

SETSCoP

Communique: WA and NT Best Practice sub-group

Videoconference – 18 October 2022

The SETS Community of Practice (CoP) held a meeting for WA and NT Best Practice sub-group members on 18 October, 2022. The focus of the meeting was to provide updates on the SETSCoP and to share information on key issues, challenges, and highlights.

SETSCoP Updates

SETSCoP provided updates on webinars covering: working with Trans people, the CRISP program, cyber-security and the recent launch of e-learning courses, beginning with employment to be followed by further courses released over the coming weeks – gender-responsive practice, domestic and family violence (series put together in collaboration with inTouch), leadership, and professional practice.

Key issues seen by SETS organisations

Women with husbands who leave the home

There are women presenting whose husbands have returned to their country of origin (e.g. South Sudan, Afghanistan) and leave behind their wife and children. These women find it difficult to access services. An example was of a woman whose husband returned to their country of origin for a second marriage, unrecognised in Australia, so the first wife was told to vacate the house. Women presenting include both those eligible for SETS and also those who have been in Australia **longer than 5 years**. There are also other settlement issues tied in: many women are financially dependent on their husbands, and some women were previously prevented from working, attending English classes, and obtaining their driver's license.

Solutions thus far have included referral to family network support, referral to DFV services, and referral to legal services. Legal service referrals are important as it ties to a rights-perspective, so clients are aware what their legal rights are and what services they can access. It is also important because women in these situations often fear that they will have their children taken from them. SETSCoP members noted that legal rights and other support services were often successful when embedded into wider settlement social programmes, such as playgroups, life-skills programmes, and regular social groups such cooking and sewing. Education and awareness is discussed under banners such as “healthy relationships”, which enables people to engage and talk about ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ behaviours – or as part of informal social sessions with guest speakers such as family lawyers and financial counsellors.

Referrals to SETS

There have been lower numbers of referrals from the Humanitarian Settlement Programme (HSP) for some providers, likely because of the reduction in clients during COVID-19. Organisations are still receiving clients from the police, TAFE, schools and other services.

Employment during first 2-years (no Centrelink eligibility)

The SETSCoP employment course is welcome, especially in the context where SETS clients are not eligible for Centrelink and Workforce Australia in the first 2 years. Already existing programmes include employment readiness workshops in collaboration with AMEP and other employment support.

Gaps in childcare for working women (including those who experience DFV)

SETS providers are receiving referrals from women's shelters for clients who have experienced DFV. Some women have been in Australia less than 2 years so are also ineligible for social support payments.

Some women also have young children and are finding it difficult to work given the lack of support for childcare. Whilst the women receive support from the women's shelter and from referrals to the Red Cross for crisis payments, the women are in very difficult circumstances – ineligible for Centrelink welfare payments so having to work, but also ineligible for childcare support to enable them to work.

Solutions have included client social networks, with an example that sometimes a group of friends will rotate childcare duties. Women who work in childcare can also bring their children to work, with very high demand for childcare workers. There are also potential opportunities for partnerships with respective state Departments of Education, who may be able to provide registration and funding support for childcare.

SETS staff mental health and wellbeing

SETS staff continue to experience secondary or vicarious trauma – with clients discussing traumatic past or current experiences either directly to SETS staff or during visa proceedings with SETS staff present.

SETSCoP members shared different modes of support. This includes debrief and clinical supervision processes. Examples included regular weekly supervision and with a manager or within teams. Some SETS organisations fund clinical supervision for staff, including payment for remote telehealth sessions for those living in areas where it is challenging to access face-to-face support.

Highlight: Programmes addressing DFV and men's mental health

SETSCoP members reported on the use of DFV-specific funding, with social support groups for particular community groups helping foster connections and communications. The other part of the programming is aimed at men, especially in regards to men's mental health. With consultation support from a third-party, the SETS provider are mapping mental health services in Alice Springs and will print flyers in different languages for information, awareness and referrals.

Highlight: Subsidised TAFE studies for certain visa classes in WA

SETSCoP members had previously advocated to the WA government for eligibility for subsidised TAFE training for refugees and migrants on visas classes where funding was previously restricted in WA – in contrast to states such as NSW and VIC. This includes people on Visas 786, 449, 886 and bridging visa holders who have applied for permanent protection visas. People holding these visas often wanted to study at TAFE, including in training, apprenticeships and classes, but were precluded by the high course costs often in excess of \$4,000. The WA government announced they are now extending access to subsidised training for refugees and asylum seekers on many of these visa classes starting in 2023.

Shared Resources

Commonwealth Bank on financial abuse resources

https://www.commbank.com.au/support/recognise-and-recover/download-guide.html?ei-CTA_DownloadGuide

Financial literacy courses for women

<https://www.myauslearning.org.au/financial-literacy/>