

SETSCoP

Communique: Victoria Domestic and Family Violence sub-group

Videoconference – 29 November 2021

On 29 November 2021, SETSCoP held its first meeting for members of the Victoria Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) sub-group. The focus of the meeting was to consult members on the systems and tools currently in place to provide DFV supports to SETS clients, identify referral systems and pathways, discuss the intersection between DFV and migration regulations and identify current prevention and intervention programs in place to work with men.

Identifying DFV, risk assessment and safety planning

Members described the various strategies used to identify DFV and tools used for risk assessments and safety planning. These include strengths and needs tools used at intake and The Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) screening and risk assessment tools. Many organisations have trained their staff to use MARAM tools.

Providers discussed the importance of building trusting relationships with clients to create a safe environment for disclosures to occur. Many providers are delivering DFV information sessions. Providers also discussed the importance of working with community leaders to assist in sharing information on what DFV is and what services are available to assist.

Providers noted other issues which occur in the context of DFV and present challenges for clients, including:

- The need for emergency financial relief
- Difficulties with police, particularly as some are not skilled in working with interpreters
- Housing support
- Lack of crisis accommodation, particularly in regional areas.

Referral pathways

Members discussed the importance of relationships with service providers in their region.

Providers discussed the challenge of clients being hesitant to connect with other providers, due to language barriers, lack of culturally responsive support and lack of understanding of visa status. Some clients are also reluctant to engage with new services or are unaware of what other services are available. In addition, many services have a long waiting list, requiring the SETS provider to continue to support the client until other services can assist. At times, the waiting period means that clients do not engage with other services.

Once a connection has been established, some services find it difficult to get information from other services on their client's progress.

Attendees noted that regional areas have less specialist services available. There is also a general lack of youth specific programs and men's programs. Some clients also struggle to access online information about external services.

DFV and migration regulations

Providers reported receiving an increased number of calls from those on temporary visas. SETS providers and other community services often provide support, although it is outside of their funding. Practitioners find this difficult as they are restricted in their capacity to help. These clients also struggle to access legal advice and support.

Clients, particularly those on temporary visas, are reluctant to access support because they are reliant on their partners for financial assistance and their pathway to citizenship. Some clients are unable to access their documents as these are held by their partners. Clients are also concerned about the availability of Centrelink and housing support.

Providers mentioned the difficulty with clients raising DFV concerns close to or after their 5 year eligibility for SETS support is expired. This often occurs because clients have other focus areas within their first five years of settlement (for example, building community connections and their knowledge of services, rights and ability to access services).

Men's programs

Attendees noted that there are a limited number of programs available for men in general. Some regional services reported no programs available. Providers reported that men mostly only engage with programs once they have been through the legal system.

Providers reported that men who are referred to mainstream men's services face barriers including limited use of interpreting services and lack of young men's programs. Some attendees noted that there are some young men's programs available which work in schools and look at language, gender roles and life skills including cooking.

Suggestions for future work

Providers made suggestions to improve SETS providers support in this area through increasing training to settlement practitioners in recognising and responding to client reports of DFV, increasing the number of bicultural workers in their services, involving community leaders in designing and delivering programs in this space and increasing the number of programs school-aged children can access to assist them with recognising DFV and understanding what support is available.

Shared Resources

[The Orange Door](#)