

SETS Community of Practice

Communique: COVID-19 Best Practice and Innovation Meeting (NT/WA)

Videoconference – 20 May 2020

On 20 May, the SETS Community of Practice (SETS CoP) held its fifth videoconference for CoP members in NT and WA to share their emerging best practice and innovative service delivery through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Transitioning to Face to Face

Many providers are transitioning their staff back to the office and to provide face to face service delivery. Some of the challenges with returning to face to face include:

- consideration of potential WHS issues
- identifying how to run groups safely
- concerns that some clients are not practicing social distancing
- protecting staff who are in the high-risk group for COVID-19

One provider shared that they are introducing staff back in phases. Others are recommencing small groups (i.e. citizenship, women's and English groups) with social distancing measures or are hosting group activities outdoors.

Majority of providers are exploring service delivery through both online and face to face mediums. This will ensure that clients who have struggled with digital literacy or have had limited access to technology during the restrictions, will be better able to engage, while those who have actively participated in SETS with online support, can continue to do so.

Learnings from COVID-19

Some of the learnings and opportunities providers have found through COVID-19 include:

- the benefits of more flexible work arrangements for staff
- technology can support SETS service delivery
- the opportunity for clients to learn and improve their digital literacy
- greater awareness that some young people struggle with technology
- being more prepared for any future pandemics or disasters
- an appreciation for the value of face to face engagement, and the ability to identify issues for clients better when in person (i.e. DFV, mental health)
- the impact of social isolation on domestic and family violence
- the value of networks such as the SETSCoP best practice and innovation meetings
- the importance of emergency preparedness training for staff and clients alike

Attendees shared how COVID-19 has highlighted inequities, and that there is a greater divide for those who are digitally illiterate or have limited access to technology. Additionally, there was a general consensus that home schooling has been very stressful for SETS clients due to the limited access to technology or data or poor digital literacy of both parents and students. Access to computers has been a great challenge and despite the support of schools, and other organisations, there has not been a coordinated approach.

Challenges post COVID-19

Providers shared their thoughts on the possible challenges post COVID-19 and once restrictions ease, which include:

- permanent impacts on education, employment and technology access for SETS clients
- increase in domestic and family violence reports
- influx in referrals to the SETS program
- SETS clients may be in crisis after COVID-19 supplements cease

Attendees also discussed the importance of financial counselling and mental health counselling projects, especially as clients engage more once restrictions are eased.

Emergency relief funding

A few providers shared that they have recently received emergency relief funding to support a range of clients, including SETS clients who are struggling.

Resources shared

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

Emergency relief from Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre (WA) call 08 93455755