

SETS Community of Practice

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

Videoconference – 24 March 2020

The SETS Community of Practice (SETS CoP) held a special videoconference on 24 March for CoP members in NSW and ACT to share their emerging best practice and innovative service delivery through the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Strategies to minimise risk

Attendees discussed the strategies they are currently employing to continue to provide services to SETS clients, while ensuring the safety of their staff and clients.

Strategies included:

- regular check-in calls to clients and making sure they have basic essentials;
- limiting face to face meetings where possible and if required, ensuring social distancing (e.g. use of wider tables, meeting outside).

Additionally, some SETS staff have been encouraged to work from home and are utilising WhatsApp or other technology mediums to keep in touch with clients.

Staff who are still undertaking home visits are only doing so where required and only if clients are well, as well as reminded to maintain social distancing and hand hygiene.

There was a general consensus that community leaders were helpful in the distribution of information relating to COVID-19, however that there was also some anxiety and fear within communities.

Managing expectations

Some attendees brought up the issue of managing expectations for clients as service delivery changes.

There was some concern that clients would complain about the limited face-to-face contact and the cancellation of group activities.

Concerns for most vulnerable

Attendees expressed concerns for the most vulnerable, including:

- clients experiencing job losses;
- older people;
- clients experiencing strain on family relationships;
- clients at risk of or affected by family and domestic violence;
- clients who have low digital literacy or lack access to technology;
- clients experiencing homelessness; and
- people on temporary visas.

Participants shared strategies to minimise risk such as regular phone contact, food-runs for older people or use of radio to share information.

Further, participants noted the ongoing advocacy for extending supports to people on temporary visas, particularly who may have lost their jobs and do not normally have any access to Centrelink.

Sharing of resources

Attendees discussed a range of relevant resources, including translated information, videos, a resource to manage anxiety in children (<https://www.mindheart.co/descargables>), and the advice provided by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (<https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc>).