

SETSCoP

Communique: WA & NT Domestic and Family Violence sub-group

Videoconference – 2 December 2021

On 2 December 2021, SETSCoP held its first meeting for members of the Western Australia and Northern Territory 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 discussed assessment of DFV occurring through regular casework interactions with clients. They noted that holding women's groups creates a safe space for disclosure. In addition, some members receive referrals for DFV issues from AMEP providers.

Members noted that some SETS clients are reluctant to share their experience of DFV, as they view it as a private matter and consider that sharing may bring shame on the family.

It was noted that, until recently, DFV hasn't been an area that settlement workers have trained or specialised in. Generally, safety planning and risk assessments are completed by the specialist services that caseworkers refer their clients to. This is due to the limited funding for SETS services, which previously hasn't allowed for this focused work to be undertaken. Some providers have had staff complete DV-Alert training.

Providers are in the process of developing resources and training for their team members to assess and identify effective referral options for clients experiencing DFV. In the Northern Territory, there is a family safety framework and some providers use their tools, although this is not mandated.

Referral pathways

Members in the meeting shared some of the DFV specific services they refer clients to when a disclosure has been made. Some areas have a referral directory and some services have online referral forms which can be completed.

Service providers discussed the struggle with receiving inquiries from clients who have been in Australia longer than 5 years. Members often refer these clients to Legal Aid, but there are wait lists. Agreements have been made with some legal services for discounted legal support for clients, however, some clients cannot afford these discounted fees.

It was noted that in Alice Springs there is a lack of transition accommodation and long-term accommodation for clients.

DFV and migration regulations

Difficulties arise for clients who are not eligible for Centrelink, as they feel more pressure to remain in their abuse environment. Providers reported that they see many clients who are concerned about their visa status staying in abusive relationships until a permanent visa is approved.

When a client is in a relationship with a partner who is not eligible for support, providers struggle, due to their restrictions in being able to provide support and at times this reinforcing a false perception of favouritism.

Men's programs

In the Northern Territory, there are very limited men's services available and no migrant and refugee specific services available.

Some providers in Perth are working with men in a new program, however they are finding it difficult to engage them. Most of the work delivered for men is done through community workshops which alert participants about DFV issues.

Suggestions for future work

Attendees discussed suggestions for areas of additional support, including more funding for legal assistance, more access to escaping violence payments for clients, more webinars for frontline staff on identifying DFV and tools and assessments that can be used to assess and recognise DFV.

Shared Resources

[Directory - Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing](#)