

## **SETSCoP Men's Groups & Prevention Programs Working Group Meeting**

Tuesday, 15 August 2023

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### **Overview**

- The SETSCoP Men's Groups & Prevention Programs Working Group is part of the SETSCoP Gender, Families & Domestic & Family Violence (DFV) Subgroup.
- It will meet three times in 2023, close to when the Subgroup meets.
- It was set up as an outcome of a discussion in the May Subgroup meeting about having an opportunity to share initiatives, challenges, opportunities and learnings from men's groups and prevention programs aimed at men and boys.
- The focus has been mostly on primary prevention. In future, the group might wish to continue to broaden the discussion to include secondary and tertiary prevention.

### **August Spotlight**

*For each session, a spotlight will be on a particular SET Provider's work in this space. We were pleased to welcome Multicultural Australia's Ahmad Hossenli to lead our first spotlight.*

- Ahmad shared valuable insights into his work in Toowoomba with men from communities, including Hazari and Kurdish community members.
- His approach has created opportunities for community members to participate in social activities, including fishing and volleyball, as well as knowledge sharing opportunities, such as having a young person from the Kurdish community talk about their pathway into tertiary education.
- He has enabled the activities to be structured, but also allowing space for discussion about issues that are relevant or are bothering them.
- He found that what's worked is giving the participants some ownership of the group, including task allocation and delegation.
- What's not worked is "going deep" about challenging subjects, but rather a "light touch", ensuring everything is covered though, but reframing sessions from, say, "domestic and family violence prevention" to "family wellbeing sessions".
- All the activities include tea or coffee – tea is a very important custom for social gatherings – and also enabling bicultural support and translators.
- He highlighted that each family member can have such a unique experience of being in Australia and that his aim for all the activities, particularly with young people, is to enable hope.
- He works with young people of all genders from Toowoomba State High to identify what some of the issues are and then "learning in the collective" either all together or separate for more sensitive subjects.

Huge thank you to Ahmad for sharing his rich insights and wisdom at the meeting.

### **Initiatives**

SETS providers shared the following insights and initiatives they were working on:

- Maree from SSI (QLD) highlighted that there were some valuable resources in identifying perpetrator collusion, developed by [Ada Conway](#), which were developed for the workforce broadly.
- Marijo from MIC East (VIC) also raised that he'd done a session on perpetrator collusion through the excellent work with Ada, as the subject comes up regularly and it's useful to talk about it. The team has been engaging with Relationships Australia, who have been interested in learning more about how MIC



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works with men around fatherhood and how we engage with communities. The team are working with a group of Iranian men, on fatherhood but also creating a space for them to discuss what's impacting on them. He's also developing group for men from different communities, to support those who might be feeling isolated. He highlighted it's also very hard to engage with men – or to keep engagement going.

- Jesse from SMRC (VIC) shared a successful group they are running called the Chai-khana Teahouse, with men from Dari and Persian speaking backgrounds. Around 15 people come from all ages. They had tried a “men's shed”-type approach but it wasn't working, so took inspiration from a women's friendship café-style group. It's now been going for six months and going very well. It initially had some funding to focus on mental wellbeing, especially suicide prevention, which they were able to do outside of SETS funding and out of those eligibility requirements. It offers a space to come together to drink some tea, have fruit, nuts, other foods and sometimes they cook something together. It's quite powerful, with men opening up at times and sharing their experiences. They occasionally invite people to come along and speak about something of interest to the group, including politicians such as Julian Hill MP, and the topics sometimes centre on visas. They've just started first round of their Carrom Board championships (similar to pool or billiards) – and are looking for other men's groups to join them.
- Farida from Communicare (WA) shared that she led a successful TAFE Men's Group, with 45 people attending. She's also working on grants, for a youth program called Building Bridges for Migrant Young People (10 to 17 year olds) in education settings and schools, and also a holiday program.
- Rallian from Wyndham Community & Education Centre (VIC) talked about his focus on capacity building within Burmese communities, including Chin and Rohingya. He highlighted how hard it was to engage with the men. He ran a successful “Happy and Healthy Men” program online during the lockdowns but as people need to work, the participation has decreased. He's also run a playgroup for the past five years, and has an extensive background in community engagement.
- Anileen from MCSCA (NT) highlighted that her work involved addressing the issue of wellbeing of men, especially from South Sudanese community. She shared that it had been challenging to get funding, and also connecting with services, and delivering them at times that were best for the communities, such as the weekends. She was also working on a partnership with a specialist DFV service in Alice Springs to deliver “Prevent, assist, respond” training. It's just begun and the funding is mostly for supporting First Nations communities, but she is advocating to include CALD because it's also relevant for them.

### Challenges

- Engagement: many specialists highlighted that engaging communities was particularly challenging.
- Language: Finding services able to support in-language, including men's behaviour change programs.
- Funding: remuneration for people's time to attend (to tackle engagement issues) but also, for community leaders who are volunteering to support the groups. Also funding generally – difficulty in accessing grants.

### Opportunities

- Carrom Board championships: form a national league!

**Next meeting:** Scheduled for 26 October 2023 (2pm – 3:30pm AEST)

### Attendees:

Ahmad and Kieran (Multicultural Australia QLD), Maree (SSI QLD), Marijo (MIC East IVC), Rallian (Wyndham CEC VIC), Jesse (Southern Migrant Resource Centre VIC), Farida (Communicare WA), Anileen (MCSCA NT)

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