

SETS Community of Practice

Communique: COVID-19 Best Practice and Innovation Meeting (QLD/TAS)

Videoconference – 19 May 2020

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

Service planning

Attendees shared some of the processes and protocols they have developed for the transition back to face to face service delivery. This includes:

- rotating staff in office
- ensuring 1.5m is maintained between staff and clients
- clearly articulated protocols around meetings and visitors
- protective screen for reception
- triaging of client needs. If not complex, option for support online or over the phone, rather than face to face
- outdoor meetings where possible
- holding smaller group workshops and activities either online or face to face

With some clients engaging more through online platforms, and others preferring face to face, attendees discussed providing both service delivery options moving forward.

Supporting staff

There was a general consensus that SETS staff have high morale, however that there is a greater need for support, due to the stress and pressure of COVID-19 and its impact on SETS clients.

Some of the strategies to best support staff, shared by attendees include:

- debriefing with supervisor, colleagues or EAP services
- focusing on staff members' strengths
- regular check-ins for staff who are supporting complex clients

Concerns for clients

Attendees discussed some of the most prevalent issues for SETS clients, these include:

- needing emergency relief due to job losses and financial impacts
- challenges with home schooling for both parents and school-aged children
- limited or no access to computer devices or internet
- poor digital literacy skills of some clients
- heightened mental health issues
- smaller language groups not getting COVID-19 information

Some of the approaches that providers have adopted to mitigate the impact of issues include:

- working closely with other programs and external providers to bridge gaps
- training clients in digital literacy
- sourcing computers from schools and charities
- translating resources for smaller language groups

Attendees shared some of the concerns they have for SETS clients once restrictions ease, which include:

- increased mental health issues
- increased domestic and family violence
- separation anxiety between parents and children
- clients needing more recurrent support (i.e. due to job losses, as supplements cease etc.)

Mental Health

Attendees discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on clients' mental health and wellbeing. Providers agreed that during this period, clients have been more open to mental health and self-care conversations with SETS providers.

Some of the main mental health issues identified include:

- anxiety
- uncertainty and stress
- isolation
- feeling out of control or helpless

Providers shared that the mental health impacts of COVID-19 seem to have affected clients of all ages and that the resilience of many clients has been tested during this period.

Attendees expressed concern especially for those who were isolated before COVID-19, as they have become even more isolated due to restrictions. Further there was concern for the pressure placed on young people, with the lack of social engagement, and the added stress of supporting their parents and younger siblings with home schooling. Despite this, some providers shared that many young people are feeling less isolated through online learning, as it has created a platform for them to get support and keep busy during COVID-19.

DEX Reporting

There was a general consensus from attendees that they were experiencing some challenges with DEX reporting and informed consent.

Resources shared

[MyAusCOVID-19 App \(Migration Council Australia\)](#)
[Domestic Violence Referrals to Sakina Refuge](#)