

Social Prescribing Initiatives: Safe Haven Café, St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne Emergency Department

The Safe Haven café is an after-hours cafe at St Vincent's Hospital for people seeking a safe space, a cup of coffee or tea and someone to chat to if required.

The café was set up for people requiring support who may otherwise present to the ED but are not requiring acute care at that point. Peer support workers and volunteers with a lived experience of mental health issues available to assist with exploring options available and identify local relevant services.

Located in the Hospital Art Gallery, the Safe Haven Café is usually open Friday 6-8pm, and 2-8pm Saturday and Sunday, providing a safe, therapeutic space to support and empower people looking for assistance. During COVID19 pandemic the service is delivered virtually as St Vincent's Mental Health has partnered with the hospital's telehealth team to make sure customers still receive the support they need, remotely.

Over the last couple of years the team has built a strong rapport with regular clients, which made it easier for the support workers to quickly establish contact and get the virtual space up and running.

The Safe Haven Café is modelled on a successful service operating in Hampshire, U.K. since 2014. It has been shown to reduce social isolation for vulnerable people and to help them to maintain their mental health on an ongoing basis.

Source: <https://www.svhm.org.au/newsroom/news/safe-haven-cafe-provides-virtual-mental-health-support-during-lockdown>

<https://stvincentsmelbourne.blog/2018/05/17/st-vincents-safe-haven-cafe/>