

## **SETS Community of Practice**

### **Communique: VIC Specific COVID-19 Best Practice and Innovation Meeting**

#### **Videoconference – 18 August 2020**

On 18 August, the SETS Community of Practice (SETS CoP) held its second videoconference for CoP members in Victoria to share their unique challenges, best practice and innovation during this time of heightened restrictions.

#### **Schooling**

Attendees shared some of the challenges and their innovative approaches to support children and parents with home-schooling.

Overall, parents and children are feeling emotionally drained, frustrated and are experiencing more mental health issues than pre-COVID, and this is reflected in an increase in mental health referrals. With families' staying home, attendees also mentioned seeing an increase in domestic and family violence.

Some students are really struggling and falling behind due to the lack of social and protective factors, while others who struggled with the social element of schooling, are doing well. Some youth are dropping out of school or English programs and are feeling pressured by parents to work rather than complete their schooling.

Despite this, it appears that with the second lockdown, schools have been better prepared and are more equipped to support students, with greater collaboration with SETS providers. Additionally, majority of students now know how to access resources and systems for home-schooling, and their attendance is being recorded.

Some of the innovative initiatives that SETS providers are delivering to support the education of young people and children include:

- moving place-based homework clubs online, to support students by one on one tutoring on Zoom
- utilising closed groups on WhatsApp, Messenger and Zoom
- developing partnerships with Headspace.

#### **Other challenges**

Another challenge discussed was the issue with accessibility of testing sites. Some clients who wanted to be tested for COVID-19 had to catch public transport to get to the testing sites, which may have increased the spread of the virus. SETS service providers have worked with the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to identify some key areas for testing.

SETS providers in regional areas also shared the challenges they have faced with supporting families through school outbreaks, by providing practical support and advocacy. One provider shared how they have supported 54 families with navigating the process for COVID-19 testing and social isolation.

There was a general consensus that changes to SETS service delivery and the impacts of COVID-19, are affecting staff wellbeing.

### **Other best practice and innovation**

SETS providers are continuing to disseminate the latest public health information to communities, including translated resources such as audio clips.

Many noted the opportunity that digital service delivery presents in allowing for a greater reach to clients who were previously disengaged, and some providers are hiring staff who can focus on supporting digital engagement through this time.

One provider shared of their survey findings which noted that of those surveyed (94 participants):

- 6% are currently employed
- 29% are looking for employment
- Only 1% are receiving Job Keeper
- 77% are receiving Centrelink support
- 43% are home-schooling their children
- Only 2% are engaged in training

### **Next VIC specific meeting**

There was consensus on the value of having another VIC specific meeting in three weeks' time and having a mental health service as a guest participant.

### **Resources shared**

Foundation House Arabic Schooling Hotline: 03 9389 8911 (for parents that are seeking advice about their children's mental health)

[Headspace](#)

[Victorian Transcultural Mental Health](#)

[Emerging Minds](#)

[InTouch: Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence](#)

[Safe Steps: Family Violence Response Centre](#)

[SETSCoP Webinar on Migrant and refugee experiences of domestic and family violence \(DFV\) in the context of COVID-19](#)

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