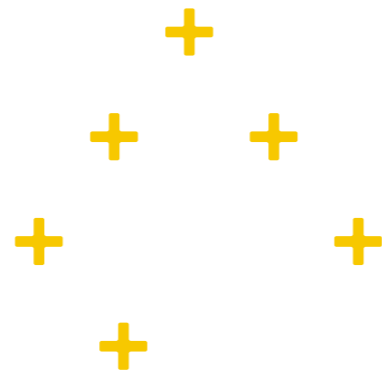
This welcome pack will introduce you to YSAS and hopefully answer some questions you may have about our programs and services.



Acknowledgement of Country

We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are Australia's First People and Traditional Custodians.

We pay our respects to all Elders past and present and understand that all of our programs and services that support young people are located on Aboriginal land that still belongs to them.



What is YSAS?

We are a specialist youth support agency that provides support to young people and their families who live in Victoria.

We specialise in working with young people who are struggling with drug and alcohol use; criminal activity (or possible future criminal activity); difficulties with managing emotions and/or negative thoughts; not attending school or working; and family conflict.



We are a child safe organisation

The safety and wellbeing of all children and young people is our priority.

We follow government guidelines that tell us how to make sure we keep young people safe while we are working with them. We choose our workers and volunteers carefully and provide everyone with training on keeping young people safe. We expect that all YSAS workers and volunteers treat young people and their families with respect. This means that they should not make young people feel uncomfortable or unsafe at any point. Our workers should never treat young people in a way that makes them feel scared, upset or embarrassed. If you want to know more, check out our Safeguarding Young People Policy, found here.



[Safeguarding Young People Policy](#)

If you have any worries about safety, you can:

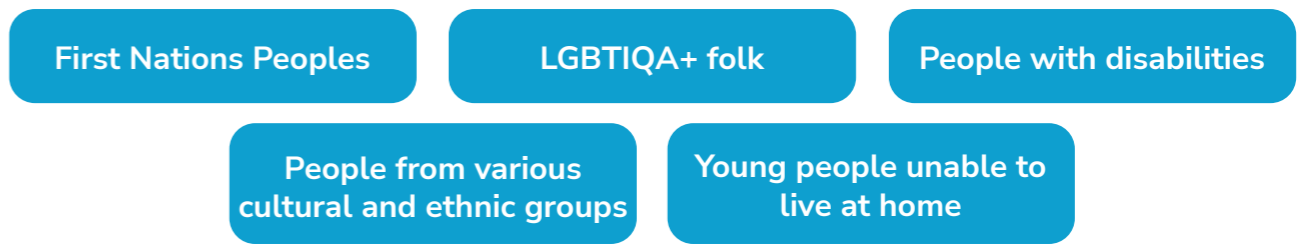
Provide us feedback by using the feedback and complaints process on page 19

or

Call YSAS' main reception on 94158881 and ask for YSAS' Child Safety Officer. The Child Safety Officer will talk to you about what they are going to do next.

Inclusion and equity at YSAS

At YSAS, we understand that everyone is unique. We welcome and work with all young people and their families from different backgrounds and identities, including:

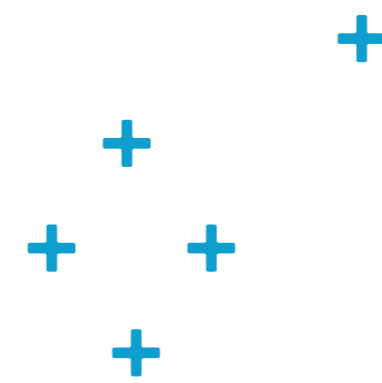


We value and respect everyone, no matter where your life journey has taken you. We do not put up with discrimination or unfair treatment of any kind and neither should any young person or their family/support persons involved in our programs and services. We want to make sure your family feels safe during your time at YSAS.

If you do have concerns about experiencing discrimination, racism, or harassment, please let us know so we can take action. For more information about how you can provide any feedback or make a complaint, see the Feedback and Complaints section below.



[Feedback and Complaints](#)



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services

We work hard to make sure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and families feel welcome, safe, and included.

Our programs and services are culturally appropriate and we have connections with Aboriginal organisations in all the places we work from.

We welcome participation and feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities regarding our programs and services. We invite First Nations community members to approach us in a way that feels right for you- whether that be speaking with a YSAS worker or contacting us through a third party, such as an Aboriginal Elder or community organisation. We prioritise providing culturally safe opportunities for Aboriginal families to participate and would welcome any ideas or suggestions you might have.

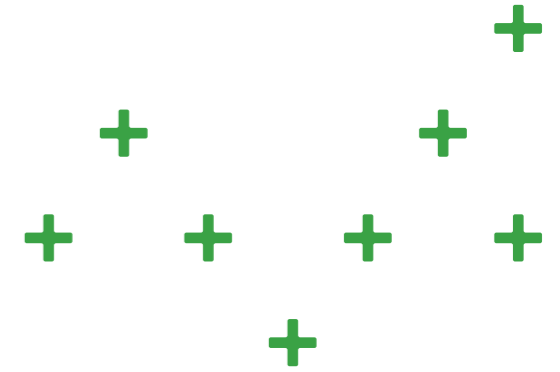
If you are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and you want to find the Community Controlled Aboriginal Health organisation in your area, you can use this interactive map to search.



Interactive map



How we help



At YSAS we believe that all young people have the capacity to reach their full potential.

At YSAS we believe that all young people have the capacity to reach their full potential. We believe that this is often best achieved with the help and support of their family/carers and community. We understand that not all young people and their families have access to the same resources and opportunities to meet their needs, cope with challenges, lead healthy lives and ultimately thrive.

We do not see young people who need our services as bad, sick or problematic. We also do not consider their struggles a reflection of poor parenting or evidence of an inadequate upbringing. We do acknowledge however that often equipping families with additional resources and support can assist young people to thrive. We see young people as having great potential but who also happen to be struggling with problems that are a result of unmet needs. The reasons for this can be complex but we do know that families and communities can be a significant support for young people.



Our philosophy at YSAS is that young people will find it difficult to resolve problems unless they:

Are **safe**, protected from harm and can respond to crisis

Have a level of **stability** and security with basic needs met such as income and housing

Have a level of **agency** and control over issues that affect their health such as trauma, grief and emerging mental health concerns

Are **participating** and engaged in satisfactory, socially valued activity such as school, work or volunteering

Have **connections** and helpful relationships with people, culture and places (this includes not having harmful relationships)

Have, or are developing, a positive **self-identity**

Our work focuses on listening to understand what the unmet needs are behind the problems that young people present with. We then make a plan with the young person to address these needs, involving the family, carer or community as much as possible. Our work often involves increasing knowledge and skill building, strengthening relationships and opportunities for engagement in meaningful activities, and supporting referrals to other agencies who can continue to support the young person and their family once our support has finished.

We also provide programs that include specific primary health and medical services for young people.

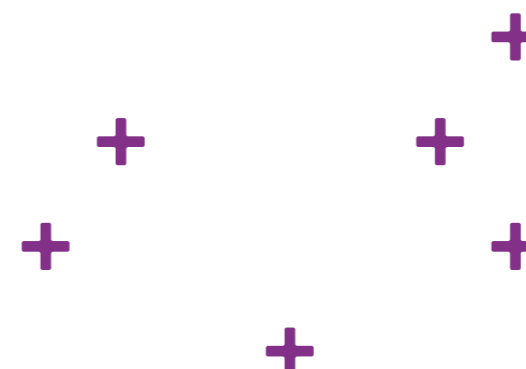
Although YSAS will support young people in times of crisis, we are not an emergency service. YSAS staff will always call emergency services and encourage family and carers to do the same in emergencies.

What will happen when a young person connects with YSAS?

When a young person accesses a YSAS program, we usually begin by getting to know them so we can understand their strengths, needs, and goals.

This happens after we have explained what services we offer and make sure the young person freely agrees to participate. This is called consent and will be explained in more detail below. We take the time to develop a relationship with a young person so they can trust us enough to share their worries and together we come up with a plan of how we might be able to help.

If the young person feels comfortable and agrees, we can invite family members to be part of the first sessions. Families are always welcome to contact the YSAS worker and let us know your concerns for your young person, even if they do not want you to attend the sessions with them. Most YSAS programs are time limited, which means that we can only provide support for a certain period. This is so we have enough resources to help as many young people and families as possible. While we do not expect that all problems will be resolved by the time we finish our work, we aim to have made some level of progress and for the young person to feel like they are moving forward.



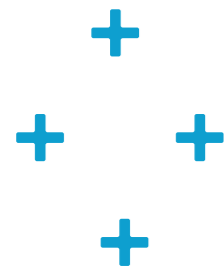
How much will I be involved in treatment and support?

We think that family, friends and the community play an important role in helping young people to overcome difficulties.

We understand that not all young people receive support from their families but we also know that sometimes young people can find it useful when families are included in our support. This is because often young people are living with their families and if they are not, they are usually still in contact with them on some level.

Young people usually get to decide how much families are involved. YSAS workers will respect the young person's right to privacy however there might be times we must include families, such as if the young person is under 15 or if we are worried for their safety. We also need to let families and the community know about how we keep young people safe from harm through our policies and procedures. This means we must tell families and communities what we do in general to make sure that young people are not being hurt while they are involved with YSAS, and what we would do if we did learn that someone was being hurt (in the past or present). All families, carers and the community have the right to access this information.

It is understandable that you might want to be involved in your young person's engagement with us, and we want to include you as much as we can. In addition to providing you with access to our policies and procedures, you can always expect to receive accurate and timely general information relating to drug use, involvement in criminal activity, and mental health education. If your young person



is 15 years or older, we will be guided by them as to how much they would like their family to be directly involved in the care they receive at YSAS. We respect young people's right to privacy and we understand that sometimes young people feel more comfortable knowing they can speak to a worker in private, without the family being advised about what was said.

We realise it can be difficult for families to understand how to best support their young person if they are not directly involved in the help provided. If they agree, we can provide general summaries about the issues identified and what action YSAS will take with the young person to assist them. We want to include families wherever we can with this, such as exploring communication skills, strengthening family problem solving skills, or building your capacity to provide effective emotional and practical support for your child. Some of our YSAS workers have been trained in family therapy and might be able to offer specialist services for families to attend with the young person. Our work includes assisting with referrals to other agencies for further family support and family therapy if required.

Can I access YSAS on behalf of my young person?

At YSAS we do not believe that a young person needs to necessarily be "ready for change" in order for us to work with them.

We think we can be supportive and helpful regardless. We also recognise that families and carers are often in the best position to support young people who are not yet ready to engage with a service or when they are waiting for a service to become available.

We encourage you to reach out to us as we might be able to help you figure out ways to engage your young person or provide advice and strategies on how you may be able to do this.

If possible, it is preferred that you speak with your young person about our services before you contact us.



Consent and privacy

At YSAS, the privacy of families we work with is important to us.

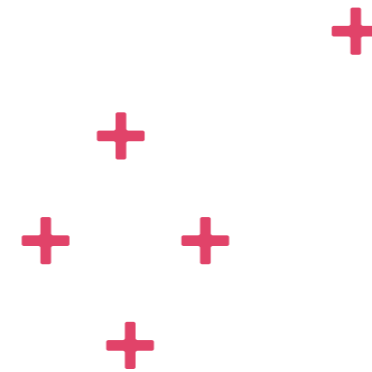
We are also a voluntary service, which means that we cannot make young people participate in our services if they do not want to.

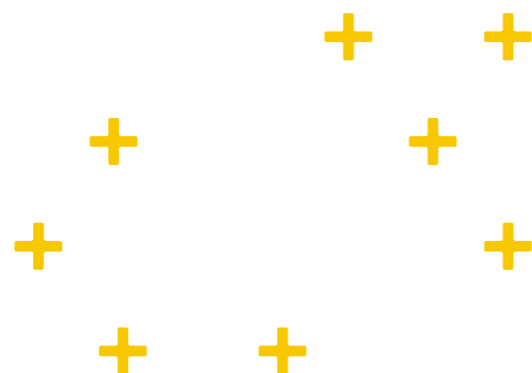
We collect personal information about young people and their families that helps us offer support. We only do this after young people have told us that it is okay, which means they have given consent. We also do not collect any personal information from young people and families until a YSAS worker has clearly explained the reason for requesting that information and what we will do with it. We are very careful with how we record personal information to make sure that it is correct and related to our work.

Sometimes a young person will require parental consent if they are to participate in our programs and services. That is because of their age (generally those under 15) or if a YSAS worker is not confident that a young person has the capacity to fully agree to participate because it is unclear if they can understand what is being explained to them (such as if disability gets in the way of this).

YSAS has to follow privacy laws that tell us we must protect your information from misuse, interference, loss, unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure. This means that no one should have access to your family's information unless you or your child have agreed.

This does not apply though if there are concerns for someone's safety (your child's or someone else's) or if a





serious crime has been committed- then YSAS is able to legally share the information with others, as we have a duty of care to keep everyone safe. If we need to do this, a YSAS worker will always try to let you know this is going to happen.

When a young person does not agree to for us to share information with you, we are still able to provide you with general information about our service. A conversation with a worker may assist you to feel more comfortable in understanding the types of support that will be offered to the young person, what you can do to assist their involvement and to consider how you are coping.

You might have the right to access the information we keep about your young person, depending on their age. You can ask a worker how to do this or email privacy@ysas.org.au and our Privacy Officer will get back to you about what to do. The Privacy Officer can also be contacted on (03) 9415 8881 and will be happy to speak with you about any privacy questions you have.



Duty of care

YSAS has a duty of care towards the young people and their families who either receive our services or are in some way impacted by our work.

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A duty of care is a legal and moral obligation that requires YSAS to work to a standard of reasonable care when doing anything that could foreseeably cause harm to others.

Our staff carefully consider decisions made and actions taken in light of our duty of care. Often there are no readymade answers to situations and dilemmas that arise in our work. Some of the things that staff consider when making decisions are:

Available knowledge about young people and/or situations

Relevant YSAS policies, program procedures/guidelines

Any legal, contractual or organisational requirements

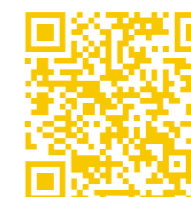
Their professions prevailing ethical standards

The rights and responsibilities of young people and families. This includes dignity of risk (i.e. the right of a young person to take some risks that affect them and that they have considered or thought about)

A young person's goals

Whether YSAS or staff are authorised to take or permit a particular action.

If you would like to see YSAS Duty of Care Policy in full it can be accessed here.



YSAS Duty of Care Policy 

Rights and responsibilities of families, carers and communities

All families, carers and the community have the right to be treated with respect, dignity and courtesy while engaging with YSAS.

Families and carers in particular have a right to know how YSAS promotes child safety and wellbeing and how to participate in decisions affecting your young person. YSAS values feedback from families, carers and the community in not only our programs and services but also in our approach to safeguarding young people. For more information, please click here.



Family and Community Rights and Responsibilities 



Feedback and complaints

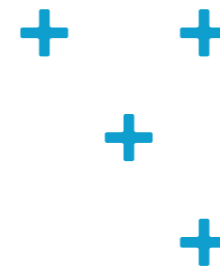
We think that family, friends and the community play an important role in helping young people to overcome difficulties.

We understand that not all young people receive support from their families but we also know that sometimes young people can find it useful when families are included in our support. This is because often young people are living with their families and if they aren't, they are usually still in contact with them on some level.

It is up to you to decide how much your family or support people are involved.

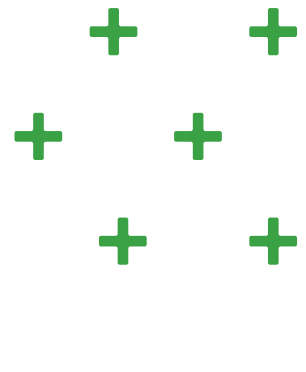
YSAS workers will respect your choices and right to privacy, but there might be certain times we need to include families in your care – this can happen if you are under 15 or if we are worried for your safety.

We also need to let families know how we keep young people safe from harm through our policies and procedures. This means we must tell families what we do to make sure that young people aren't being hurt while they are involved with YSAS, and what we would do if we did learn that someone was being hurt (in the past or present).



Family and community Participation and Partnership

At YSAS, your privacy is important to us.



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YSAS has to follow privacy laws that tell us we must protect your information from misuse, interference, loss, unauthorised access, modification, or disclosure. This means that no one should have access to your information unless you have agreed.

The only time this doesn't apply is if there are concerns for someone's safety (yours or someone else's) or if a serious crime has been committed - then YSAS has to legally share the information with others. This is because YSAS workers have a duty of care to keep everyone safe. If we need to do this, a YSAS worker will always try to let you know this is going to happen.

You have the right to access the information we keep about you. You can ask your worker how to do this or email privacy@ysas.org.au and our Privacy Officer will get back to you about what to do. The Privacy Officer can also be contacted on (03) 9415 8881 and will be happy to speak with you about any privacy questions you have.