

## **ASVET WORKSHOP REPORT**

### **Introduction**

The seventh ASVET workshop took place on the 21<sup>st</sup> of November 2019. The workshop's primary focus was the importance of understanding the complex trauma people seeking asylum are facing and how education providers and other organisations working with people seeking asylum can play a role in responding appropriately to their needs to improve their long term outcomes. At the workshop a range of practitioners were invited to share their trauma informed practice strategies to the audience (refer to attached Agenda). This workshop also provided attendees with information in regards to the ASVET program and its current administration processes.

### **Summary of Workshop Content**

#### **Session 1: Reflections, Current Environment, and Forward Vision**

Abiola Ajetomobi, the Director of the ASRC Innovation Hub, Opened the workshop with a brief presentation that highlighted some of the ASVET programs successes since 2016. In mentioning the presentation on trauma informed practice by Dr Kirke Olson at the ASVET workshop in May this year, Abiola commented on the ASRC's role as in promoting and informing cross-culturally appropriateness and awareness across all sectors. She also encouraged all education providers to work in partnership to support students impacted by the changes to eligibility that limit their access to education and training. Another point made by Abiola was the delivery of an ASVET Community of Best Practice forum next year and its anticipated role in identifying and informing the priorities for the next funding round and will help to shape new solutions.

#### **Session 2: ASVET Administration processes**

Pauline Brown, an experienced ASVET Education advisor with the ASRC, presented a range of detailed information for practitioners, including;

- Administration processes and compliance
- How to access the ASVET Help desk and the ASVET webpage
- The type of information and resources available on the webpage
- Current eligibility criteria for people seeking asylum seeking to undertake courses

#### **Session 3: ASVET 2018- 2021**

The ASRC Education Manager, Gillian Meek, highlighted the significant achievements of students and providers under the current 2018 - 2021 ASVET contract. Gill also mentioned the current contract which is now half way through its term and some of the significant changes we have seen during this time. One being the increase in direct referrals to TAFE and Learn Locals. Sam Quinlan – Senior Project Officer from the Department of Education and Training (DET) provided DET updates including confirmation of continued eligibility for the Free TAFE courses and the new arrangements allowing people seeking asylum on eligible visas to access relevant ACFE programs through Jobs Victoria. The session led to an open discussion when Sam and Gill responded to a range of questions from the participants.

#### **Session 4: Trauma informed practice- A framework**

The key note speaker at the workshop was Moin Zafar, ASRC Mentoring program coordinator gave an informative and insightful presentation on trauma informed practice. Moin brought his lived experience perspective and shared some the strategies he uses in his program. Moin highlighted the value of involving students in the design, implementation and evaluation of this practice. In turn, students will be empowered and they will increase their self-agency. The presentation was shaped to provide a framework for participants to utilise as a tool to embed trauma informed practice into their daily practice when working with people seeking asylum.

#### **Session 5: Practitioner Panel discussion**

Faye an EAL teacher from Yarraville Community Centre, Gillian Kerr from the Foundation House Ucan2 Project and two ASRC volunteers, one an EAL teacher and the other an Education advisor were invited to the panel to participate in a discussion about the daily application of trauma informed practice in their roles. The conversation centred around how they recognize the signs of trauma and their relevant trauma informed strategies and response. They also reiterated the importance of referring to specific interventions such as counselling or psychologists when the level of trauma was beyond their scope.

#### **Session 6: Cases studies - Group work**

The participants broken up into groups and asked to reflect on six different cases studies, three per table, and think about best practices strategies or responses in relation to the case studies. All participants were keen to share strategies already in place in their respective organisations and also to envision possible practices to adopt when dealing with new situations or incidences occurring due to trauma or potentially adding to trauma. The case studies were designed to accommodate a range of situations occurring at different organisational levels.

#### **Session 7: Group work feedback**

Each table designated one member to share their main themes on each case study. Other groups with similar case studies were asked to contribute by adding new themes. This helped participants to learn from other groups' strategies and accept a diverse range of approaches.

#### **Session 8: Close**

Gillian Meek, ASRC Education Program gave a concise summary of all sessions and invited participants to apply the new strategies, sustain those already in place as well as remembering to de-escalate and refer to specific intervention when cases are beyond their capacity. Gill concluded by thanking all attendees, including Sam Quinlan from DET, Gillian especially noted the enormous contribution of the ASRC Education volunteers and their commitment to supporting people seeking asylum in their education journey.