

SETS Community of Practice

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

Videoconference – 6 May 2020

On 6 May, the SETS Community of Practice (SETS CoP) held its fourth videoconference for CoP members in NT and WA to share their emerging best practice and innovative service delivery through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Engagement

Attendees discussed the challenges they are facing with engagement of clients, due to changes to service delivery from COVID-19.

A particular group of concern were young people. Some of the issues faced by young people, shared by attendees are:

- online platforms are hindering meaningful engagement
- poor digital literacy for some youth
- limited access to data or devices for some youth
- many young people anxious about returning to school

Providers agreed that another common challenge with engagement was that some families only have one mobile phone, and this makes contact with other family members difficult. Additionally, some providers expressed that clients are feeling lonely due to social distancing, and are struggling with engaging in AMEP online. Majority of attendees noted a reduction in new referrals to SETS, particularly from the HSP program.

Some strategies to maintain meaningful engagement shared by attendees were:

- regular check-in phone calls or video calls
- activity packs posted to clients
- small group events for Ramadan (10 people maximum)
- small homework clubs (10 people maximum)

Record keeping

Many providers mentioned moving from more group-based services to casework during COVID-19. A related issue that attendees highlighted is the ability to track individual interactions with group members. Some providers suggested creating a group on DEX to report on individual interactions. This information has been passed on to Department of Home Affairs for their guidance.

Most vulnerable

Attendees discussed how many clients with mental health issues, are not accessing online counselling services as their preference is for face to face services. Additionally, that some temporary visa holders struggle with access to mental health services due to ineligibility.

Attendees also expressed concern that there continues to be an increase in domestic and family violence, especially among those holding temporary visas as the implications of job losses and home isolation, is creating tensions for families. One provider shared that a local taskforce has reported at 5% increase in domestic and family violence since COVID-19 restrictions were put in place. Another provider will share numbers for refuge intakes, at the next meeting.

There was a general consensus that financial pressures from job losses may be contributing to family tensions. One provider shared about their NILS loan program, which they can provide an interest free loan of upto \$1500 for those eligible.

Providers mentioned privacy concerns that some clients have with the COVID-19 SAFE app and this fear has impacted the number of downloads among some client groups.

New multilingual COVID-19 app

The facilitator shared that Migration Council Australia (MCA) has developed a multilingual resource for Australia's culturally and linguistically diverse communities about COVID-19, its impact and available support. The MyAusCOVID-19 app can now be downloaded from Apple Store or Google Play.

Resources shared

[Mercy Lending Services \(Mercy Care WA\)](#)

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