

SETSCoP

Communique: SA COVID-19 Response Meeting

Videoconference – 1 September 2021

On 1 September 2021, SETSCoP members from South Australia attended an SA-specific COVID-19 Response meeting to discuss resources and strategies to support clients with ongoing issues as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify emerging issues and areas of need for additional support.

COVID-19 Vaccines

Attendees discussed strategies being implemented to inform and assist SETS clients to get vaccinated. Providers mentioned they have run information sessions, where health practitioners are present, so that clients can be confident in the strength of the information. Some sessions have been delivered for specific language groups or cohorts, such as older men, who may be unable to access information in other settings. In addition, providers have assisted individuals one on one to set up vaccine appointments.

Attendees also discussed their efforts to lead by example and communicate with clients when they themselves have been getting vaccinations and ensure that their office is a safe space to discuss concerns and get information about the vaccine.

Key concerns for clients

Providers shared some of the most common challenges for their clients, which include:

- Increased mental health and family conflict issues
- High levels of stress and trauma associated with heightened conflicts in country of origin. Recently, this has been particularly evident in the Afghani community
- Challenges using the vaccine booking systems
- Difficulty accessing transport to get to vaccination clinics
- Some interpreters at health clinics have mis-interpreted information
- The spread of misleading information and myths by some key community members, such as faith leaders and family heads, as well as by friends and family members living in their country of birth.

Ongoing Impacts of COVID-19

During the meeting discussions included the ongoing effects of unemployment and under-employment, with a number of clients who have work continuing to be given less hours and, therefore, receiving less income. Parents have also reported concerns about struggling to support their children with home schooling when required. This has had an impact on their relationship with their children. It was also reported that some adults who disengaged from AMEP during lockdowns did not reengage once AMEP returned face to face.

Supports being Provided

A range of programs are being delivered to support clients including:

- Groups that have both face-to-face and Zoom in options
- Regular phone check-ins, which often lead to referrals for clients to other services, such as ER
- Digital literacy classes
- Weekend camps for women and their children
- Community Garden