

Perth Inner City Youth Service (PICYS) supports young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, and facing mental health challenges and other barriers to being safe, stable and well. To do this equitably we have an intentional focus on supporting LGBTIQ+ young people as well as other marginalised groups.

We are now leaders in providing support and safety for LGBTIQ+ young people facing homelessness and contributed to the LGBTIQ+ Inclusive Practice Guide for Homelessness and Housing Sectors in Australia. There is clear research and practice evidence that LGBTIQ+ people are at higher risk of homelessness and have specific needs to address. Yet Commonwealth and WA homelessness and housing service commissioning has no equity criteria or quotas to ensure services are meeting the needs of this vulnerable population through their data capture, policies, practices, training requirements and consumer participation processes.

While we have highlighted the sexuality and gender identities of the young people in this collection, many also face intersectional marginalisation based on their First Nations heritage, cultural and linguistic diversity, and variations in congenital sex characteristics.

WE HOPE THIS COLLECTION OF STORIES FROM YOUNG LGBTIQ+ PEOPLE HELP TO SHOW THE IMPACT AND BENEFITS OF EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICE AT PICYS AND HELP HIGHLIGHT ITS IMPORTANCE ACROSS HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING SECTORS AND SERVICES.

- PICYS LEADERSHIP TEAM



We acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples as the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay respect to them and their cultures, and the Elders past, present and emerging.

WE THANK THE YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THEIR FEEDBACK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These stories would not be available if it were not for the courage, bravery and achievements of 40 awesome LGBTQIA+ young people. Their Alias names are;

STAR

ELLEN

ASH

SMASH

JOSIE ROME

ELLIS

GHOST

DORY

LIAM

BLUE

ADRIAN

STARTLIGHT

ARCHIE

CASANOVA

FLOWER

MOSS

JAI

JADE

CHYNA

DOM

MAY

KRUMPY

CHARLEY

THECONSEQUENCEOFTHEINDUSTRIALREVOLUTION

SPOONS

ADAM

RUBY

SCOT

JOHN

EZRA

ALIEN

MORPHEUS

RENEE

FLORENCE

JAZZA

HARMONY

THEO

TRINITY

PAPER CRANE

T

We also acknowledge the PICYS Youth Workers and team for the “trustworthy” relationships and skilled Youth Work you share, and for your genuine interest in the wellbeing and opportunities for each of these young people.

PICYS LEADERSHIP TEAM,

MADDII ARCHER (SHE/HER) HOUSEHOLD NETWORK COORDINATOR

DANI WRIGHT TOUSSAINT (THEY/THEM) YOUTH SERVICES MANAGER

ANDREW HALL JP (HE/HIM) PICYS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



FOREWORDS

PICYS is dedicated to empowering young people. At the core of our work is a steadfast commitment to listening deeply to their experiences and perspectives. Our Most Significant Change storytelling practice is a key component of this commitment, allowing us to build trust, co-create solutions, and witness young people transform their lives. By embedding this practice across our organisation, we continually refine our support, share knowledge, and strive to create a brighter future for young people in Perth and beyond.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the 40 courageous young people who have bravely shared their stories for the benefit of us all. To protect their privacy, all names have been changed to aliases and their accounts remain entirely unedited.

These young individuals have been actively supported through PICYS Household Network or Pillar services between 2017 and 2024. This edition of PICYS Most Significant Change Young People's Stories specifically focuses on the experiences of LGBTIQ+ youth.

We chose to highlight their voices because they are often overlooked and misunderstood. Their unique challenges, including discrimination and stigma, can intensify feelings of isolation, particularly when combined with homelessness. This can have a profound impact on mental health and overall wellbeing.

Our goal is to foster a society where everyone feels safe, valued, and celebrated, including LGBTIQ+ individuals. We hope this publication contributes to creating more inclusive families and communities.

TO THE 40 BRAVE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO SHARED THEIR STORIES, WE OFFER OUR HEARTFELT APPRECIATIONS AND RESPECT.

**ANDREW HALL JP (HE/HIM)
PICYS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

“PICYS JUST MAKES ME FEEL SAFE AND LIKE I’VE GOT HELP WHEN I NEED IT. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO ME BECAUSE I DON’T HAVE OTHER SUPPORTS LIKE THAT IN MY LIFE. THEY ARE LITERALLY ALL I’VE GOT.”

- ADRIAN, 20 YEAR OLD, TRANS MALE

It is evident that LGBTIQ+ young people are disproportionately represented in the homelessness system in Western Australia, where they encounter numerous barriers and discrimination within available services. The work undertaken by PICYS for these young people is crucial, as every young person deserves to be treated with fairness and acceptance, particularly when seeking essential services such as housing and mental health support. For the past 40 plus years, PICYS has established a vital safe space for LGBTIQ+ young people, and this support is more important now than ever. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to PICYS and to the courageous young people who have shared their lived experience stories. Their storytelling has the power to foster empathy and drive the changes necessary for the well-being of young LGBTIQ+ individuals. The Youth Pride Network looks forward to continuing to work alongside PICYS in creating and maintaining safe spaces for all LGBTIQ+ young people.

CHLOE CLEMENTS
YOUTH PRIDE NETWORK COORDINATOR

We all need to feel safe, seen, cared for. For all too many young people, their connection with PICYS can be their first experience of these basic human rights. They are met where they are at, accepted for who they are and considered as a whole person, not a set of diagnoses or category. Youthlink provides mental health support to many of the same young people PICYS serves, young people for whom mental health difficulties are exacerbated by their experience of marginalisation due to being LGBTIQ+, often contributing directly to their homelessness. PICYS role is fundamental to our capacity to help young people improve their mental health. Our partnership with PICYS and collaboration in supporting our young people to flourish, is a cornerstone of our service, it has been for decades and we sincerely hope will be for decades to come. Congratulations and a very big Thankyou.

SALLY GREEN
CO-ORDINATOR YOUTHLINK
NORTH METRO HEALTH SERVICE

At PFLAG+ Perth we love PICYS for 'walking the talk'. When you enter their Leederville base or their office space at Lotteries West House the atmosphere is warm, welcoming, inclusive and empowering. The relaxed and comforting spaces may distract you from the frontline, life saving work PICYS do, in the trenches with our most vulnerable young people.

One of the most powerful tools PICYS utilises in their work and in their space in the youth homelessness sector is their unshakable BELIEF. In their clients, in their services, in the abilities of themselves and others, in holistic, ethical care and in community. Whenever possible they will build functional and respectful relationships beyond their young clients, to their client's families and other supports, to other services and agencies and with the wider community. PICYS' ability to embrace potential and nurture it into reality is unparalleled and it has been a privilege to watch them grow from strength to strength.

Producing this publication, elevating the voices of those least likely to be seen and heard, is indicative of PICYS commitment to and focus on the young people they serve and the futures they work to be a stepping stone into. It is a privilege and an ongoing source of inspiration to have PICYS as part of our PFLAG+ Perth family!

Thank you,

KATE SALINGER
PFLAG+ PERTH

The work PICYS does is unparalleled and uniquely impactful. I have seen the work of PICYS in several capacities now and can see the significant development and growth the young people go through.

Catering for a particularly disadvantaged cohort, who – rightly or wrongly – often feel unwelcome in mainstream services, PICYS meets the young people where they are and supports them on their journey.

Any engagement with PICYS will leave you instantly inspired and unquestionably supportive of this vital service.

CONRAD LIVERIS
CHAIR WAAC

FOREWORDS

It is clear that LGBTQIA+ young people are vibrant and powerful, however also sadly true that they are not provided the same safety and opportunities that all young people deserve to live their lives authentically, grow, and be nurtured. Young trans and LGBTQIA+ people face high rates of homelessness, exposure to violence, and social rejection, which lead to poorer mental health and general wellbeing outcomes.

The services that are offered by PICYS, and the services that are made possible by partnerships between PICYS and other organisations including Transfolk of WA, are therefore crucial to ensuring that trans and LGBTQIA+ young people are supported just like all young people should be. We are delighted to work with PICYS to deliver support to young people in the trans community. Their ongoing contribution to the wellbeing and safety of this group is absolutely crucial.

DR THOMAS DRAKE-BROCKMAN
CHAIRPERSON, TRANSFOLK OF WA

As the Director of Pride Professionals, I am honoured to support the Perth Inner City Youth Service (PICYS) in their essential work with at-risk LGBTQIA+ youth experiencing homelessness. Our partnership with PICYS, now in its third year as the charity partner for the Perth Pride Professionals Mentoring Program, underscores our shared commitment to building a safer, more inclusive community where every young person can thrive.

PICYS is a beacon of hope and resilience for our vulnerable community members. They are uniquely equipped to meet the complex needs of LGBTQIA+ youth who are homeless or at risk, providing not just shelter but a haven where young people are welcomed with compassion, understanding, and support.

I sincerely thank Andrew Hall and the PICYS team for their tireless efforts. Together, we can drive the necessary changes to ensure that every young person can live with dignity and hope regardless of their background or identity.

ASHTON WARRICK
ORGANISATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST/DIRECTOR
PRIDE PROFESSIONALS / ORGSIGHT

At the heart of Perth Inner City Youth Service (PICYS) lies a deep commitment to empowering young people by truly listening to their experiences and perspectives. Through their consistent storytelling practice, they have not only built trust and co-created solutions but also witnessed the incredible transformations of those most vulnerable they serve. This has also allowed PICYS to refine their support, share invaluable knowledge, and work tirelessly to create a brighter future for young people in Perth and beyond.

The courageous young people who have bravely shared their stories in this edition. These stories, drawn from experiences between 2017 and 2024 within PICYS Pillar services, shine a spotlight on the lives of LGBTQIA+ youth. These voices are too often overlooked and misunderstood. The unique challenges these young individuals face including discrimination, stigma, and homelessness can exacerbate feelings of isolation, profoundly impacting their mental health and overall well-being.

PICYS has been providing that support and advocating for systemic change for decades. The work of PICYS requires specific expertise and needs to be funded and supported.

MICHAEL FELIX
CHAIRPERSON, PRIDE WA

It is wonderful to read the LGBTQIA+ Young People's Stories in the PICYS Most Significant Change Report. PICYS fills a unique gap in service provision in Perth, particularly for trans and gender diverse youth. Reading the stories in this report clearly demonstrates the profound impact that PICYS makes on the lives of young people when they are at their most vulnerable. PICYS helps young people develop their skills and independence, and find their confidence, their voice and their vision for the future. There is no greater achievement than seeing a young person blossom. Congratulations to all the young people and the PICYS staff on the incredible work that you keep on doing!

PROFESSOR ASHLEIGH LIN
SCHOOL OF POPULATION AND GLOBAL HEALTH,
THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Since 2019 StreetSmart Australia has been a funder of the work PICYS undertakes with young people in Perth. In particular we started to support this vital service due to their specific work with LGBTQI+ young people. We know that these young people experience homelessness at a rate at least double that of their peers and are particularly vulnerable to mental health illness and self-harm. The work that PICYS undertake is specialised and much needed.

ADAM ROBINSON
CHIEF IMPACT OFFICER / FOUNDER STREETSMART AUSTRALIA

Many young LGBTQI+ Western Australians are happy and healthy, but this cohort is over-represented among those with poorer mental health and unstable accommodation. This is exacerbated by experiences of stigma, discrimination, abuse, violence, and exclusion, making services that specifically cater to this group vital. Young LGBTQI+ people are at the heart of PICYS, an organisation with a rich history of doing work at this intersection. As we continue to work toward the elimination of discrimination and disadvantage toward LGBTQI+ people in WA, PICYS occupies an essential position in our community.

MISTY FARQUHAR OAM
RAINBOW FUTURES WA

The Youth Mental Health team at Telethon Kids Institute are fortunate enough to have partnered with PICYS on several research projects, sharing a vision of supporting marginalised young people to live safe, happy, and healthy lives. We are extremely grateful for the work PICYS does and, in particular, their inclusivity in ensuring that every young person feels seen and supported. The PICYS team are passionate, dedicated and generous with their time, hearts and skills. We thank them, as well as the young people who have shared their stories, and commend them on their openness and bravery.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR YAEL PERRY,
HEAD, YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH,
TELETHON KIDS INSTITUTE

Humans are inherently driven to seek safety as a means of survival. For young people, feeling safe at home, in school, in society, and within their close relationships is essential for healthy development into adulthood. Unfortunately, not all young people experience this security, particularly many LGBTQI+ youth who face rejection, violence, and discrimination from family, peers, and the broader society. These challenges are encountered in person, through media, and on social media, with well-documented negative effects.

As the Western Australian partner of the national QLife helpline, which provides free and anonymous LGBTQI+ peer support and referrals, Living proud witnesses firsthand the impact of these issues. We hear from young people and adults grappling with mental health challenges, homelessness, suicidal thoughts, family and relationship issues and feelings of shame.

For many young people, connecting with services like PICYS can be life-changing. The acceptance, understanding, and support they receive help them envision a future they might not have thought possible. PICYS offers this vital support every day, and it is a privilege for Living Proud to continue our partnership with them, recognising the crucial role they play in providing safety for countless young people.

MEAGHAN HOLDEN
CEO, LIVING PROUD

“IT’S GOOD TO HAVE PEOPLE YOU CAN TALK TO AT PICYS, I DON’T USE DRUGS AS MUCH AS I WAS, I’M MORE CONFIDENT THAN I WAS AND HAPPIER THAN I WAS. PICYS HAS HELPED ME WITH INDEPENDENCE, HOW TO LIVE ON MY OWN, I ALREADY KNEW HOW TO BUT NOW I HAVE MORE SKILLS, LIFE SKILLS AND MORE PEOPLE SKILLS”.

- CHYNA, 19 YEAR OLD, GAY TRANS PERSON

SINCE BEING INVOLVED WITH PICYS WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE FOR YOU?

STAR

19 YEAR OLD, LESBAIN NON-BINARY PERSON

PICYS has changed my life in very positive ways. Without them at times I would have been homeless, gone without essential food items and toiletries, and wouldn't of had someone to support me through all the tough times. The most significant change has been the support I've been given through my mental health and the help the PICYS youth worker has given me to find housing when I needed it. The impact it's had is great because there has been times where I didn't think I would make it through, but then I knew I had the support of PICYS and it helped a lot. I would have been homeless so many times if it wasn't for the PICYS youth worker helping me with housing and crisis referrals and this helped me keep on track. PICYS have helped me with coping skills, accommodation, food needs, a safe place to come to drop in and have a yarn. An amazing youth worker who supports me through everything I go through. I wouldn't call PICYS a service I would call them my family.

ELLEN

18 YEAR OLD, NON-BINARY PERSON

The most significant change for me is how independent I have become since working with PICYS. I now feel confident in attending appointments and going grocery shopping by myself. I also have better living skills, such as using a washing machine and cleaning. I have developed especially impressive toilet cleaning skills. I also have a better understanding of tenancy related tasks, such as budgeting, paying rent, and leases. I can set goals better. Being in a healthier environment has put into perspective where I want to be in life. I can set goals better. I am now studying at university, and I have attained a part-time job.

ASH

19 YEAR OLD, (TRANS) WOMAN

The most significant change for me is an increase in housing stability and a future plan for where to go next. I have more education and understanding for budgeting and independent living (eg. How rent assistance works). It's been a good base for experimenting and getting to know how to manage my money well to live independently. This has reduced my fear for living on my own without parental support and to be able to 'hold my own' and I've gotten more independence.

I've also had more thinking time to figure out what I want to do with my life and where I want to go - a safe quiet place to be able to think about my prospects. It's been a canvas for what I needed for me to foster some self-improvement and keep my mental health stable.

These are all important things that people need that are good.

SMASH

22 YEAR OLD, NON BINARY PERSON

Getting housing changed everything, it allowed me to work on my goals. I made friends at PICYS, the friends are better influences, who are also working on goals and are more like minded. I was able to be admitted into hospital for a long term stay. During my stay I was able to work on my mental health, get stable, stay away from drugs and people that were bad influences. Between hospital and Ngatti PICYS helped keep me stable by always talking to me, showing me someone cares and helping me get to appointments. I love who I am now.

JOSIE ROME

22 YEAR OLD, GAY TRANS MAN

If it weren't for PICYS there may have been incidents in my life that would have landed me in hospital or worse. The people at PICYS, both the workers and young people, were the first to listen to me when I was severely struggling this year.

I'm used to handling everything myself, such as leaving my abusive family, homelessness, financial struggles, isolation, and poor mental health. However, this year became too much, with me getting into yet another abusive housing situation. I went through this without any friends or mental health support due to COVID and other factors. I had severe mental breakdowns and thoughts of suicide, even though I was trying my best to improve my life.

PICYS was the first place, in a long time to give me what I needed. Even if it was just some food, people to talk to and a safe location to visit, PICYS was able to provide me with all of this. Having access to a youth support worker was the most beneficial change to my life. I feel like I am cared for and don't have to suffer alone, like I was used to in the past. I got a drive to try again, and I now keep myself safe. Good people who have resources to care as well, changed my life. Saying they saved my life is not an understatement.

ELLIS

20 YEAR OLD, PANSEXUAL NON-BINARY PERSON

Having a youth worker with PICYS has definitely made my life easier and significantly improved my mental health. My youth worker assists me with important tasks like making appointments + getting to them, calling, or speaking on my behalf for important matters such as Centrelink, and is the one who managed to get me into therapy when most other places were turning me away. These are only minuscule examples of the things she's helped me with.

She is one of my strongest supports and having her to lean on when I need someone has legitimately been lifesaving at times. There were so many times when I felt so alone, overwhelmed and like I couldn't get anything done and she pulled me up and made sure we got things I needed to do done.

The most significant change has just been having someone so willing to go out of their way to support me and make sure I'm able to do the things I need to do whilst also making sure my mental health is as stable as it can be. I'm legitimately not sure where I'd be without my Youth Worker's help and support.

GHOST

20 YEAR OLD, LESBIAN TRANS FEMALE

PICYS has given me safety and space to grow. I was doing lots of different types of drugs and experimenting with that stuff. I've probably done every drug under the sun ... and moon! And to be honest I still miss that life a bit. Part of me still wants to do drugs and live that lifestyle. It was kind of fun and I had no responsibilities. But I know it wasn't good. I don't miss the feeling of not having anywhere to go and always being scared and in fear. One time some dude stomped on me while I was sleeping. But of course, I got used to that lifestyle. I learnt to read the streets. I got good at assessing things, finding places that are safe, staying close to places that are accessible 24/7 like IGA. I learnt what people to stay away from, and what people were ok. I met a lot of good people. It taught me that things like homelessness and poverty don't discriminate – they can affect anyone. I lived like that for more than half my life. I was stuck in a cycle that lasted over 9 years and I couldn't get out of it.

Now I'm clean and I have a place to stay. My ability to handle my mental health has improved. Before I was just living hour by hour, minute by minute trying to survive. It was so much harder to focus on anything else. I feel like it wasn't me – I can hardly remember any of it.

Now I have time to reflect on things, and that is scary too. Not having anything to worry about is scary. Now I can actually live my life, but I don't know how to do it yet. I'm excited to study though. I guess being in PICYS housing has given me motivation, but I'm still figuring it out. I know I'm still in the early stages of recovery, it's only been like 4 months or something. I'm doing my best to stay positive and focus on the present. I'm practicing positive thinking, replacing bad thoughts with positive ones. Everything you do is done in the current moment. If you focus on the now things will come because now is the only time that exists. Now is the most important thing.

DORY

19 YEAR OLD, LESBIAN FEMALE

PICYS saved my life. My youth worker and the staff at PICYS supported me with transport, housing, counselling, food, toiletries, and more. They also arranged fun activities for me to take part in. They boosted my mental health and helped me access other services with ease. My youth worker and the others were kind and listened to everything I had to say without rushing my recovery. Not being pressured into making quick decisions and fast changes was so important to me.

**“THEY HAVE NEVER JUDGED ME FOR MY UPS AND
DOWNS. I DON’T THINK I HAVE EVER FELT MORE
SUPPORTED IN MY LIFE. SIMPLE AS THAT.”**

- CHARLEY, 25 YEAR OLD, PANSEXUAL TRANS MAN

LIAM

18 YEAR OLD, GAY TRANS MAN

I’ve been with PICYS for almost a year now and it has also been the best year of my life. Coincidence? I think not. Throughout this year I have had a reason to get up in the morning for drop-in and appointments. I have made friends that I value and would be worse off without. I have a place to talk about how I feel without judgement. The most significant change to my life as a result of PICYS though is being able to stop couch surfing and actually live in a place where I feel safe.

Before I started going to PICYS, I was living with my mum who is emotionally and mentally abusive. She would gaslight me, yell at me, purposefully trigger panic attacks, and I didn’t feel safe. I was extremely suicidal. I would stay in my room all day with the door closed so I wouldn’t do anything to set her off, so eventually I just took a bag of clothes and left. Then I started going to PICYS and got to talk out the issues and trauma that came from that and start making a plan to live somewhere stable, and things started getting better. I was more optimistic, getting help and seeing a psychologist, talking regularly with my case worker, and actually had a support network. I felt cared for, probably the kind of care most kids get from their parents that I just wasn’t getting.

After a friend and I got into an argument and I was asked to leave her couch, I suddenly felt hopeless again and attempted suicide. The day after I went straight to PICYS to seek help. They told me about crisis accommodation and I decided that was the best option for me. I was too anxious to call alone so they did it with me. Being in crisis accommodation was the first time I felt safe in a house I was living in. After my time was up at crisis, PICYS helped me move into transitional accommodation for the year which gives me time to sort out my next move.

The transitional accommodation PICYS gave to me is the best gift, because it is safety, stability, and comfort. I feel supported and cared about like no one has for me before. They made the most significant change in my life - feeling safe.

BLUE

18 YEAR OLD, PANSEXUAL NON-BINARY TRANS MASCULINE PERSON

It has been over a year since I have been working with PICYS. Before then I was living at home, where I did not really feel comfortable enough to be who I really was. PICYS made it possible for me to move out and to be independent for myself. They have also made it possible for me to seek therapy, change my name and gain access to the Hormone Replacement Therapy I needed to begin my journey in transitioning. PICYS has made me feel like I have a community that I can go to, where I am safe from judgement and able to speak freely about things that have affected me in multiple areas of my life.

BLUE AT 20 YEARS OLD

Definitely the biggest change would be the fact that for the first time since moving out in 2020 I am in stable housing that I know I won’t have to leave in a year. That’s made it possible to study and engage in mental health practices and all that sort of stuff. But definitely the housing has been the biggest change and that change has led to so many other changes. I just feel like I can function a lot more now that I have my space and as I slowly start to build that space up to be my home, I’ve felt more at home and able to access supports easier. Also, the support in studying as well with the funding to get stuff to set up my study space. The funding was just for my study space but because that space is nicer it’s now easier to make things nicer around it and slowly build that out. All these changes have led to a better sense of safety and security in my life. This new sense of security has helped me achieve greater goals in advocacy and helping others find their voice, which is my passion.

ADRIAN

20 YEAR OLD, TRANS MALE

Engaging with PICYS has made a significant change in my life because of the workers involved.

I started at PICYS in 2018 when I decided I wanted to live independently away from home. While studying at school, my Household Network youth worker had helped me secure a place but I didn't end up going due to family circumstances. However, I felt very welcomed in the drop-in centre so I decided to start going to drop-in on a regular basis.

While I was homeless PICYS was a safe place to go on the days I needed somewhere to eat, shower, and wash my clothes. I could always go there on drop-in and get the support I needed. If I needed help with anything there was always someone there volunteering to help. Overall I felt welcomed and safe.

In late 2019 I engaged in the PillarProgram and got my Pillar youth worker. She took me to doctors appointments weekly until I got my diagnosis of POTS (Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome) in May 2020 which made a huge difference in my life. Having a diagnosis would mean I could start treatment. I didn't have the guts to go to the doctors by myself and push for answers. But my Pillar youth worker supported me in finding answers until I got them. She also took me to hospital appointments and helped pay for my first lot of meds which helped as I was financially unstable and homeless at that time. My youth worker helped me through a lot of hard emotional feelings with my mental health and ongoing issues in my life and gave me advice I needed. She still supports me to this day when my current worker is on leave.

In Mid 2020 I was reallocated a new PILLAR youth worker and they helped me through the worst the past year from

supporting me at court fighting for my rights to being there when I needed a listener. I came out to the youth worker as trans in late 2020 and they helped me get the right support I needed and helped me with linking into RPH Sexual Clinic and onto my hormones. The youth worker has also taken me to doctors and hospital appointments and supported me in pushing for more answers on my ongoing chronic illnesses. My youth worker currently takes myself and my assistance dog Bruno to his training so he can support me ongoing. And helps with organising FoodHampers on the weekly basis.

PICYS just makes me feel safe and like I've got help when I need it. This is important to me because I don't have other supports like that in my life. They are literally all I've got.

STARLIGHT

21 YEAR OLD, ASEXUAL FEMALE

I was accepted into PICYS housing, which was much more suitable for me than my previous accommodation. It was safer, more secure, and an all-round better environment. My youth worker helped me understand the lease and other tenancy requirements. She also helped me move in and would mention causes of concern in the house meetings that I wanted to say but didn't feel comfortable enough to. She helped me get onto the priority housing waitlist. I'm really happy and excited about being able to move into my own place. I obtained photo id and was able to get things get things that I've wanted to for years, such as a police clearance and septum piercing. My youth worker referred me to accessible and appropriate mental health services. I've also been supported when I've had conflict with my family and friends. Talking to someone and getting advice has provided reassurance so I feel less angry and upset. I feel more secure in my decisions. When I put boundaries into place. It's nice to not feel like I'm in the wrong for just trying to keep my peace.

“I FELT CARED FOR, PROBABLY THE KIND OF CARE MOST KIDS GET FROM THEIR PARENTS THAT I JUST WASN'T GETTING.”

- LIAM 18 YEAR OLD, GAY TRANS MALE

“THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE HAS BEEN THE SUPPORT I’VE BEEN GIVEN THROUGH MY MENTAL HEALTH AND THE HELP THE PICYS YOUTH WORKER HAS GIVEN ME TO FIND HOUSING WHEN I NEEDED IT. THE IMPACT IT’S HAD IS GREAT BECAUSE THERE HAS BEEN TIMES WHERE I DIDN’T THINK I WOULD MAKE IT THROUGH, BUT THEN I KNEW I HAD THE SUPPORT OF PICYS AND IT HELPED A LOT.”

- STAR, 19 YEAR OLD, LESBIAN NON-BINARY PERSON

ARCHIE

20 YEAR OLD, GAY TRANS MALE

I’ve been going to PICYS for around 4 years now and I know that it’s (partly) because of their support that I’ve been able to make such massive strides in my life. By having a place I can always go to, that I know I’m not going to face judgement or be seen as different, where I can talk openly about my struggles in life and others won’t pity me or try to coddle me, others around me know what struggle feels like and they know it’s not about trying to make me feel better about life. Its been a great help, its given me a lot.

Like most young people, my life has had a lot of ups and downs, for years I have been struggling with PTSD and depression and have been trying to find meaning and a way forward. When I look back on when I was first in contact with PICYS, I see a person who was really struggling with the weight of it all and just doing their best to make it through the next week, I remember a person with a low sense of self worth, little self confidence and frankly, quite fragile. I didn’t feel in control of my life, and to be fair, there really wasn’t a lot in my control with the tools I had.

My most significant change has been myself, my values and beliefs, how I see myself and how I see the world and PICYS has been there throughout it, they’ve helped me move from couch surfing, to transitional housing to

permanent housing, they’ve always been there if I need to talk and figure something out, regardless if it’s venting about something or how to get help with Centrelink. Because of the rock that is PICYS, they’ve always provided me a sense of stability in what can be a chaotic life, its only then that I’ve been able to change myself for the better. I’m always thankful to the workers there, they’ve always shown me a kindness and willingness to help that is hard to find elsewhere.

Gaining a sense of self and independence is such a clear strength that I don’t think I need to explain the significance of it. I’ve always been a resilient person but that resilience doesn’t mean a whole lot if you can’t change the circumstances that lead you to being stuck in the first place, and I’m in a place now where I feel like those circumstances have changed. PICYS were always there willing to lend a helping hand or just listen to how I’ve been, and I know that I can always come back, I won’t get pushed out of the service because now I’m doing well. I am doing better now and it feels pretty amazing, stable housing, stable mental health, I’m on track with uni and in general, I’m in a great place. I always love going to PICYS because it’s a connection to a place where you know people genuinely care about how your doing and will be there with you when things are tough, finding ways that work best for you.

CASANOVA

17 YEAR OLD, NON-BINARY PERSON

I believe that in the past year, I have been more focused on my recovery, and feel able to recover. PICYS has helped me with accommodation way more than any other program has, or that I could do myself. I have been supported to make an application to department of housing. I have been supported to go through rental listings to find affordable housing. PICYS has helped me learn about my rights as a tenant.

Coming to PICYS helped me get out of the house more, and the Be Well group has helped me learn about coping strategies, and things I can do during an episode to make it not be worse. I have had a lot of help from PICYS. I think one of the things that was most impactful, was that I was given options. I was given options about rentals, my lease, and insurance options. PICYS didn't just give me the options, they explained them to me, so I could make the decision, and understand the decision I was making.

FLOWER

18 YEAR OLD, BISEXUAL GENDER-FLUID YOUNG PERSON

There have been a lot of significant changes for me. I now have a place to live. I have my own space to wear what I want and explore my gender and identity. I have worked on my independent living skills, such as cooking and cleaning. I have also been given the opportunity to learn about paying bills and being a tenant. I feel closer to being able to live by myself in long-term housing.

My PICYS youth worker has connected me with other support services, which has helped me cope with my mental health. I attend Youth Link on a weekly basis, and recently had Youth Hospital in the Home come out to my unit. I now know when to seek help, and I have found strategies that work to distract me when things are getting bad. I haven't thought about self-harming in a while. I'm also free to invite my friends over whenever I want, they are protective factors and have helped me improve my mental health. I would like to work towards financial stability. I'm not very good at budgeting, but I would like to open a savings account and maybe buy a car or a PS5.

MOSS

20 YEAR OLD, TRANS MAN

The most significant change for me has been having more mental stability. Previously I would make attempts on my life and self-harm frequently. I have support, I am engaging in some form of help. It is probably the best support I have ever received. People are actually there to help and it is not like previous supports I have received. I guess, people actually give a shit. Another thing, is that I managed to get my identification sorted. That was a big fucking thing. Having no identity was indescribably awful. I could not go anywhere, I could not apply for anything because I could not prove who I was. I did not have a passport, birth certificate, photo ID, or a citizenship certificate. Getting all of this took 10 months.

JAI

20 YEAR OLD, (TRANS) MALE

Perth Inner City Youth Service (PICYS) has helped me by supporting me in reaching out to mental health professionals. I was homeless for a month before enrolling into the program. I managed to find a place to stay just before I got in. Despite this they still took me on and supported me in getting stable and finding my own feet. PICYS has also offered me financial support for my change of name certificate which was a significant financial cost. Though, now I have managed to save up for this and feel able to pay for this, it's reassuring to know I can reach out to them for support if needed. Overall PICYS has provided me with an extra layer of support that has enabled me to work towards my mental health goals.

JADE

20 YEAR OLD, QUEER TRANS WOMAN

The most significant change has definitely been not being homeless and having the flexibility to move between accommodation services as needed. Also having my legal name changed.

I was accepted for youth work support from when I first came in to PICYS when I needed it. Then I got support to get into AYLA and then into PICYS housing.

It's been important because I didn't have any options and was sleeping on my friend's floor at the time so getting accommodation was amazing. It's gotten me out of those nightmare times.

CHYNA

19 YEAR OLD, GAY TRANS PERSON

Having a place which is permanent. I hadn't been stable even before my mum got arrested, so 18 years of instability at one point we lived in a car. Since Mum got arrested I moved around without her so for 7 years on my own. That was SHIT, very unstable. I was sick of moving, the people I stayed with were good but some weren't accepting of my gayness or my transition. I had never had my own place before PICYS, having my own unit was good because of the freedom and independence. It's good to have people you can talk to at PICYS, I don't use drugs as much as I was, I'm more confident than I was and happier than I was. PICYS has helped me with independence, how to live on my own, I already knew how to but now I have more skills, life skills and more people skills. I already had good people skills because I know how to talk to people but still more skills than I had before. I think differently about my future now I used to think I would end up a junkie on the streets but now I think I'm going to have a good future with a good job and a nice husband. Let that sink in! This is important to me because I won't have some bum-ass future like I thought I was going to have. I'm going to go far places, I'm going to study now, I've got stable accommodation so I won't have to keep moving all the time. I now have more life skills and I have people I can talk to and trust. This is good because if you haven't got someone to talk you turn to drugs or alcoholism.

DOM

19 YEAR OLD, TRANS MALE

The most significant change for me is my self-confidence and independence. Being involved with PICYS has taught me skills that are helping me function as an adult. I have always struggled to understand things and complete tasks but PICYS is helping me to achieve my goals and grow as a person already. The things I am learning have given me self-confidence and excitement for my future, I feel very productive and motivated whereas before I felt like I was very stuck and lost. I have learned lots of things, social skills, things related to money, just adult skills in general, opening up to people, organisation and learning to handle responsibilities.

MAY

25 YEAR OLD, QUEER TRANS WOMAN

For a long period my post-highschool life was dominated by mental health issues, issues with employment, and neglect of my life. I then proceeded to have a complete collapse of almost all of my social supports at the same time that I was in the middle of my gender transition. I was probably on track to have a short and rough life. After that point I was introduced to PICYS when I really needed it. PICYS has helped change the course of my life for the better (and to be honest probably extended it), their drop-in service has linked me to the important people in my life and was a good respite from home. The drop-in really taught me how to keep my life enriched with community. Discussions with case management staff there have also helped me with cleaning up the neglected parts of my life such as moving out of home, understanding how obtaining and owning a vehicle works, and obtaining employment. Their case managers have also really helped me when I've really struggled to cope when my life developed overarching issues. Their hosting of mental health courses has had a great impact on the wellbeing of myself and the people around me for the better and has offered some long term career goals.

And that's just a really quick summary of the effect they have on my life, My most significant change is that I now have the tools to keep a full and enriched adult life that I desperately needed. PICYS is one of those extremely rare places that is exactly what a lot of people need. A place that is purely there to help, to provide a place of peace to those who don't have one, a guiding hand for those who need and ask for it. their impact on the young people is night and day and ripples throughout the community.

If I were to leave out the whole "they changed my entire life" thing and focus on one thing, it would be my confidence to be me as an adult.

"PICYS UNDERSTANDS THE LINK BETWEEN MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH AND THE INTIMIDATING ASPECT OF INDEPENDENCE. THESE ARE THE THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE NEED HELP WITH, WHICH CANNOT BE DONE IN A 'TYPICAL' PSYCHOLOGY SETTING."

KRUMPY

20 YEAR OLD, GENDEROID PERSON

- Routine of drop-in has helped with stability.
- Food from ER helped to cut down on expenses.
- Nice to be at drop-in for support.
- Transport to appointments has been helpful.
- Quite rooms at drop-ins have been helpful.
- AGgender good to have extra support system.
- Overall, seeing more people and being able to make more friends.

CHARLEY

25 YEAR OLD, PANSEXUAL TRANS MAN

Before I was with PICYS, I was on the streets and living in my car. This was very traumatic for me, and my mental health was down the drain. I had to cope with using alcohol and benzos. I basically drank myself to death. Being on the street every day felt repetitive and draining, and I had a lot of pain from blisters, sores and shin splints from walking to get to services and safe places. I was probably averaging about 20k steps a day. I also felt a lot of judgement from previous workers, which added to my stress and trauma. PICYS supported me to find stable accommodation, which was difficult to find by myself due to the housing crisis, my AOD and mental health challenges. PICYS also paid for a few nights stay at a backpackers hostel so I could have a safe place to stay whilst waiting to get into my transitional accommodation. PICYS also continued to work with me through my tenancy-related challenges, and my apartment was close to my other supports, which was a bonus. PICYS also supported me to reduce my alcohol and drug usage by connecting me with affirming AOD counsellors and encouraging me to try community detox. They have never judged me for my ups and downs. I don't think I have ever felt more supported in my life. Simple as that.

“THE MOST
SIGNIFICANT
CHANGE FOR
ME IS AN
INCREASE IN
HOUSING
STABILITY
AND A FUTURE
PLAN FOR
WHERE TO GO
NEXT.”

- ASH, 19 YEAR OLD,
TRANS WOMAN

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

16 YEAR OLD, BISEXUAL TRANS MAN

I, Theconsequencesoftheindustrialrevolution, was linked into the Perth Inner City Youth Service near the start of this year by Child Protection & Family Services. Having to remove myself from my biological situation had me left feeling unsupported. Although merit must be accredited to CPFS for beginning my journey, processes were slow, and roadblocks stopped progress at almost every turn.

When first introduced to PICYS and having been assigned to a new starting youth worker, I was quickly impressed with the amount of resources and opportunities this service provided, Centrelink consultations, Community drop-ins, Recreation & exercise activities and Agender Basecamps. Also receiving food, sanitary items, computer and internet access and abundant resources to external supports. The staff at PICYS have created a sense of security, acceptance and understanding unseen in services I had accessed prior. The space is beautiful and invaluable to many.

Since being involved with PICYS, progress has been made in a pace and quality unparalleled to any other service. All to the merit of my youth worker and the team which support him in navigating gender diversity, Legal Aid, Centrelink, and Medicare services, allowing me to access services I would have little to no understanding otherwise. All of which have propelled me further to living independently and lending me a hand in completing forms, attending appointments, and acquiring necessary documents. On top of this PICYS and the worker/s provided safety and someone to talk to about things which were affecting me. All of which were undertaken with a high level of professionalism, courtesy and understanding.

The most significant change to have happened to me after being involved with PICYS, is hope. Understanding that life can and will prevail after displacement, that there is support, kindness, and persistence.

I'd like to thank the amazing PICYS crew and support worker. Although my journey is not complete, I am utterly impressed with the progress made.

SPOONS

18 YEAR OLD, HOMOROMANTIC ASEXUAL
TRANS MASCULINE NON-BINARY PERSON

When I first came to PICYS, I wasn't ready to accept help. I didn't believe that I was really struggling because I had always been struggling and had experienced much more dangerous and unsafe situations, which became my baseline. At the time, my mental health was not good. I wasn't eating or looking after myself. I would call MHERL pretty much every day, at least once a day and was in hospital regularly with serious self-harm. I was feeling pretty desperate.

Since working with my youth worker, my mental health and wellbeing has improved. I don't constantly want to die anymore. They helped me change my legal name and my housing situation is a lot more stable. I now have ambulance cover. I am no longer in serious debt. I interact with people in a more meaningful way without as much masking.

I don't know how I would have made it without the help of PICYS and I couldn't have asked for a better caseworker.

ADAM

16 YEAR OLD, TRANS MALE

Having a stable environment has changed my mental health. Before coming to PICYS I felt like I had no control over my mental health. Thanks to PICYS I have not been in and out of hospital. PICYS has helped to keep me sane due to the normal interactions. PICYS just treats me normally, it is not like going to CAMHS where they treat you like you are a client. I never felt like I got treated like a human, I always felt like I got treated as something that needed to be investigated and problems that needed to be sorted. When I have come to PICYS feeling I'm going to fucking kill myself, I am treated like it's a normal thing to experience. It shouldn't be a normal thing but it is for people with suicidal ideation. When I leave PICYS I feel like I can deal with the thoughts, even if just for today, and tomorrow I can seek support if I need it.

Thanks to PICYS I also have my own place, somewhere safe to stay. My previous living environment was fucked up. It was not a stable or calm place. I felt like I was on edge. There was a lot of conflict, and my foster father left me feeling unsafe to be around him. With my new place it is calm. Very fucking calm. I get to make food whenever I want. After school, I can just go home to collapse and just not worry about anything. I can do chores whenever I want. I am doing all my chores on the weekend at the moment, it is so much easier and the place is so clean. The most significant change from being with PICYS is that I am more sane.

**“BECAUSE OF THE ROCK THAT IS PICYS,
THEY’VE ALWAYS PROVIDED ME A SENSE OF
STABILITY IN WHAT CAN BE A CHAOTIC LIFE,
ITS ONLY THEN THAT I’VE BEEN ABLE TO
CHANGE MYSELF FOR THE BETTER.”**

- ARCHIE, 20 YEAR OLD, GAY TRANS MALE

RUBY

21 YEARS OLD, BISEXUAL FEMALE

Everything has changed! Even my whole perspective on life the person I am has changed in a better way, my relationships with friends and family have changed. Mainly because you guys that work at PICYS are like these are human beings not just people that come in. You guys are like its ok you're going through this we are here to help, that's a big thing. No other service would take me because they were like "You're not working! You're not studying! You're mentally insane!" But you guys were like that's ok your still a human. You guys have helped so much, encouraged me with schooling, meeting people going through the same things and having somewhere to live that's safe, being given a chance to be helped, help with little things like going to the Doctor, next week I've booked all my own doctors' appointments! Because of you guys I've got my own house where I can have cats which is a big thing because I love cats. I haven't had my own space since I was a young teenager, even getting therapy I wouldn't have sorted that, I couldn't have don't it without you. You guys really need more funding because there isn't enough places out there to help us, there's no other service like PICYS. You don't judge, you put in the effort for all young people, people are nice to you when you come in, you communicate with us and we communicate back. You even bring your dogs in for us. You guys have provided me with information about jobs and opportunities to use my experiences to help others like the job at YACWA. I want to use my shitty life to now help others, I don't know where I would have been if it wasn't for you guys. I stopped self-harming, now I'm a responsible-ish adult. I'm slowly getting more adult, like I get hungover for two days after a bottle of wine!

SCOT

20 YEARS OLD, HETEROSEXUAL TRANS MAN

Over the past 2 years PICYS has helped me with many things that I always wanted to do, but couldn't get done by myself. When I came to PICYS I was living in a bad situation and trying to finish high school. I was also working and struggling to find time to do things for myself. Having a case manager helped me to achieve things that I didn't have the time for or avoided doing.

The most significant thing PICYS has helped me with is getting on testosterone. This is a big deal for me, and I didn't know where to start. My caseworker put me in the right direction and came with me to appointments. Since starting T, my mental health has improved. I am not depressed as much and have less anxiety. Being able to pass as male has made a huge difference to my life.

PICYS also supported me to get my licence. My dad gave me a few driving lessons but what he showed me wasn't like the stuff you need to know to pass the test. I went for multiple driving tests but kept not passing. PICYS was able to give me a free lesson with a driving school which taught me a lot. I booked a few more lessons and then passed my next driving test. Having my licence has improved my independence and confidence.

I am now living in a safe place and working full time. I am able to save up my money and work towards my future goal of entering the police academy.

JOHN

24 YEAR OLD, GAY TRANS MAN

It's been so long and so much has happened, but being helped to move out of my parents' place and into some transitional accommodation that was my first place I had of my own and got my own keys and that was massive. Everything's changed since then and if that hadn't happened I don't where I'd be now. Things were going south at my parents and I don't know what would have happened there.

I started working, I've done a lot for myself eg. I'm not drinking every day, I've got my driver's licence, I met my partner who I live with now. My mental health has heaps better. Having my worker to talk about my frustrations with my parents is so helpful to feel valid and like I can manage my relationship with them now. Now I know if it's not going to be a good catch up with them I can just not go coz that's what's best for me.

So much has changed in the time I've been with PICYS, it's hard to think of everything that's happened and changed coz I've been through so much. But now I'm keeping myself on track and focussing on something that gives my life meaning.

EZRA

17 YEAR OLD, GENDER FLUID PERSON

The most significant change for me is that I have been able to access services that I need. I now have a GP that I can see regularly. I have a lot of health problems and my family has a history of health problems. I have not had a regular GP previously because I wasn't allowed to, and when I got out of that situation, nobody knew how to do it. I do not have any health records, and figuring out what health concerns I have is important to me so we can go from there. I have also been supported to gain access to Centrelink. I have a chance of getting money, which means I have a chance of getting my life together by getting access to housing. Receiving support from PICYS is helping me realise that I do deserve support.

ALIEN

17 YEAR OLD, QUEER TRANS GUY

Having very good support in finding accommodation, which is something I would've struggled with. Knowing I'm not going to be left on my own if something bad happens. Help learning how to adult when my parents weren't willing to help. Having a space where I feel safe and respected. I have made friends that are going through similar things to me.

MORPHEUS

21 YEAR OLD, NON-BINARY GENDERQUEER PERSON

I have noticed that I am feeling more comfortable asking for help, it's not that I am more prepared but that I feel that I am worthy. All my life I have been made out to feel that I am a burden. These are feelings that I am still tackling. There have been multiple interactions with PICYS staff where you can tell that my needs and capabilities are being acknowledged, listened to, and respected. In the past, the expectation has been that I should be able to do this myself. It has helped having people around me to let me know it's ok when I can't do something, and not to shame me for it. It also helps that people understand why I might not be able to do something. I don't feel that I have neurotypical expectations put on me. With PICYS, people can see that I am really trying, but still need help, so they help me where I need it.

PICYS has helped tear down a lot of my anxieties around asking for help. For instance, I've not always been open about when I am feeling suicidal out of fear of being sent to hospital. I was told that I would not have to go to hospital if we were able to work out alternatives. I did not trust this at first, but my youth worker followed through with what we both committed to, and I was trusted to stay out of hospital. Going to hospital takes away my control and agency, but in this instance, I was given that control and agency. I was listened to about my personal needs and differences in those needs and felt acknowledged about why hospital was not the best for me. Other services assume the same approach will work for all, and if it doesn't, it's my fault. Having my personal needs listened to and respected consistently has been empowering.

During the time I have been with PICYS, I was given two months from my landlord to vacate my property. PICYS helped with all the paperwork, and things I struggle with usually. I was completely overwhelmed and burnt out, I could not comprehend anything. In that time, PICYS linked me with RUAH After Hours Support Service, which has been great for me to have the additional support. I was given support that I did not expect to receive, such as, helping me to move out, and providing financial support to stay at a lodging whilst arranging other accommodation. PICYS really went above of what I thought were the limits of how they could help. They collaborated with Youthlink, RUAH, and Youth Futures, and worked out plans and offered them to me. This was not done behind my back, but with me participating. Eventually, I was able to go into The Beacon where I am currently staying. The experiences of dissociation and memory issues are clearing up. Without the support of PICYS, I genuinely believe I would have ended up on the street, or dead.

RENEE

22 YEAR OLD, LESBIAN WOMAN

- Weight gain
- Mental stability
- Access to services, in particular health services

How I have changed as a result of being involved with PICYS:

- Sense of security
- Sense of direction
- Control over my emotions

The most significant change that has occurred for me is 100% my health. I have gained 20kgs after being diagnosed with Anorexia. I struggled with my weight for many years as a result of an eating disorder, I have also been diagnosed with BPD.

The youth worker was persistent and helpful in my recovery, from using CBT based techniques, to negotiating with insurance companies on my behalf.

PICYS understands the link between mental and physical health and the intimidating aspect of independence. These are the things young people need help with, which cannot be done in a 'typical' psychology setting.

There are many things PICYS have done for/with me.

The most helpful and important parts were tackling the horrors and discomforts with my physical health.

From my head to my toes and everything in between I am healthy.

FLORENCE

22 YEAR OLD, TRANS FEMALE

Since becoming involved with PICYS they housed me and during this time I expressed my interest in accessing their support in terms of my transition from Male to Female. Since then they have supported me in many ways to start and continue my transition. Not only have they been emotionally and sometimes financially supportive they have also supported me through my decisions by simply being there.

The worker I am currently linked in with has gone above and beyond with supporting me through this transition and because of this I have now officially started my transition having been going through HRT for almost the last 2 years and I have now changed my name officially to my choosing.

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WHEREAS BEFORE
I FELT LIKE I WAS
VERY STUCK AND
LOST.”**

- DOM, 19 YEAR OLD, TRANS MALE

JAZZA

20 YEAR OLD, BISEXUAL MALE

Before coming to PICYS I was homeless and unemployed. I had lost direction and wasn't sure what was happening. I felt like I had lost control of my life. Things were pretty stressful and I didn't have any ways to manage what I was experiencing.

PICYS got me back on track. Being case managed by PICYS gave me a sense of hope that things were gonna be ok. I started looking towards the future a lot more. By setting goals and having things to work on I was able to organise my thoughts better. PICYS keeps me accountable for things and I really like that. Often my ADHD distracts me and makes it hard for me to focus and get things done. Having someone who checks in with me on how I am going and what I've been up to gives me a sense of purpose.

Since being linked in with PICYS I have started looking towards the future a lot more and can see a path forward for myself in the world. I have been able to find my direction and I am excited about achieving things. I still have mental health challenges which can make things hard for me, but PICYS allows me to cope better and gives me the confidence to keep on going.

HARMONY

18 YEAR OLD, BISEXUAL MALE

Since being with P.I.C.Y.S, many positive and lifesaving changes have occurred for I; this includes things such as have a strong support network which involves my case manager and other youth who also access the service. I also have access to basic things such as a wide array of food, toiletries, and general household items. Overall, the most signification change has to be that PICYS has given me the will to live, they have done this by providing me with a unit of my own when I had nowhere to go, by believing in me when I don't, by providing a never-ending amount of support when I need someone. My level of gratitude for PICYS cannot be described in words, and I thank you for that

Getting housing changed everything, it allowed me to work on my goals. I made friends at PICYS, the friends are better influences, who are also working on goals and are more like minded. I was able to be admitted into hospital for a long term stay. During my stay I was able to work on my mental health, get stable, stay away from drugs and people that were bad influences. Between hospital and Ngatti PICYS helped keep me stable by always talking to me, showing me someone cares and helping me get to appointments. I love who I am now.

THEO

25 YEAR OLD TRANS MASCULINE, NON-BINARY PERSON

Well, I think I have been a lot more assertive. I am better at sticking to my boundaries. I've had some people say that I don't put up with people's bullshit, but I feel that I don't really stick to my boundaries at times. I definitely feel I'm a wee bit more assertive. I think just being around people who are accepting of me and I don't have to force myself back into the closet because there's gonna be a confrontation. Being around a bunch of different people of different cultures and backgrounds and sexualities and identities, it has made me a lot more optimistic because people have different perspectives and I may not have thought of something and then they say something and I think "oh that kind of makes sense". It's kind of made me more confident whereas before I kind of just go along with things if it means avoiding conflict. I guess that I have got a safe space and if things do get rough I've got people to reach out to. Before PICYS, I didn't really know any other trans or non-binary people, like I knew there were people like me but I had never met anyone similar to me. It has made me feel like I'm not the odd one out.

I also feel like my social skills have improved. I am a lot less self-conscious about when I kinda end up being a wee bit of a jabber-jaw and just talk and talk and talk. I used to be very self-conscious about that. But most people don't seem to mind listening. I also kind of gotten better at controlling myself when I am talking too much and being able to stop myself when someone else wants to have a bit of a yarn instead. I was actually very shy as a kid and I wouldn't talk a lot, but as I got comfortable around people I just talked. I guess I have accepted that I am a wee bit of a talkative person and I've kinda learnt that's not a bad thing, it's kind of a quirk and maybe a bit of ADHD thrown in there. It makes me feel good because I tend to feel that I am quite annoying, but it seems other people think that I am not, so it's a good wee bit of a self-esteem boost.

TRINITY

20 YEAR OLD, LESBIAN NON-BINARY PERSON

I feel like I have hope for the future. I guess, PICYS has opened up my brain and made me want to be productive and do things and believe that I am worth something. I feel like normal again. Because before, I wasn't doing very well or doing anything. PICYS helped me to see things differently and changed my perspective on things. I have changed my perspective on adult life, like I am ready for it. This really is the most significant thing to happen to me since being supported by PICYS.

PAPER CRANE

20 YEAR OLD, NON-BINARY PERSON

I have been with PICYS since 2020. I often attended PICYS drop-in sessions, as a way of distraction. I needed support at a time that my mental health, school life and everyday life, was at its worst point. I had to figure out who I really am, to affirm my gender identity and to overcome my fears. At PICYS, I find myself surrounded by like-minded individuals, who don't judge me for being myself. I have had the opportunity to learn appropriate social skills; specifically, how to act around people of all ages, and ethnicities. This is something I struggled to understand whilst living with my family, because of their values.

PICYS youth workers have played a big role in helping me feel accepted for who I am. I feel that the staff here show genuine concern for my wellbeing. The youth workers have always been accommodating and responsive towards my concerns whilst living in PICYS shared housing. For example, I once found myself in a negative situation with my housemate, and it affected me greatly, as I felt I had no control in my own space. My case manager at the time, saw it was necessary to move me into a single PICYS unit. It was at this point that I began to focus on my mental health and understand the significance of independent living. I have since been linked with numerous support services, most of which I can arrange appointments on my own. Other times I may need support, and the youth workers have been available and willing.

I appreciate being in my current PICYS unit, as I now have a safe space to remain for longer than I have experienced before. This also includes the added comfort of being provided with new furniture whilst living here. PICYS accommodation has been the only place I've felt the most stable.

As much as I prefer my own company, since attending PICYS drop-ins, I've become a lot more sociable and self-aware. I can happily say that my relationships outside of PICYS have also flourished. Most importantly, is the relationship I now have with my mother, who better understands me as being part of a great LGBTQI+ community. PICYS has been the most accepting and inclusive service that I have been with. I can now say I am more hopeful for my future.

T

18 YEAR OLD, BISEXUAL FEMALE

I have been with PICYS for almost 2 years. When I first joined PICYS, I was having major issues with my AOD use, was homeless and in unsafe situations. I was self-destructive and impulsive, and had difficult relationships with my family and ex-partners who were abusive. I did not have any motivation or life skills to live on my own, such as using a washing machine.

PICYS was able to get me stable housing, which was life changing.

During my stay at the apartment, I was able to learn how to live independently and financially while navigating challenges. I got out of bad living situations, learned how to set boundaries in my relationships, among many other skills that I will be able to carry for the rest of my life. I saw my family less and had a safe space to be in, which helped my relationships with family stabilise, improve and become more manageable. I was also able to work on myself without being in abusive environment. Being in the apartment gave me more motivation to live a safer and less self-destructive life.

PICYS was always a safe place, and even though I have had a few case workers I loved every one of them. I always felt safe, understood and supported during tough times. PICYS also gave me support with my domestic abusive relationship, such as getting restraining order and setting boundaries with them. The number 1 thing that was most helpful was also receiving supports for Centrelink and Government services which I would not be able to do it without PICYS due to my anxiety around paperwork and phone calls.

Being with PICYS also helped me to grow and mature, which helped me to stay away from similar relationships. I know myself better now and can self-regulate better. It was life changing for me. Before this I had no intention of living past the week, but now I am thinking about my future. I have received supports to complete my Tafe course, and now I am looking to complete a course in Animal Studies and be employed in the future.

PICYS' support and understanding has helped me in so many different ways. It is a supportive environment for anyone who is struggling with their mental health and in abusive household. I have never been judged even during times when my mental health is bad and affected my self-care. Instead, they helped and supported me with taking care of my hygiene and other living necessities.

If I had a message to anyone accessing the service, I would say that PICYS is a supportive environment to be in and will always listen to where you're coming from even if it is an extreme situation.

**THE CRUCIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LESBIAN, GAY,
BI-SEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, INTERSEX AND QUESTIONING
PEOPLE AND OTHER MINORITIES IS THIS:**

**IN EVERY OTHER MINORITY GROUP THE FAMILY SHARES THE
MINORITY STATUS.**

IN FACT IT IS OFTEN SOMETHING THAT UNITES THEM.

**BUT GAY PEOPLE ARE A MINORITY GROUP WITHIN THE FAMILY.
A MINORITY OF ONE.**

**- A MINORITY OF ONE -
WORDS FROM MAGDA SZUBANSKI**



“SERVING YOUNG PEOPLE FOR OVER SINCE 1982”

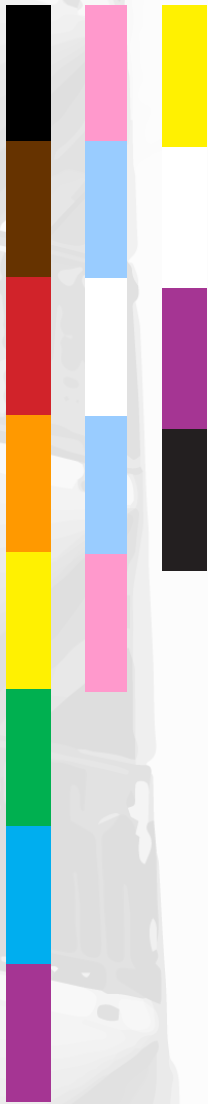
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P: 08 9388 2791 E: info@picys.org.au
22 Blencowe St, West Leederville, WA, 6007

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