

## **SETSCoP**

### **Communique: NSW-specific best practice meeting**

#### **Videoconference – 29 June 2021**

On 29 June 2021, SETSCoP members from NSW attended a NSW-specific best practice meeting to discuss the particular challenges and opportunities for providers who are servicing SETS clients during the recent lockdown and related public health restrictions.

#### **Impact on services**

Attendees shared the impact of the latest restrictions on their SETS service delivery. Many providers have had to cancel face to face events and activities, such as youth camps.

Despite the challenges imposed by the lockdown, some providers perceive that it has been easier than previous lockdowns as they are better equipped to deliver services remotely and their clients have better digital literacy skills to use online platforms. However, some shared that the restrictions have reignited some anxiety as it has come at a time where Sydney was finally returning to 'normal'.

One of the greatest challenges for providers is that they are not sure how long the lockdown will remain and as such have difficulty forward planning their group activities or events. Some providers are postponing group sessions for the next two weeks, following which they will reassess whether they should run sessions online or if restrictions ease, hold them face to face.

One provider shared their approach to emergency relief vouchers, whereby they complete eligibility screening over the phone and email the food vouchers for clients to print. The online vouchers are also allowing clients to monitor the balance of the vouchers. Another provider shared that they are holding citizenship sessions on Zoom almost 100 clients attending the sessions.

There is considerable compliance by SETS clients with the current public health restrictions, many are wearing masks and are abiding by social distancing advice.

#### **Vaccine uptake**

Members shared that despite the slow uptake, in general their clients are more receptive to getting a COVID-19 vaccine. There has been extensive work done by some local refugee health services who have held education information sessions for migrant communities. The target audience for many of these sessions has been community elders, however attendees noted value in further work to engage religious leaders. Religion is important to many SETS clients and as such religious leaders have significant influence on community members and can alleviate any ethical or moral concerns they may have. More work is needed to engage

smaller religious sects who may not be receiving timely and accurate information about the vaccine roll out.

One provider shared that in collaboration with their local health service, they have organised an outreach vaccination hub. As settlement providers are trusted by their clients and migrant communities, the outreach program has been extremely successful and has been extended for a further three sessions.

Some common myths from certain cultural groups were shared which include fears around impotency, loss of sex drive and changes to DNA as a result of vaccination. Other communities have concerns around vaccine ingredients due to misinformation being shared between community members.

A common issue among all NSW providers present in the meeting is that vaccines in NSW tend to be appointment-only. Attendees shared the view that more drop-in vaccination clinics would significantly increase access for migrant and refugee communities and in turn, will increase vaccine uptake by these communities.

### **Client wellbeing**

Many young people are struggling at the moment as their school holiday plans have been cancelled. They are feeling “out of control” and this is impacting their mental health and wellbeing. Some Sydney-based providers are looking into holding outdoor exercise classes for young people as group exercise is allowed for up to 10 people. Others are seeking to engage young people through online sessions or informal online social catch ups. Some providers shared innovative wellbeing sessions that they will be running with clients which include virtual yoga, pottery and cooking classes.

### **Resources Shared**

[Summary and Q&A from the Department of Health Briefing on 16 June \(Australian Department of Health\)](#)