

SETS Community of Practice

Communique: COVID-19 Best Practice and Innovation Meeting (NSW/ACT)

Videoconference – 16 June 2020

On 16 June, the SETS Community of Practice (SETSCoP) held its seventh videoconference for CoP members in NSW and ACT to share their emerging best practice and innovative service delivery through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Service delivery updates

Some providers continue working from home arrangements with their staff, while a majority have returned to the office and are providing face to face service delivery. With libraries and community centres not completely open at the moment, this too is impacting providers' ability to service their clients face to face. Some providers are using coffee shops for client meetings and all are employing safety measures such as wiping shared surfaces, social distancing and reminders about hand hygiene.

There was a general consensus of the opportunity that COVID-19 has presented in supporting clients to be more digitally literate. Generally most clients have found learning Zoom and other online platforms an enjoyable learning experience. Some providers have noticed an increase in attendance and interaction with SETS clients through online platforms.

A key focus for many providers has been providing emergency relief and care packages, as many SETS clients and the wider community are struggling with job losses and the economic impacts of COVID-19.

With the schools now being open, online learning and the challenges associated it, have been less of an issue for SETS clients over the last few weeks.

Domestic and family violence

There has been a spike in domestic and family violence (DFV) incidents through COVID-19 and as restrictions are lifting. Providers have noted the following for SETS clients:

- mental, emotional and financial abuse has heightened
- loss of income and unemployment, in addition to social isolation, has increased tension
- escalation of physical DFV where abuse was already present
- increase in young migrant doctors experiencing DFV in some regions
- a trend for men within some communities refusing to engage in counselling or behaviour change programs.

Those most vulnerable to DFV as shared by providers include:

- those with limited or no English language skills
- those on spousal or partner visa subclasses, with limited understanding of their rights and immigration laws
- those with children
- those socially isolated from their friends, family and community

- those in more rural or regional areas due to travel restrictions
- those who feel shame or stigma to leave DFV situations

Some of the common tactics used by those perpetrating DFV through the COVID-19 pandemic include:

- using power, control and threats
- limiting access to technology (e.g. not providing credit or removing sim cards)

Supports by SETS providers to help clients experiencing DFV include:

- assisting clients with safety planning
- referring to psychologists and other specialist services
- supporting with emergency accommodation and applications to Department of Housing
- soft entry programs such as Barber shop sessions, for young men to discuss behaviour change programs while getting haircuts.

Boundaries

Many SETS staff have struggled to maintain boundaries through the COVID-19 pandemic, due to increased work after hours, finding it hard to separate home from work, and clients approaching them through online or over the phone outside of work hours.

Refugee Week

Many attendees shared that they have needed to change their Refugee Week events due to as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. Some of the alternative refugee week events and activities providers are doing include:

- a blog with local schools
- E-book sent to local primary schools to read with students
- colouring in, poster and canvas competition at primary schools and local shops
- share a meal, share a story initiative
- online recording and photos of flag raising ceremony
- takeaway meals initiative whereby when people buy an Indian takeaway, the same meal is given to a refugee family (buy one, gift one)
- Refugee Week online conference with other settlement providers
- A community radio station is celebrating stories and sharing information
- small outdoor events with limited attendees

SETSCoP subgroups

The SETSCoP will be returning to its original model with operational and thematic groups commencing in the next month. More information will be shared to the SETSCoP via email.

Resources shared

[Fathering Across Cultures \(Migration Council Australia\)](#)

[MyAusCOVID-19 App \(Migration Council Australia\)](#)