

SETS Community of Practice

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

Videoconference – 8 September 2020

On 8 September, the SETS Community of Practice (SETSCoP) held its third videoconference for CoP members in Victoria. The focus of the meeting was on mental health, with attendees and guest attendees discussing the impact of COVID-19 and public health restrictions on client mental health and sharing appropriate referral pathways.

The guest attendees were Maria Tucci (Foundation House), Jenny Addy (Foundation House) and Huda Ashraf (Orygen).

Mental health

Attendees shared of the some of the common stressors that have impacted clients' mental health and wellbeing during this time, which include:

- social isolation
- change of routine, especially for young people
- balancing roles and responsibilities
- family tensions
- missing out on usual support network
- stress of home schooling
- housing concerns, including overcrowding
- digital literacy issues
- pre-existing mental health issues.

Some strategies suggested to support clients' mental health and wellbeing include:

- normalising negative feelings
- encourage clients to exercise and get some sunshine
- encourage clients to keep connected with family, friends, or groups
- remind clients of the value of routine and good sleep hygiene
- reassure parents of their value in supporting routine and the experience of home schooling, rather than trying to master all schoolwork.

Through consultations with communities in Victoria, Foundation House has identified the most vulnerable client groups during this time which include those who:

- have arrived recently
- are older
- have a disability.

Foundation House and Orygen described how much of their work has been in supporting the most vulnerable and at risk, with many presenting to their services in crisis situations. Due to limited resources, there are significant wait times for mental health services, with some wait times being up to 6-12 months.

Next VIC specific meeting

There was consensus on the value of having another VIC specific meeting in three weeks' time.

Resources shared

[Foundation House](#)

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

[Refugee Access Service \(RAS\): Brief description of service \(Orygen\)](#)

[Refugee Access Service \(RAS\) Flyer \(Orygen\)](#)

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