

SETS Community of Practice

Communique: COVID-19 Youth meeting

Videoconference – 9 April 2020

The SETS Community of Practice (SETS CoP) held a special videoconference on 9 April for SETSCoP members to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on young people under the SETS program. Facilitated by Nadine Liddy (MYAN), discussion focused on identifying current issues, solutions and ideas for supporting young people during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The most common issues for young people identified by attendees include:

Mental health and wellbeing

- mental health impacts of COVID-19 (particularly anxiety and depression)
- reliving trauma and fear around re-socialising after the pandemic
- isolation and disengagement
- increase in suicidal ideation and self-harm
- mainstream counselling services having long waitlists and not using interpreters as required
- trying to keep young people physically active during isolation
- greater risk of drug-use, alcohol, unplanned pregnancies

Education

- inability for some clients to access adequate IT, internet or data to study
- support by schools differ (i.e. some posting studying material for those with limited access to technology)
- university fees
- accessibility to videoconferencing for schooling differs between states (e.g. In Queensland schools can not provide education through videoconferencing, while other states can)
- disparity between different cultural groups and their understanding of COVID-19 and its impacts

Family wellbeing

- intergenerational conflicts heightened during social isolation
- staying at home is leading to greater issues for larger families
- unable to see grandparents
- increase in domestic and family violence
- gaps in supporting young mothers

Financial

- job losses
- some clients needing food vouchers and emergency relief
- limited supports available for international students or other temporary visa holders

Information technology

- differing levels of digital literacy among young people
- risks of privacy through use of IT
- young people not answering phones, especially if private caller ID
- providers spending a lot of time to help SETS clients with Centrelink forms, as
- Services Australia can now only spend 15 minutes per customer. Services Australia are encouraging SETS clients to call multilingual line but it drops out and there are long wait times

Many providers reported needing to cancel group activities, while some have moved to delivering these online. Engagement with online groups, continues to be a challenge for young people.

COVID-19 information and awareness

- young people not taking risk of COVID-19 seriously
- information is not youth-specific
- information is not always culturally appropriate and too much written information
- some community groups have greater understanding of COVID-19 than others

Opportunities, ideas and solutions identified by attendees include:

- initiatives for parents to support young people during the COVID-19 pandemic
- virtual homework clubs by bilingual workers
- translated text messages
- support from community leaders to share COVID-19 information
- utilising pre-existing networks, community leaders and youth leaders to support young people
- use of WhatsApp, Facebook groups, Facebook live, blogs and videos to engage young people
- online leaderships programs and challenges (e.g. soccer challenge)
- home delivery of packages for young mums
- regular phone contact with most vulnerable clients
- some schools are providing laptops to students to support home-schooling
- online conversational classes for young people to engage
- opportunity for parents to share and talk to young person about their own experiences (e.g. experiences of war, resilience)
- opportunity to focus on the resilience and resourceful of young people
- opportunity for services to work more closely together
- necessity for more culturally appropriate, visual and audio COVID-19 information
- necessity for some youth-specific COVID-19 resources
- necessity to remain future-focused and goal-focused

Other discussion points include:

- removal of the newly arrived residents waiting period from 25 March for JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance, Austudy, Parenting Payment Single and Partnered, Farm Household Allowance and Special Benefit. For more visit [Services Australia](#) website
- increased waiting times for TIS

Resources shared by attendees include:

[MYAN Policy Update](#)

[MYAN NSW Teleconference notes \(3rd April\)](#)

[Coronavirus information in your language \(SBS Online Portal\)](#)

[Multicultural Communities of Launceston blog](#)

[A community awareness video about COVID-19 by Dr Aweyes Omar to the Somali Community in Australia \(Roots TV\)](#)

[A community awareness video about COVID-19 by Dr. Riyad Dawood to the Arabic Community in Australia \(Roots TV\)](#)

[A community awareness video about COVID-19 by Dr Pedus to the Nigerian Community in Australia \(Roots TV\)](#)