

“WITHOUT  
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BE HERE  
TODAY”

# SAFE SPACE

## SAFE SPACE, BLACKTOWN

Stride is a mental health charity delivering a range of services designed to support those experiencing mental health concerns, including Safe Space in Blacktown. The Safe Space house is equipped with sensory rooms and staffed by peer workers, support workers and mental health specialists who offer care outside of a clinical environment.

Mental health is a priority health improvement area for Western Sydney Primary Health Network. WentWest commissioned Blacktown Safe Space – the first of its kind service in NSW – following successful pilots in QLD. The success of Blacktown Safe Space has helped secure the rollout for three additional Safe Space houses across NSW and QLD.

*The following story is taken from an interview transcript with a Safe Space client, Amelia Lewis\*, and is their own words.*

I've suffered from a lot of mental health issues. I have been let down. They've looked upon myself as being transgender, and they've not looked at me as a person.

I've come close to the end, and I've had real attempts. They weren't cries for helps, I needed to do something. I went to my doctor and they tried to help me. They gave me a list of places, and they gave me the telephone number and address for Safe Space in Blacktown.

[When I first arrived], it felt like a home. It felt comfortable. And the people inside the place were warm and welcoming. I felt safe.

I've never felt that with the mental health system before. I can honestly tell you that without Safe Space, I wouldn't be here today. I've had my rocky and bad days. And I know that whenever I fall into trouble I pick up that phone and I call Safe Space, or I come in.

I was coming in three times a week to start off with, then I dropped down to twice, once. And now it's been a couple of weeks, but I actually ring up if I'm in trouble. I know I have friends.

I know I have that support. They treat you as a person. That you're an individual, that you count no matter what diversity you are.

Safe Space has provided myself with the tools, and the strength to move forward, to seek more help, to refocus myself in a way of moving forward. Safe Spaces has pushed myself into the direction of getting help from other services, from a mental health clinic to seeing a new psychologist.

Oh, I love the house. I love the backyard. We've had lunch in the backyard together, and I've even come in and had dinner one night. It was great, and the company is amazing.

It's made a big difference to my life. I know that they're the support people, but it's more than that; they're friends..

For more information about how WentWest supports Western Sydney, visit [www.wentwest.com.au](http://www.wentwest.com.au).