

Student Counselling and Development

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

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*Inspiring excellence,
transforming lives
through quality,
impact, and care.*

VISION **130**
*Renew and Reimagine
for 2034*

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA



UFS
STUDENT COUNSELLING
AND DEVELOPMENT



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*A team is not a group of
people who work together.*

*A team is a group of people
who trust each other.*

— Simon Sinek



1 MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Reflecting on 2024, I believe that SCD has grown exponentially – not only in terms of the offering to our students, but also in terms of truly understanding what holds the team together. Thank you to each SCD member for bringing creativity and enthusiasm to the table, and for having a heart for our students.

The 2024 annual report portrays the multifaceted role that SCD plays on the University of the Free State's three campuses, and highlights the pioneering work being undertaken. The multi-layered services available to students are evident in the report – individual therapeutic sessions, group sessions, skills groups, workshops presented within the residential spaces, developmental workshops, programmes, career counselling, the website's self-help material, as well as the 24/7 toll-free SADAG Careline, and 24/7 assistance with trauma counselling from ER24. An added service during 2024 was the part-time appointment of a certified spiritual healer to assist students experiencing challenges while undergoing an ancestral calling.

Another highlight for SCD was the second year of an internship for three Counselling Psychology interns and the addition of intern social workers to both our Bloemfontein and South campuses! SCD has collaborated with KopsieSport and the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) to support high-performance athletes' mental health through the GROW programme – a first of its kind! This year

has been a year of growth and expansion, as SCD integrated with Kopsie Health and the HIV Office from 1 October 2024, forming the new Health and Wellness Centre under my leadership. Adding professional nurses and HIV staff to the offering not only helps our students receive a more holistic service; the Health and Wellness Centre is moving towards a multi-disciplinary approach that educates staff and students on the scope of role players involved. Thank you to each member of the newly conceptualised Health and Wellness Centre for your diligence and hard work; I am excited about our future!

My sincere thanks to everybody who has contributed to the success and growth of SCD and the Health and Wellness Centre over the past year – especially Temba Hlase (Executive Director: DSA), the Student Affairs Senior Leadership Group, and every SCD staff member. Thank you for a year full of partnerships, collaboration, interesting challenges, wonderful achievements, and that we could learn and laugh together.

'If you want to go fast, go alone.'

'If you want to go far, go together.'

– African proverb.

2 INTRODUCTION

The Department of Student Counselling and Development (SCD) was established in 1977 and offers free services to all registered students at the University of the Free State (UFS). SCD is based within the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) and there are SCD offices on the Qwaqwa, South, and Bloemfontein campuses. The staff complement consists of social workers, intern social workers, clinical and counselling psychologists, intern counselling psychologists, registered counsellors, and administrative staff.

Both undergraduate and postgraduate students can be assisted through a variety of services offered at SCD, including individual therapy sessions, group sessions, workshops, developmental programmes, and career counselling. Various age groups are attended to, ranging from adolescence to adulthood. The students assisted at SCD are from various cultural backgrounds across South Africa, as well as international students. SCD's strategic direction is based on three pillars, namely Psychological Interventions, Training and Development, and Research and Innovation. This process encapsulates the vision and mission of SCD, which – after several consultations with the entire team – has been adjusted to the following.

SCD'S MISSION IS TO

- a** improve understanding and awareness among the UFS community regarding holistic mental health and mental health challenges;
- b** provide systemic education and knowledge regarding mental health issues and implement programmes, activities, and initiatives that support healing and the development of resilience among students;
- c** contribute significantly to knowledge production, evidence-based interventions, and mental health innovations to address the substantial mental health needs of students; and
- d** collaboratively create a socially just environment by expanding mental health services to enhance compassionate and caring environments for students.

The mission culminates in SCD's vision:

Our vision is to develop and implement systemic and holistic mental health services that promote student well-being and flourishing; mitigate, reduce, and prevent mental health challenges; and address existing mental health issues.



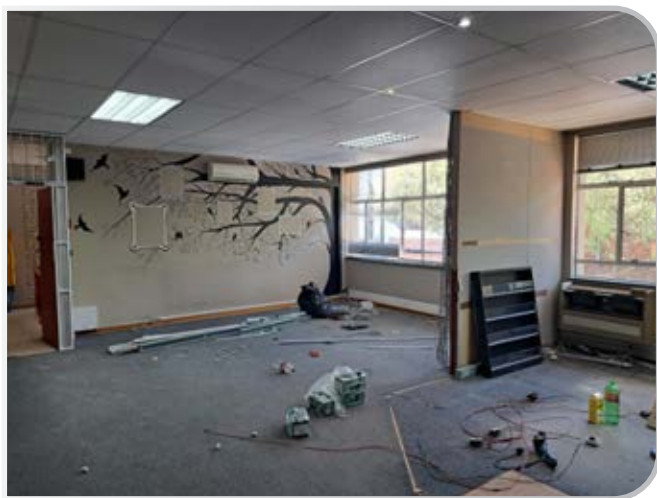
Throughout 2024, the Kopsie Health Building – where SCD is situated on the Bloemfontein Campus – was expanded and more offices were added. An innovative and relevant space was created to respond to students' learning and developmental needs. The vision was to create a space – aligning a variety of student services in one building – communicating care, relevance, warmth, and quality.

During this process, the reception area of SCD was moved and revamped. One central entrance to the building assists with the flow of students.

The result was a warm and welcoming space where students feel comfortable spending time. Therapeutic colouring books with pencils are available too.



The new reception area



The 'old' reception area under construction



The newly expanded Kopsie Health Building

On 1 October 2024, SCD integrated with Kopsie Health and the HIV Office. The newly conceptualised structure is known as the Health and Wellness Centre. As this report reflects on 2024, SCD's journey will be shared according to the three strategic pillars and the activities integrated within. From 2025, the report will focus on the newly established centre.

Health & Wellness Centre



3 PILLAR ONE

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS

3.1 SCD SERVICES AND RESOURCES

3.1.1 Individual counselling

Individual, confidential counselling on various psychological, emotional, and developmental issues, with the aim of supporting students in resolving challenges that may impede the fulfilment of their potential. Individual sessions are held with students on an appointment basis. Although SCD has moved to mainly face-to-face sessions, students may still choose which platform of counselling they prefer:

While students are on campus, the majority prefer face-to-face sessions. During holiday periods, students will mostly revert to telephonic counselling. This, however, tends to have its own challenges, as privacy is a concern.

The tables below illustrate the number of sessions per campus during 2024.



**Telephonic
counselling**



**Online video
counselling**



**Face-to-face
counselling**

BLOEMFONTEIN CAMPUS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Total sessions booked	52	320	485	599	657	488	665	630	711	868	613	21	6 109
Total sessions attended	41	235	351	394	417	284	431	390	438	573	399	16	3 969
Difference	11	85	134	205	240	204	234	240	273	295	214	5	2 140
Cancelled by student	5	28	45	76	79	70	92	72	64	83	49	0	663
Cancelled (other)	4	14	16	32	63	14	30	57	40	23	14	1	308
Missed by students	2	41	71	91	103	128	109	109	161	164	144	4	1 127
Total	11	83	132	199	245	212	231	238	265	270	207	5	2 098
New students booked	30	167	178	185	153	115	149	122	157	156	79	4	1 495
New students attended	28	119	154	143	117	83	119	100	118	119	58	4	1 162

Table 1: Sessions on the Bloemfontein Campus

Feedback from students regarding therapy sessions on the Bloemfontein Campus

- A space I would recommend to anyone not knowing how to deal with their emotion. I am very grateful to SCD for creating a safe space for me.
- Compliments to the SCD team for their patience and accommodation to me. I felt better from the first stop of the screening process, and I knew from then that I had the best choice.
- For the first time, I managed to complete all my sessions, and I have never been happier with the assistance I received from SCD.
- I've healed and I've begun to take back my life. I'm happy, and I'm enjoying my life to the fullest. I'm in a good place.
- I had the most amazing psychologist in the world. She is called by God to reach out to the broken hearts.
- I love how friendly everyone is when we come in, it can be very comforting when you are not in a good mood. Keep up the great work.
- SCD has assisted me to grow personally to have the capacity to love myself and be true to myself. My head is now screwed on, thanks.
- The SCD team has always been extremely professional and so nice. This journey has been nothing short of pure love.
- The services from the administrators to the therapist were exceptional. Not once did I feel as if I was bothering someone.
- The services were very beneficial. The staff members very professional and made the experience even better.
- The staff from SCD are very welcoming – from the receptionists, the psychologists, and counsellors.

SOUTH CAMPUS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Total sessions booked	1	20	60	73	98	12	32	93	83	81	42	0	595
Total sessions attended	1	16	43	51	59	10	24	55	42	58	20	0	379
Difference	0	4	17	22	39	2	8	38	41	23	22	0	216
Cancelled by student	0	1	2	7	2	0	2	3	4	3	6	0	30
Cancelled (other)	0	1	1	0	15	12	0	15	7	4	0	0	55
Missed by students	0	2	14	15	22	1	6	20	30	16	16	0	142
Total	0	4	17	22	39	13	8	38	41	23	22	0	227
New students booked	1	11	23	30	18	1	8	27	8	10	9	0	146
New students attended	1	11	20	23	13	1	7	23	5	10	8	0	122

Table 2: Sessions on the South Campus

QWAQWA CAMPUS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Total sessions booked	0	84	182	176	233	106	123	156	164	166	62	0	1452
Total sessions attended	0	62	120	100	148	55	98	98	106	118	42	0	947
Difference	0	22	62	76	85	51	25	58	58	48	20	0	505
Cancelled by student	0	8	32	20	36	29	14	15	20	17	15	0	206
Cancelled (other)	0	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	6	4	0	0	15
Missed by students	0	13	28	53	49	37	11	43	32	27	5	0	298
Total	0	22	61	76	85	66	25	58	58	48	20	0	519
New students booked	0	49	79	77	110	50	43	49	39	49	32	0	577
New students attended	0	41	58	50	73	33	40	29	27	42	19	0	412

Table 3: Sessions on the Qwaqwa Campus

Feedback from students regarding therapy sessions on the South Campus

- I'm grateful for the time that you give us. The sessions help so much, and I'll forever be grateful for the opportunity given to sit on the red couch and just vent.
- I love the privacy and security I had felt.
- Keep up the good work SCD, I am very satisfied with your services.
- The service was good; however, I'm still in the process of healing and finding inner peace, and I am looking forward to continuing attending counselling.
- You're more than just a counsellor. You're a mentor and a friend. Thank you for everything.



The next table indicates the total sessions for 2024, highlighting that 1 551 sessions were missed by students across all three campuses. This is calculated at 19% of the total booked sessions – the same percentage as in 2023, which is still too high.

TOTALS FOR ALL CAMPUSES	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Total sessions booked	53	424	727	848	988	607	820	879	958	1115	717	21	8 156
Total sessions attended	42	313	514	545	624	349	553	543	586	749	461	16	5 295
Difference	11	111	213	303	364	258	267	336	372	366	256	5	2 861
Cancelled by student	5	37	79	103	117	99	108	90	88	103	70	0	899
Cancelled (other)	4	16	18	35	78	26	30	72	53	31	14	1	378
Missed by students	2	56	113	159	174	166	126	172	223	207	165	4	1 551
Total	11	109	210	297	369	292	264	334	364	341	249	5	2 828
New students booked	31	227	280	290	281	166	200	198	204	215	120	4	2 218
New students attended	29	171	232	214	203	117	166	152	150	171	85	4	1 696

Table 4: Total sessions for all three campuses

3.1.2 On call / emergency sessions

Daily time slots to assist with emergency-related issues (suicide attempts; suicidal thoughts; trauma) are booked to ensure that students receive timely intervention. Individual appointments are set aside for emergency sessions to assess and contain the emergency and make the relevant referrals. The table below illustrates the number of emergency sessions per campus during 2024.

BLOEMFONTEIN CAMPUS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
On call (emergency) sessions booked	3	21	28	35	44	18	31	33	34	33	15	2	297
On call (emergency) attended	3	19	26	30	36	13	27	26	24	30	12	2	248

Table 5: On call sessions: Bloemfontein Campus

SOUTH CAMPUS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
On call (emergency) sessions booked	0	0	6	7	4	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	21
On call (emergency) attended	0	0	5	7	4	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	19

Table 6: On call sessions: South Campus

QWAQWA CAMPUS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
On call (emergency) sessions booked	0	2	2	5	4	2	6	4	4	0	0	0	31
On call (emergency) attended	0	3	2	1	5	2	6	5	6	0	0	0	33

Table 7: On call sessions: Qwaqwa Campus

The next table indicates the total sessions for 2024, highlighting that 49 sessions were missed by students across the three campuses. This is calculated at 14% of the total booked sessions.

TOTALS FOR ALL CAMPUSES	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
On call (emergency) sessions booked	3	23	36	47	54	20	39	39	38	33	15	2	349
On call (emergency) attended	3	22	33	42	44	15	35	32	30	30	112	2	300

Table 8: On call sessions: All three campuses

Through the data, it was evident that the months of April, May in the first semester, and July, August, and September had significantly more students requesting therapeutic assistance, as well as emergency sessions. The significant increase in requests during the first semester (and April) has not been the norm in SCD, but this is the second year that this pattern has presented. The second semester increase in requests during August, October, and November relates to what has been experienced previously. During 2024, the requests increased from the beginning of the second semester, where it usually tended to only increase from August. Seemingly, students need specialised help sooner than in the past. The top 10 reasons why students report to SCD can be seen in the tables below.

	January		February		March		April		May		June	
1	Anxiety	31	Overthinking	205	Overthinking	205	Overthinking	201	Overthinking	188	Overthinking	35
2	Overthinking	27	Anxiety	201	Anxiety	201	Anxiety	185	Anxiety	156	Anxiety	32
3	Family	19	Depression	127	Depression	131	Academic performance	148	Academic performance	140	Depression	22
4	Stress	18	Family	123	Family	129	Depression	121	Depression	114	Academic performance	19
5	Depression	16	Panic attacks	100	Stress	128	Stress	121	Family	112	Panic attacks	15
6	Eat/sleep	13	Stress	99	Academic performance	102	Eat/sleep	110	Stress	91	Stress	15
7	Panic attacks	12	Eat/sleep	93	Eat/sleep	100	Family	108	Eat/sleep	89	Poor self-esteem	14
8	Poor self-esteem	12	Academic performance	88	Panic attacks	98	Financial	97	Panic attacks	82	Romantic problems	12
9	Suicidal	11	Poor self-esteem	86	Poor self-esteem	89	Panic attacks	90	Poor self-esteem	80	Financial	12
10	Academic performance	10	Financial	85	Financial	89	Poor self-esteem	84	Suicidal	75	Trauma	10

	July		August		September		October		November		December	
1	Overthinking	170	Overthinking	116	Overthinking	146	Overthinking	97	Overthinking	51	Overthinking	34
2	Anxiety	166	Anxiety	114	Anxiety	140	Anxiety	91	Depression	49	Anxiety	29
3	Academic performance	113	Family	69	Academic performance	93	Academic performance	71	Anxiety	47	Family	26
4	Family	101	Academic performance	64	Depression	88	Stress	58	Family	37	Depression	24
5	Stress	97	Stress	60	Family	83	Eat/sleep	54	Academic performance	36	Academic performance	24
6	Panic attacks	89	Depression	59	Stress-related	71	Panic attacks	54	Anger	28	Stress	20
7	Depression	86	Eat/sleep	51	Eat/sleep	71	Depression	53	Stress	24	Suicide	16
8	Eat/sleep	78	Poor self-esteem	50	Poor self-esteem	62	Suicide	42	Suicide	23	Anger	15
9	Poor self-esteem	77	Panic attacks	47	Panic attacks	60	Poor self-esteem	36	Eat/sleep	23	Panic attacks	14
10	Regret	68	Family	44	Anger issues	60	Death of a loved one	36	Self-esteem	19	Eat/sleep	13

Table 9: Top 10 reasons why students visit SCD (per month)

The top ten reasons for students visiting SCD during 2024 are summarised in the table below. The top three reasons, Overthinking (*this involves thinking excessively about a certain topic or situation, analysing it for long periods of time*), Anxiety (*a feeling of nervousness, unease, or worry that typically occurs in the absence of an imminent threat*), and Academic Performance (*the extent to which a student has reached their academic goals*) are significantly higher than the rest of the reasons.

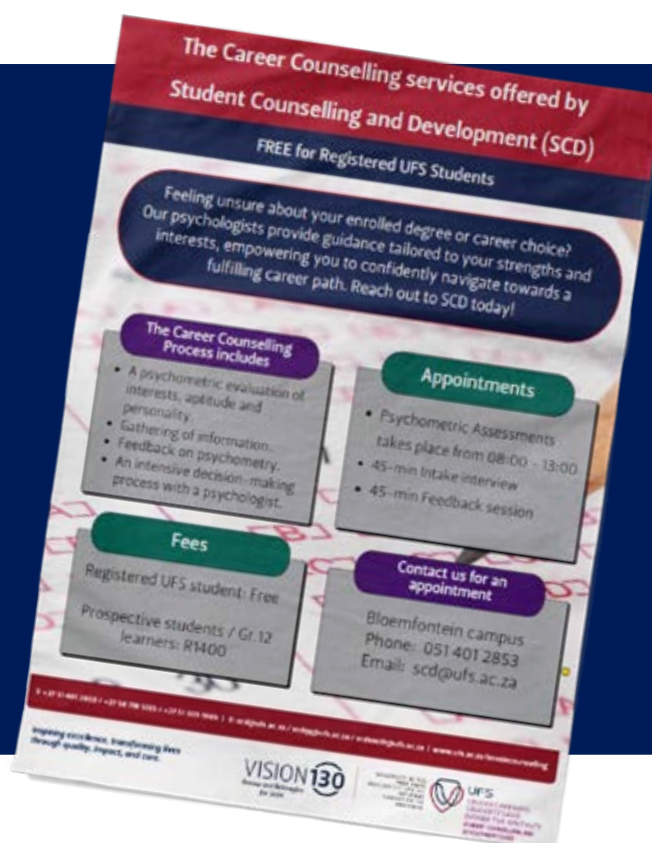
**TOP 10 REASONS
FOR STUDENTS
VISITING SCD**

1	Overthinking	1 475
2	Anxiety	1 393
3	Academic performance	908
4	Depression	890
5	Family-related	807
6	Stress	802
7	Panic attacks	661
8	Self-esteem	609
9	Eat/sleep	695
10	Financial	283

Table 10: Top 10 reasons why students visit SCD (total for the year)

3.1.3 Career counselling

This specialised process assists the student in knowing and understanding themselves and the world of work in order to make career, educational, and life decisions. The career counselling process offered to registered students and Grade 11/12 learners includes a complete psychometric evaluation of aptitude, interests, and personality, as well as an intake interview and intensive decision-making process with a counselling psychologist.



The following tables provide an illustration of the number of career counselling processes on each campus, with the figures being consolidated in the last table.

BLOEMFONTEIN CAMPUS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Intake interviews booked	3	3	5	5	3	7	11	7	15	12	3	1	75
Intake interviews attended	1	4	4	4	2	6	17	6	7	7	2	1	59
Feedback sessions booked	0	1	1	12	1	3	9	3	6	8	11	2	58
Feedback sessions attended	0	1	1	9	1	2	5	2	4	5	8	1	40

Table 11: Career Counselling sessions: Bloemfontein Campus

SOUTH CAMPUS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Intake interviews booked	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	9
Intake interviews attended	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	9
Feedback sessions booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feedback sessions attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 12: Career Counselling sessions: South Campus

QWAQWA CAMPUS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Intake interviews booked	0	0	2	1	5	0	1	1	0	0	5	0	15
Intake interviews attended	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	5	0	11
Feedback sessions booked	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	5	0	11
Feedback sessions attended	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	5	0	10

Table 13: Career Counselling sessions: Qwaqwa Campus

TOTALS FOR ALL CAMPUSES	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Intake interviews booked	3	3	7	9	9	7	12	13	15	12	8	1	99
Intake interviews attended	1	2	5	8	5	6	18	12	7	7	7	1	79
Feedback sessions booked	0	2	2	12	2	5	9	5	6	8	16	2	69
Feedback sessions attended	0	2	2	9	2	3	5	4	4	5	13	1	50

Table 14: Career Counselling sessions: Totals for all three campuses

3.1.4 Social Work Services

Social Work Services aim to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance student success and well-being. This is done by planning and implementing appropriate social support intervention strategies and techniques. Some of these interventions include the following:

- Family-related matters (e.g. divorce, death, etc.)
- Sexual gender-based violence intervention and referrals (SGBV)
- Food support (referrals to the Food Bank and No Student Hungry programmes)
- Emergency social support needs assessments
- Bereavement support
- Pregnancy counselling
- Substance abuse support and referrals.

A reflection of students seen by Social Work Services can be viewed in the table below.

TOTALS FOR ALL CAMPUSES	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Total sessions booked	19	92	111	155	229	107	157	186	162	149	40	0	1 407
Total sessions attended	18	85	90	117	167	68	103	149	133	116	40	0	1 086
Difference	1	7	21	38	62	39	54	37	29	33	0	0	321
Cancelled by student	0	1	10	13	19	7	4	4	10	4	1	0	73
Cancelled (other)	0	0	1	4	12	0	0	10	4	1	0	0	32
Missed by students	0	8	12	33	35	29	8	19	13	23	1	0	181
Total	0	9	23	50	66	36	12	33	27	28	2	0	286
New students booked	18	83	73	89	117	51	42	52	37	73	14	0	649
New students attended	18	78	79	79	110	50	41	46	34	55	11	0	602

Table 15: Total sessions for all three campuses: Social Work Services

Trends among students reporting for assistance included difficulty adjusting to university, grief over the loss of a loved one, overwhelming romantic relationships and dealing with breakups, a need for pregnancy support – particularly in relation to the pregnancy placement options for these newborns, and anxiety stemming from experiences of domestic violence prevalent at home. An increase in trends such as substance abuse and grief has led to a need for group interventions, which have started and will be explored in depth in 2025.

The integration of Social Work Services into the service offering of SCD not only enhanced the multidisciplinary focus of the department but also allowed for better understanding and collaboration between the disciplines. The top five reasons why students accessed Social Work Services can be viewed in the table below.

TOP FIVE REASONS FOR STUDENTS VISITING SCD: SOCIAL WORK SERVICES			
	Bloemfontein Campus	Qwaqwa Campus	South Campus
1	Grief support	Unplanned pregnancy, psychosocial support, and assistance with placement	Childhood trauma and effects on current coping ability
2	Unplanned pregnancy	Academic exclusions	Academic under-achievement and accompanying stress
3	Financial concerns	Financial concerns	Unplanned pregnancy, psychosocial support, and assistance with placement
4	Relationship challenges – family, romantic	Accommodation concerns	Relationship challenges – family, romantic
5	Substance abuse	Traumatic experiences	Suicide ideation, grief support, material assistance (toiletries and food insecurity)

Table 16: Top five reasons why students visited Social Work Services

During 2024, the SCD social work internship programme continued in collaboration with the academic Department of Social Work. The programme complements SCD social work services with individual casework, group work, and community work. As part of community work, interns held awareness campaigns on grief and substance abuse at residences, highlighting how individuals are likely to deal with grief in unhealthy ways. This campaign increased the number of students joining the grief support groups, where they could learn more healthy ways to deal with grief.



Grief support groups

Social work interns successfully facilitated two grief support groups. The groups were designed to provide a supportive environment where one could share thoughts, emotions, and experiences with others who understand and have/are experiencing the pain of grief. The goal was to assist in finding comfort, guidance, and connection as they journey through the healing process.



3.1.5 Developmental workshops, programmes, and engagements

Webinars and workshops

Group sessions (workshops or webinars) are presented with the purpose of imparting skills and supporting students in resolving challenges that may impede the realisation of their potential. The various group sessions are presented in-house and at the request of UFS faculties, departments, and residences.

SCD presented 113 workshops/webinars during the year, reaching 4 311 students. These workshops included:



Coping with Stress



Mental Health Survival Guide



Suicide Awareness



Test and Exam Anxiety



Self-Care



Emotional Intelligence



Assertive Communication in Romantic Relationships, etc.

The most requested workshops were Coping with Stress, Suicide Awareness, Mental Health Survival Guide, and Self-Care. The tables below provide an overview of all group interventions presented during 2024 per campus.

TOTALS FOR ALL CAMPUSES		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Workshops	Booked	6	8	21	17	13	4	11	5	4	6	1	0	96
	Attended	323	213	582	549	371	42	423	352	25	58	9	0	2 947
REBT Programme	Booked	142						83						225
	Attended	11						27						38
Self-Esteem Programme	Signed up	62						50						112
	Attended 1st	15						30						45
	Completed	10						26						36
GROW Programme	Booked	10						69						79
	Attended	10						41						51
On the Red Couch	Booked	0	0	0	29	6	27	17	43	0	0	0	0	122
	Attended	0	0	0	17	5	11	9	7	0	0	0	0	49
Power Club	Booked	0						24						24
	Attended	0						17						17
Man to Man	Booked	0						30						30
	Attended	0						25						25

Table 17: Attendance figures for workshops and programmes

The table above indicates the group interventions on all three campuses during 2024; a total of 3 163 individuals participated in group interventions.

Feedback from students regarding workshops:

- Great session, very educational too, especially because I went in there out of curiosity, but I came out a knowledgeable person on different forms that anger can manifest itself.
- Highly recommend the workshops as they are eye-opening and quite informative.
- I'd love to come and join this session again. I am feeling better right now.
- I learnt a lot about emotions through this workshop that I can teach to others.
- I really learned a lot about emotions that I thought were normal, but actually need to learn how to deal with them. Also, I found new knowledge about expressing emotions.
- More workshops like this are needed to help students learn how to deal with things or situations we come across in life.
- Please arrange for workshops like this on a regular basis. It helps me regulate my overall health.
- This session helped me realise that, along with physical health, you must also take care and prioritise your mental health and eat food that nourishes your mind.

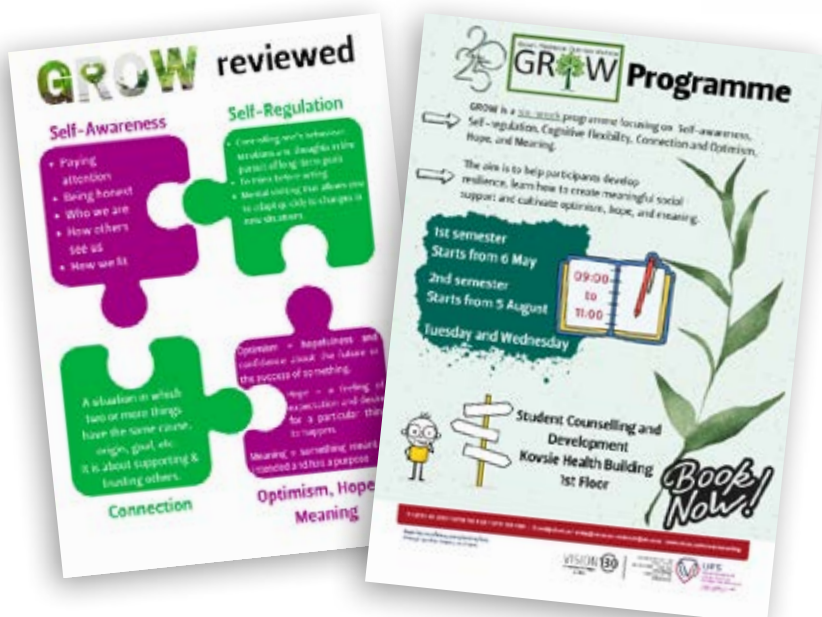
Programmes

The *Self-Esteem programme* is an eight-week programme that focuses on developing healthy self-esteem in students. Students are assisted to define and understand the formation of self-esteem. Furthermore, the programme aims to help students become aware of the impact of self-esteem on their well-being. Students are assisted to process past events and beliefs that harm their self-esteem.

Students will also learn how to identify their own self-sabotaging behaviours, which prevent them from reaching their full potential. Students will also be able to develop healthy assertiveness skills and learn relevant self-esteem-building skills. Thirty-six students completed the programme during 2024.



The *REBT programme* is a practical, action-oriented approach to assisting individuals overcome and cope with adversity, achieve goals, and enhance personal growth by addressing attitudes, unhealthy emotions, and maladaptive thought patterns and behaviours. During 2024, the programme had 225 registrations, with 38 students completing the programme.



The *GROW project* is a scientifically designed mental health project that aims to develop participants to engage life in a way that creates **G**rowth, builds **R**esilience, cultivates **O**ptimism, and achieve overall **W**ellness (i.e. GROW). We used the social sciences and research evidence to create a project that has the best possible potential to cultivate certain competencies and skills in participants, which will enable them to cope more effectively with the ups and downs of life and to flourish as human beings. Fifty-one students completed the six-week programme in 2024.

Feedback from students regarding the REBT programme:

- I learned that nothing is wrong with me and I just need to work on my emotions and learn to speak up.
- I like that it was able to explain everything step by step and guide us.
- I really enjoyed learning about the different concepts and techniques of REBT. I found the ABCDE framework particularly helpful in understanding how irrational beliefs can lead to negative emotional and behavioral consequences, and I appreciated the emphasis on cognitive restructuring as a way to change these beliefs. I also enjoyed learning about the various types of irrational beliefs. Overall, I found the REBT programme to be very informative and beneficial. I hope that I can continue to use what I've learned to help people overcome negative emotions and behaviours.
- It taught me a lot that I didn't know about the types of thoughts I could get and how to control them.
- it was easy to use and navigate through, and you can pace yourself through the whole programme.

3.1.6 Engagements

SCD Movie Nights at Residences

On the South Campus, SCD collaborated with the residences to create awareness about the various psychosocial challenges that students may be exposed to during their period of study. To illustrate the challenges in question, the movie *Monate, jou lekker ding* was shown to students on different dates in their respective residences. The movie brilliantly captured the challenges that students may experience within higher education. A total of seven movie nights at different residences on the South Campus during February reached 626 students.



Movie night poster

SCD Movie Night

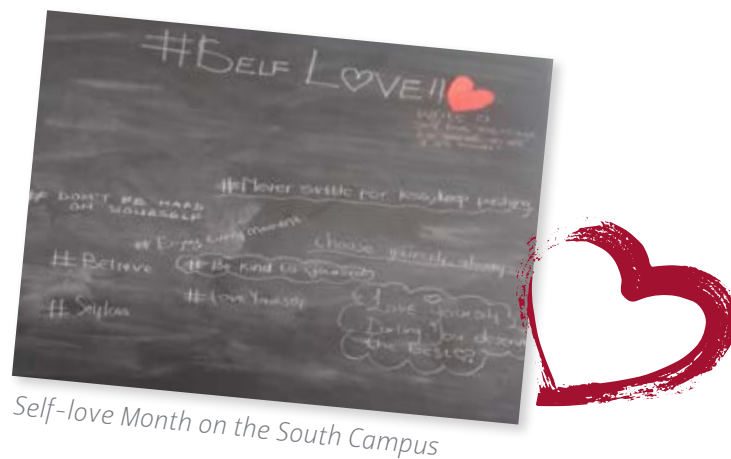
During February 2024 – as part of welcoming the first-years to campus – a movie night was hosted on the Bloemfontein Campus, with free popcorn and drinks. This was a fun activity to make students aware of SCD's services. The evening was attended by 1 020 students!



Movie night attendees

#Self-Love

Students on the South Campus were encouraged to show love to themselves by writing declarations of self-love in the cafeteria. The cafeteria chalkboards were available for use, and students received motivational and self-love quotes. This was a positive experience for students, and SCD staff were thanked for the reminder to love and appreciate themselves.



Self-love Month on the South Campus

World Social Work Day

Social workers in Bloemfontein from the School of Social Work, the Department of Health, and SCD joined forces to celebrate World Social Work Day on 19 March 2024. The day was celebrated with a peaceful, joyous walk to the Main Building on the Bloemfontein Campus. A pledge was handed over to Prof Francis Petersen (Vice-Chancellor until September 2024) to illustrate the strengthening of social workers' commitment.



International Social Work Day celebrations

Interfaith Prayer Service

The Interfaith Prayer Service was convened with the purpose of fostering moral regeneration and spiritual upliftment among students. The gathering on the Qwaqwa Campus brought together leaders and followers of various faith traditions, alongside social workers and role players from the university community, to unite in prayer, reflection, and social commitment.



Interfaith prayer service

Dialogue: Gender-based Violence

SCD, in partnership with Protection Services, the Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Office (GEADO), and the Department of Health, conducted a fruitful dialogue on gender-based violence in higher education on the Qwaqwa Campus on 2 October 2024.



Gender-based Violence Dialogue

Everyday Heroes

SCD worked with the Social Support Office to celebrate the South Campus' Everyday Heroes. The session targeted male students on the South Campus, with an emphasis on the 'heroes' sharing their personal stories of navigating psychosocial challenges. The rationale for the session was for students to note the success stories of ordinary people like themselves (for example, male staff members).



Everyday Heroes event

3.1.7 Online mental health resources

SCD believes in guiding students to reach their full potential. The services offered to students in SCD are multi-layered, with one of these layers being online mental health resources. The SCD website is regularly updated and provides access to interactive self-help material online. It is therefore available 24/7 and students can access it whenever they prefer; it also provides a platform where students can be educated about mental health. Interactive self-help tools are provided on the website for students to access. SCD has an online presence on Blackboard (the online learning platform of the UFS), on social media platforms, as well as on the SCD website. When you have time, go browse a bit!

In addition to the extensive information available on the website, the SCD Road Map – developed in 2023 – is distributed widely and guides students on how to access different services in SCD.



3.1.8 Spiritual Support

SCD has a holistic approach to student wellness and the one wellness dimension, spirituality, necessitated a more nuanced approach. Spirituality gives purpose to life and life's experiences, helping one to make meaning of one's existence, and is inextricably linked to health and well-being. There are a variety of support mechanisms for the more traditional spiritual realms available, but support was needed for students from African indigenous spiritual belief systems. The role of ancestors within these belief systems is central and as many students experience an ancestral calling challenging, SCD appointed a part-time certified spiritual healer to assist. Ms Victoria Dithebe was appointed on a part-time basis from April and provided psychoeducation, guidance, and healing to several students. The feedback from students have been very positive and encouraging, and the aim is to expand the service to both South and QwaQwa campuses.



3.2 PARTNERSHIPS, COLLABORATIONS, AND NETWORKING

3.2.1 UNIBS

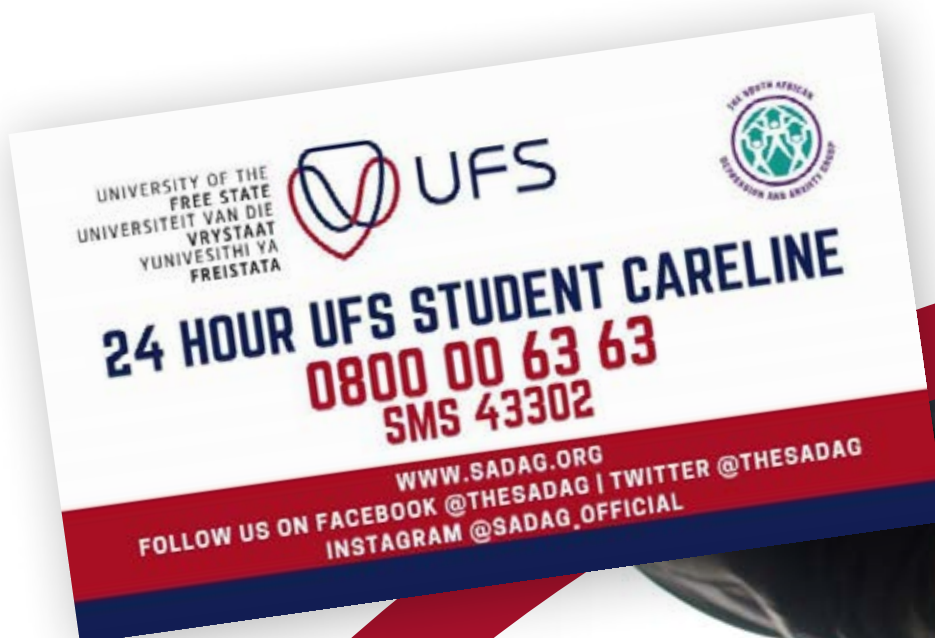
The Unit for Professional Training and Service in the Behavioural Sciences (UNIBS) is one of the stakeholders that SCD partners with to assist in the training of intern counselling psychologists. As part of the continued strengthened partnership with UNIBS, four intern psychologists from UNIBS formed part of the SCD mental health practitioners on a rotational basis, assisting in the offering of therapeutic services to registered students and psychometric services to the broader Free State community. Three SCD interns formed part of the UNIBS mental health practitioners, providing therapeutic services to UNIBS clients. UNIBS and SCD worked together to train and supervise the five intern psychologists.

3.2.2 SADAG careline and screening

The dedicated toll-free student mental health careline, operated by the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG), took effect on 1 September 2020.

This helpline provides free telephonic counselling, containment, crisis intervention, and support, as well as referrals to mental health professionals and other psychosocial resources, to all registered UFS students. The details and location of each student caller are recorded, along with a detailed description of the nature of the difficulties the student is experiencing, as well as the support provided in terms of referrals/advice on how best to manage their situation. According to the case management principles applied by SADAG, follow-up calls are made to students in crisis to track their situations and ensure that they are making positive progress.

Since 1 September 2021, SADAG has also taken over the screening process from SCD. This means that every student who contacts SCD for a session is first contacted by SADAG and an initial screening session is conducted online. From these calls/sessions, SADAG will then refer students to SCD if the student is still in need of further counselling or intervention. If a student is not referred to SCD for further intervention, it means that the student has been sufficiently assisted/contained. When a student at SCD presents with emotional/psychological challenges bordering on an emergency, the first port of call will be to refer the student to a telephonic consultation with SADAG.



The tables below provide a monthly overview of the number of students assisted by SADAG throughout 2024.

MONTH		JANUARY		FEBRUARY		MARCH		APRIL		MAY		JUNE	
NUMBER OF CALLS		368		476		598		594		599		407	
GENDER		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
		63%	37%	79%	21%	78%	22%	80%	20%	70%	30%	76%	24%
RACE	African	66%		75%		70%		61%		43%		54%	
	White	23%		12%		16%		19%		26%		27%	
	Coloured	11%		9%		9%		11%		19%		14%	
	Indian	0%		4%		5%		9%		12%		5%	
CAMPUS	Bfn	74%		79%		69%		78%		80%		77%	
	QQ	3%		2%		8%		4%		3%		3%	
	South	0%		1%		1%		1%		2%		1%	
	Undisclosed	23%		18%		22%		17%		15%		19%	
TOP THREE REASONS FOR CALLS		Academic stress 20%		Anxiety 20%		Anxiety 18%		Academic stress 23%		Academic stress 22%		Academic stress 22%	
		Anxiety 18%		Academic stress 12%		Academic stress 17%		Anxiety 17%		Anxiety 16%		Anxiety 20%	
		Family issues 16%		Depression 12%		Family issues 13%		Family issues 10%		Family issues 13%		Bereavement 16%	
SUPPORT PROVIDED		Psychological first aid 37%		Psychological first aid 32%		Psychological first aid 34%		Psychological first aid 32%		Psychological first aid 31%		Psychological first aid 53%	
		Student support facilities 29%		Referred to UFS psychologists 30%		Referred to UFS psychologists 32%		Referred to UFS psychologists 29%		Referred to UFS psychologists 29%		Student support facilities 28%	
		General enquiries 19%		Student support facilities 19%		Student support facilities 25%		Student support facilities 21%		Student support facilities 26%		Referred to UFS psychologists 10%	



MONTH		JULY		AUGUST		SEPTEMBER		OCTOBER		NOVEMBER		DECEMBER	
NUMBER OF CALLS		458		449		479		527		497		383	
GENDER		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
		79%	21%	73%	27%	77%	23%	73%	27%	65%	35%	70%	30%
RACE	African	58%		61%		65%		62%		90%		73%	
	White	25%		24%		20%		20%		8%		13%	
	Coloured	12%		10%		10%		10%		0%		8%	
	Indian	5%		5%		5%		8%		2%		6%	
CAMPUS	Bfn	85%		82%		85%		81%		75%		57%	
	QQ	2%		1%		3%		5%		2%		2%	
	South	1%		0%		1%		2%		1%		1%	
	Undisclosed	12%		17%		11%		12%		22%		40%	
TOP THREE REASONS FOR CALLS		Academic stress 20%		Academic stress 19%		Academic stress 23%		Academic stress 17%		Academic stress 22%		Academic stress 23%	
		Anxiety 19%		Anxiety 16%		Family issues 13%		Anxiety 16%		Depression 10%		Depression 17%	
		Family issues 14%		Depression 8%		Anxiety 12%		Family issues 14%		Anxiety 10%		Anxiety 14%	
SUPPORT PROVIDED		Psychological first aid 40%		Referred to UFS psychologists 33%		Referred to UFS psychologists 36%		Psychological first aid 31%		Psychological first aid 45%		Psychological first aid 69%	
		Referred to UFS psychologists 40%		Psychological first aid 30%		Psychological first aid 28%		Student support facilities 25%		Student support facilities 30%		Student support facilities 21%	
		Student support facilities 3%		Student support facilities 23%		Student support facilities 24%		Referred to UFS psychologists 24%		Referred to faculty advisers 11%		General enquiries 5%	

Table 18: Statistics of students who contacted SADAG

MONTH	2022	2023	2024
January	367	361	368
February	375	389	476
March	392	548	598
April	409	548	594
May	392	625	599
June	416	423	407
July	402	581	458
August	434	632	449
September	486	687	479
October	502	668	527
November	538	643	497
December	389	391	383
TOTAL	5 102	6 496	5 635

Table 19: 2022-2024 comparison of SADAG statistics

3.2.3 Project Empower

SCD has collaborated with KovsieSport to support high-performance athletes' mental health through the GROW programme (growth, resilience, optimism, and wellness) – a resilience-based project aimed at fostering human strengths, psychological capabilities, and overall flourishing. This is a collaborative effort between KovsieSport, the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), as well as SCD, to provide holistic support. As this is a holistic approach, the coaches of the different teams are also assisted and trained. Some achievements can be mentioned in particular:

- The men's football team reached the semi-final stage of the Varsity Cup competition.
- The women's football team won the Sasol league provincial competition and went on to represent the Free State at the nationals.
- The netball team won the 2024 Varsity Cup competition.
- The men's football team qualified for the 2025 Varsity Cup.
- The women's football team maintained a good USSA ranking that keeps them in Section A.



The Project Empower team with the Netball Head Coach and the Director of Sport at the Varsity Cup Netball Final

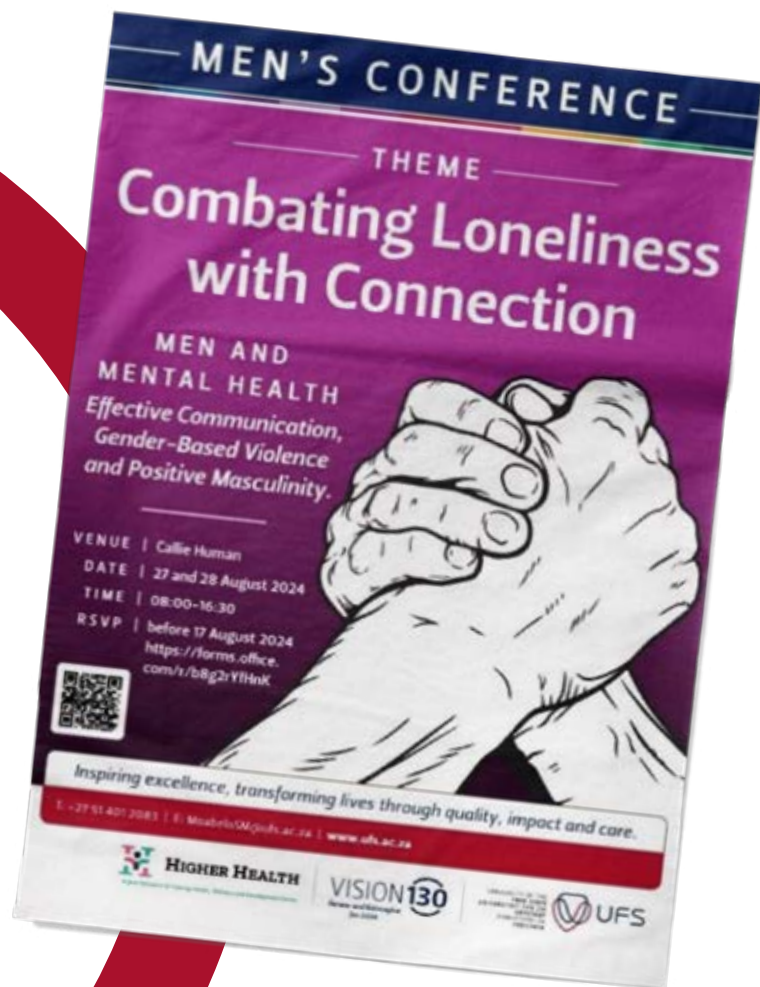


Hockey and rugby coaches training at Kovsie-Inn



Project Empower gala evening

On 18 November 2024, the Project Empower Year-End Gala Dinner acknowledged student-athletes who completed the project. The event served as a reminder that, beyond the pursuit of victories in sports, investing in mental health is a significant triumph.



3.2.4 Lekgotla (Men's well-being project)

Following the success of the Lekgotla pilot in 2023 and inter-institutional collaboration, more stakeholder engagements took place at the beginning of 2024. Stakeholders in Lesotho were identified as possible collaborators. During a successful visit to Lesotho, productive meetings were held with key stakeholders from the National University of Lesotho, Lerotholi Polytechnic, and Limkokwing University of Creative Technology. The focus was on introducing the Lekgotla initiative and discussing collaborative efforts for a Hiking Pledge event. All institutions expressed strong support and enthusiasm for the collaboration.

The Lekgotla Men's Forum, established in 2024, aimed to foster social connections and community among participants. The forum, piloted with consistent members from the 2023 Lekgotla programme, includes 15 elected leaders from various colleges. Vuyisa Ntulo, an SCD Social Work intern, is among these leaders. The forum is structured across the three campuses and will play a pivotal role in the success of the programme.



Lekgotla: Men's Forum

The Young Men's Imbizo 2024 was another exciting addition to the Lekgotla. The imbizo, meaning 'a gathering' in Nguni, was launched on the Qwaqwa Campus. This event was designed to inspire courageous conversations among young men. Approximately 300 students from the Bloemfontein and South campuses were transported to attend the event. The imbizo focused on two main segments: discussions on consent and financial literacy for men. The format of the imbizo was student-centred, promoting active discussions over traditional speaker sessions. Panel members included experts such as Jeffery Ridinyane, a lawyer specialising in gender issues, and representatives from Liberty and Standard Bank for the finance segment.

As part of the Lekgotla initiative, about 190 students from the three collaborating institutions participated in a hiking event in Lesotho. This activity aimed to build relationships and foster a sense of brotherhood among participants, reinforcing the project's goals of community building and personal development.



Hiking in Lesotho

Overall, the Men's Well-Being Project (Lekgotla) has made significant strides in 2024, with successful stakeholder engagement, comprehensive planning, and impactful events designed to support and connect young men across various campuses.

The UFS also hosted a MaskUnity Men's Conference on 27 and 28 August. This was a collaboration between SCD, the Social Support Office, and Kopsie Health. This year's theme was *Combating loneliness with connections*. The conference was attended by Walter Sisulu University, Sol Plaatje University, Central University of Technology, Maluti FET College, and all three UFS campuses. There were about 400 students in attendance. Other stakeholders included Higher Health, the Department of Health Free State, and the HOD Campus Health from Wits University. The keynote speaker was Monyatsi Mahlatsi, the MEC of Health in the Free State. An MHP from the Bloemfontein SCD presented during the conference. The title of the presentation was *Being HuMAN: Well-being, Masculinity, Connection*.

3.2.5 ER24

The management of crises within the changing climate at the UFS is an important matter that had to be revisited. Crises can manifest in a variety of ways, ranging from serious sports injuries, psychological, physical (injuries), to illness and managing the consequences of crowd unrest and disasters (fire in a building / residence). These types of incidents have a very specific reputational risk for the university and pose risks to students and staff. A more integrated and comprehensive emergency service was needed, especially from a service provision, compliance, risk management, medico-legal and legal-litigious perspective. The increase in stakeholder expectations around emergency care, increases in liability claims, changes in the complexity of medical care provision, legal changes in transporting at-risk patients, and changes in acute care compelled a revision of the crisis service provided at the UFS.

Despite the South African Depression and Anxiety Group's (SADAG) telephonic and screening assistance, SCD still needed an additional team to physically visit a student in case of emergency. The severity and frequency of our students' mental health challenges have increased significantly. In most of these cases, it was evident that the assistance of a paramedic or medical professional was needed.



An ER24 pilot project was approved for six months, from 1 October 2022. The pilot was successful and significantly impacted service delivery, after which a one-year contract was signed with ER24. As this one-year contract lapsed on 15 May 2024, a two-year contract could be negotiated with ER24. As this service provider has a national footprint, it can respond to a registered UFS student's emergency nationwide. This has greatly assisted with service delivery on all three of our campuses during crises. The UFS ER24 number could only be activated by UFS staff using authorisation numbers, and students did not have direct access to this number.

The assistance provided by ER24 during 2024 can be seen in the table below.

TYPE OF SERVICE	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Group sessions	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Trauma counselling	0	4	17	17	17	4	18	30	30	33	8	0	178
Telephone counselling	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	0	4	20	17	18	4	18	30	30	33	8	0	182

Table 20: ER24 statistics

3.2.6 Higher Health

Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee (Director: SCD) serves as the Chairperson of the Student Health and Wellness Co-ordinating Committee, with the mandate to oversee all activities and expenditure within the Higher Health grant at the UFS. Higher Health develops and implements a range of health, wellness, and psychosocial services within, among others, the higher education sector.



Part of the Higher Health grant implementation was the appointment of peer educators to assist with the roll-out of awareness programmes, training, and facilitating discussions. During 2024, SCD was again actively involved with peer educators on all three campuses. The peer educators were committed to meeting the targets and raising awareness regarding different areas/aspects of health and overall wellness. Several other initiatives flowed from the Higher Health grant, including awareness campaigns and intervention programmes on substance use, sexual health, mental health, and gender-based violence.

3.2.7 Department of Psychology

The Department of Psychology invited SCD to serve on the Master’s Counselling Psychology selection panel from 19 to 21 August 2024. Vhutali Ndou and Thirushni Sam assisted the department in selecting the students best suited for the programme. The collaboration in selecting master’s students benefits the SCD Internship programme, as some of the students end up at our internship site.

3.2.8 Protection Services

During 2024, Protection Services included SCD in workshops presented to students on personal boundaries, hosted on all three campuses. This is a vital skill that students are struggling with, especially in contexts where gender-based violence is present. A psychologist from SCD joined the hosting team for each of the engagement sessions. This proved to be an immense benefit, since the students were able to speak with a mental health specialist in an informal setting, and being in a group format, all participants benefited from the psychologist’s insight and advice.



3.2.9 Housing and Residence Affairs

SCD collaborated with Housing and Residence Affairs (HRA) on a student leadership development project during 2023. The training, scheduled for January 2024, was the first of its kind, as it included all the student leaders within residences and day residences on all three campuses. HRA strives to establish dynamic, diverse, and safe student living and learning environments. Student leaders, also known as residence committee members (RCs), has an integral role in these living and learning communities.

The training was divided into two days – 24 and 25 January on the Bloemfontein and South campuses, and 29 and 30 January on the Qwaqwa Campus. The overall theme of Day 1 was *Getting to know yourself and others better*. The overall theme of Day 2 was *Taking care of yourself while leading others*. The number of students who attended the different days of training can be seen in Table 21. Attendance registers were completed daily.

	North College	South College	Central College	East College	West College	South Campus	Qwaqwa Campus
Number booked	45	54	45	67	51	42	70
Day 1 Attendance	42	55	39	60	34	25	66
Day 2 Attendance	43	57	39	59	48	25	64

Table 21: Attendance of Training

On Day 1 a total of 321 RCs were trained and on Day 2 a total of 335 RCs were trained. On the South Campus, there was a big discrepancy between the expected number of students and the number of students who attended the training. Education students had to do practicals and could not attend the training. This impacted the South Campus especially. Students completed evaluation forms – via a QR code – and the feedback was summarised.

Do you know Student Counselling and Development?

The abovementioned question was posed on the evaluation forms and 98,6% of the students confirmed that they know SCD!

- *Love the SCD – continue with your good work, guys!*
- *The presenter was very nice and explained very well.*
- *This programme was amazing. The whole two days were fun, and the presenter was very interactive and nice with us. It was STELLAR! Thank you, SCD!*
- *I wasn't overloaded with useless information, everything was beneficial.*

In addition, SCD collaborated with HRA to support students in their own spaces. The college structure was used as an organisational principle to reach as many students as possible, as residential students and day students are allocated to colleges. SCD planned three priority themes for workshops – as consulted with HRA – and had several Counselling Psychology interns facilitate workshops throughout 2024.



COLLEGES	WORKSHOP	MONTH	TIME	VENUE
Central	MHSG	6 March 2024	17:00–19:00	Soetdoring Gazelle
	Coping with Stress	9 May 2024	17:00–19:00	Wag-’n-Bietjie Gazelle
	Suicide Awareness	22 April 2024	17:00–19:00	Akasia Gazelle
East	Coping with Stress	8 May 2024	17:00–19:00	Khayalami
	MHSG	7 March 2024	17:00–19:00	House Roosmaryn
	Suicide Awareness	23 April 2024	17:00–19:00	House Ardour Gazelle
North	Coping with Stress	7 May 2024	17:00–19:00	Tswelopele Residence
	MHSG	14 March 2024	17:00–19:00	Welwitschia Residence
	Suicide Awareness	24 April 2024	17:00–19:00	Vergeet-My-Nie Residence
South	Coping with Stress	13 May 2024	17:00–19:00	Lehakwe
	MHSG	4 March 2024	17:00–19:00	Villa Bravado
	Suicide Awareness	25 April 2024	17:00–19:00	Emily Hobhouse
West	Coping with Stress	16 May 2024	17:00–19:00	Multipurpose
	MHSG	12 March 2024	17:00–19:00	Multipurpose
	Suicide Awareness	29/30 April	17:00–19:00	Multipurpose
South	Coping with Stress	30 September	17:00–19:00	Lehakwe
	MHSG	30 July 2024	17:00–19:00	Villa Bravado
	Suicide Awareness	14 August 2024	17:00–19:00	Emily Hobhouse
West	Coping with Stress	2 October 2024	17:00–19:00	Multipurpose
	MHSG	29 July 2024	17:00–19:00	Multipurpose
	Suicide Awareness	13 August 2024	17:00–19:00	Multipurpose

Table 22: College workshops in 2024

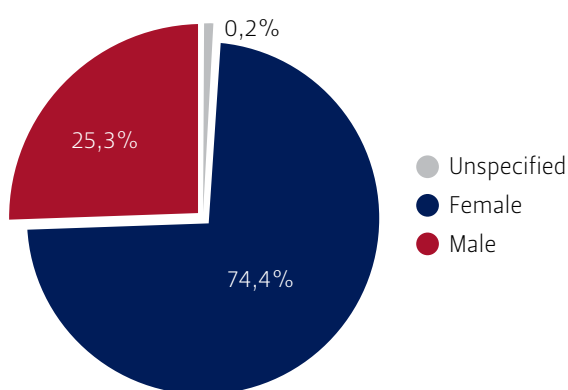
3.2.10 CUADS

The Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS) Policy on Universal Access and Disability Support for students with disabilities necessitated CUADS to reposition itself to assist with policy implementation.

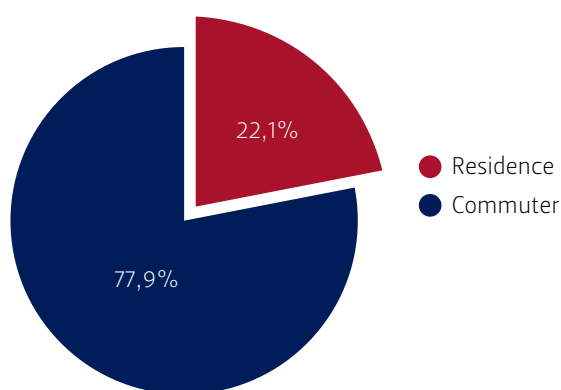
The overarching Reasonable Accommodation Panel reports to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic, who approved the establishment of the panel's subcommittee to deal only with extra-time applications. The function of administering extra-time applications has now been added to the responsibilities of a staff member within CUADS. There is also an extra-time procedure in place, which guides the adjudication of concessions for students within the different disability categories. SCD is represented on the subcommittee by Vhutali Ndou. Vhutali assisted CUADS in reviewing 99 applications to identify and help students facing academic challenges regarding learning difficulties.

3.3 SCD STUDENT PROFILE

The information in the following section provides a glimpse into the student clientele using the services of SCD on all three campuses.

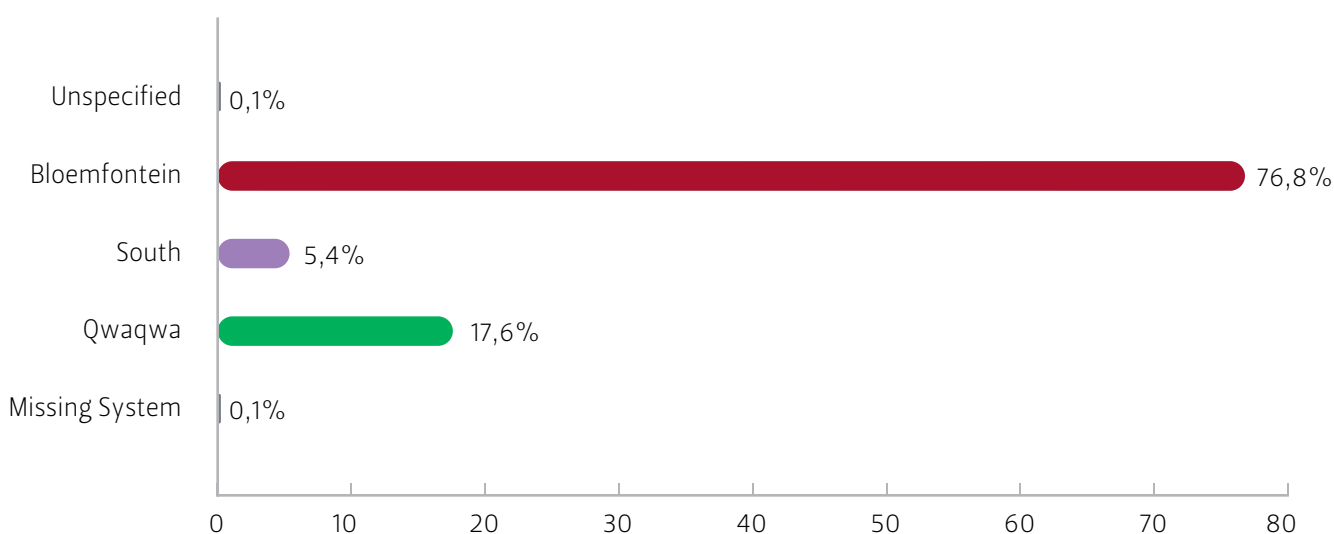


Graph 1: Gender distribution of SCD clients

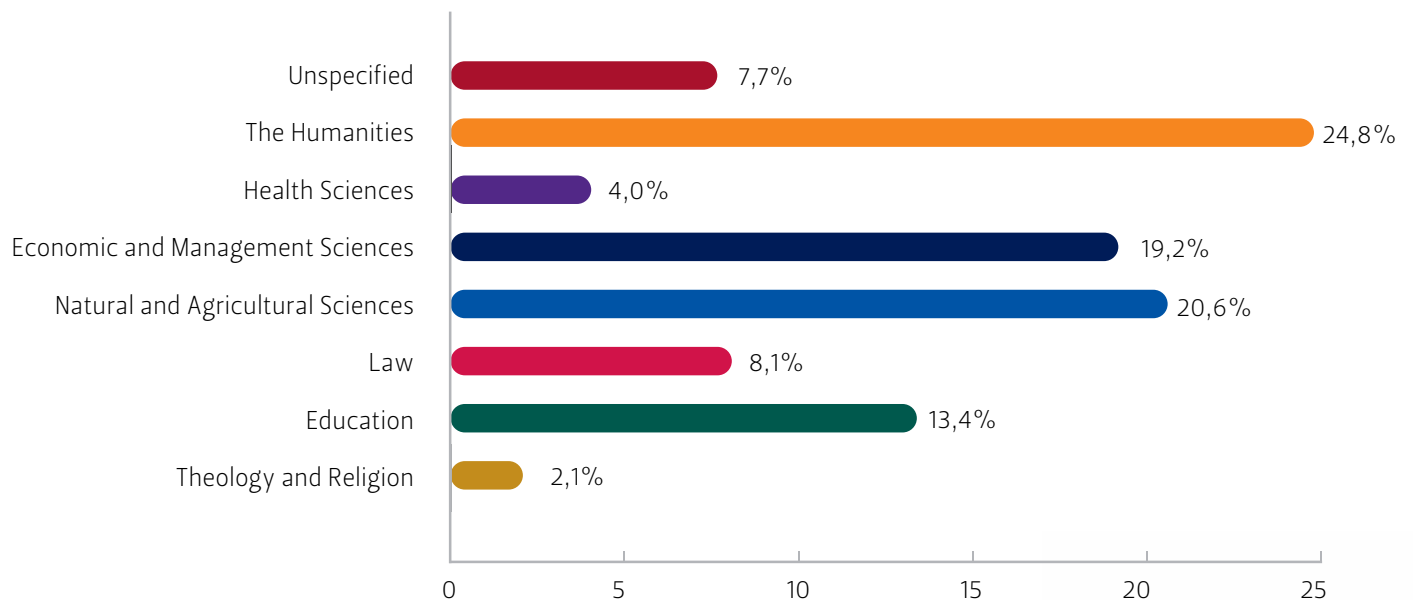


Graph 2: Accommodation status of SCD clients

Graphs 1 and 2 indicate that the majority of clients visiting SCD on all three campuses during 2024 were female and living off campus.

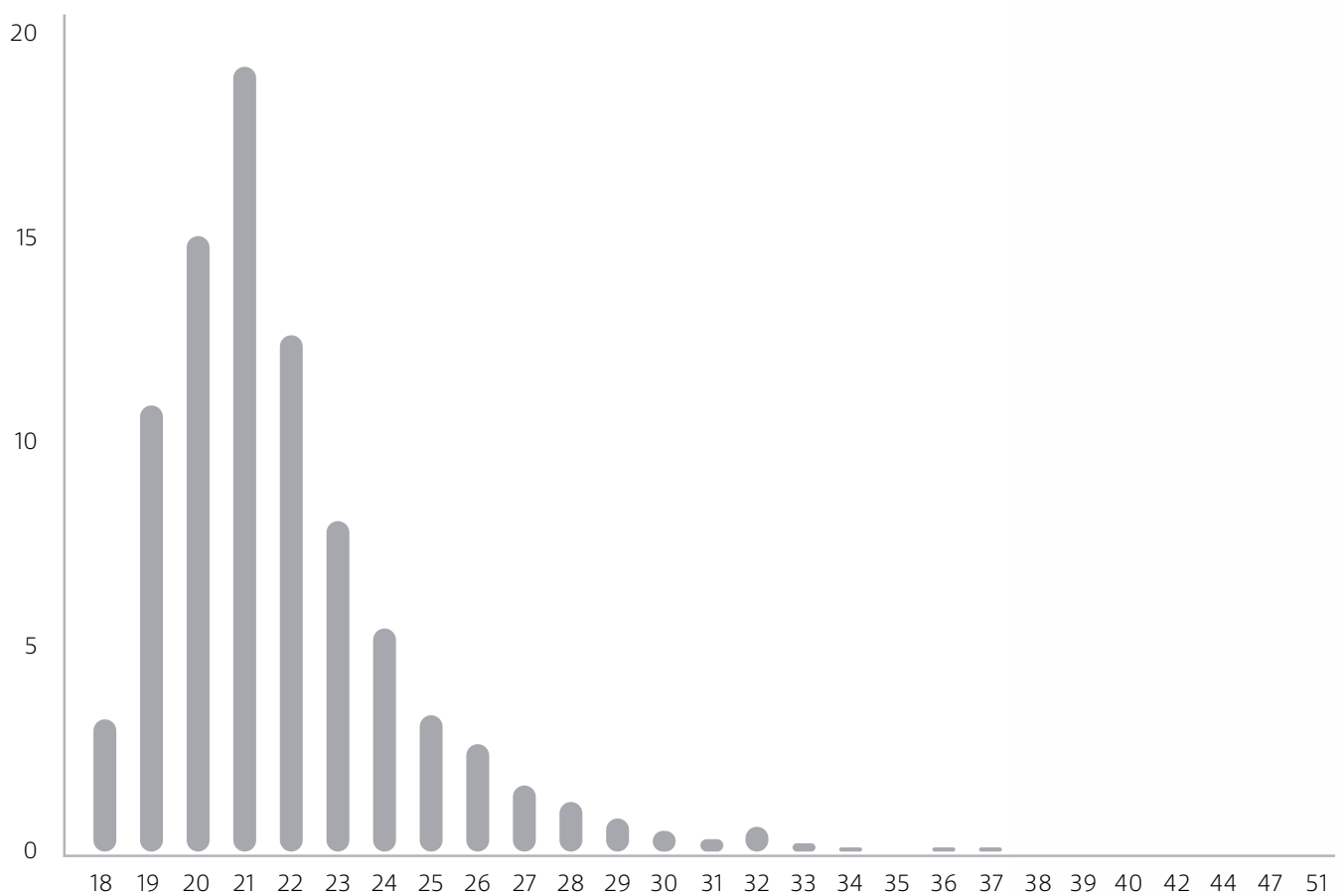


Graph 3: Campus distribution of SCD clients

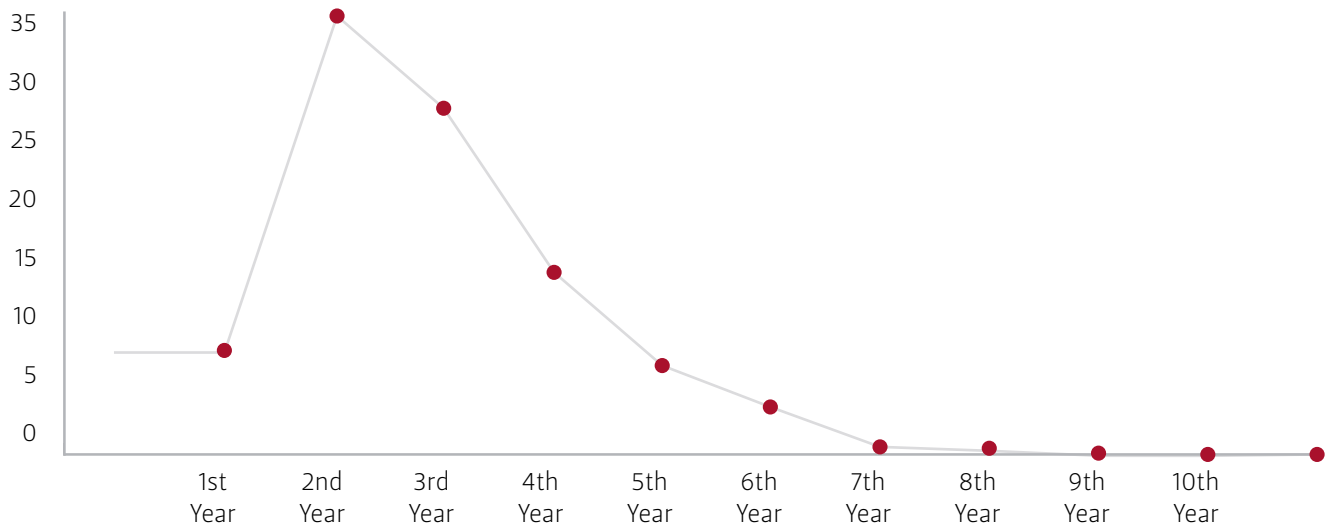


Graph 4: Faculty distribution of SCD clients

Graphs 3 and 4 illustrate that the majority of clients were from the Bloemfontein Campus, and the faculty where most clients studied was the Faculty of The Humanities. The Bloemfontein Campus is the biggest campus of the UFS, and the Faculty of The Humanities is also the biggest faculty at the institution.



Graph 5: SCD clients' age distribution



Graph 6: SCD clients' year of study

SCD clients' year of study is mostly second year (graph 6) and the majority of students presenting at SCD as clients are 22.





4 PILLAR TWO

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1 DEVELOPMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF

Staff were exposed to different professional development and training opportunities during 2024.

4.1.1 Professional development and training attended

- Kgalalelo Thaele, Assistant Officer on the Bloemfontein Campus, attended the annual Association for Office Professionals of South Africa (OPSA) conference hosted in Cape Town. This conference enables office professionals to grow professionally and personally, network with fellow professionals, and empower them more in this line of work. This enabled Kgalalelo to support the administrative team even better.





CBTASA Conference



Staff attending the Aurora Alcohol and Drug training

MHPs had the opportunity to attend two-day training on the theme: *Identification and management of substance use disorders*, presented by the Aurora Alcohol and Drug Centre in Bloemfontein.

- The internship coordinator, Thirushni Sam, and the three SCD intern psychologists – Mieke van Niekerk, Ontiretse Kalakgosi, and Ntotole Maloba – attended the Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Association of South Africa (CBTASA) congress in Cape Town. The staff members reported attending a successful CBT congress that improved their practical skills. They have gained valuable knowledge and insight into the current therapeutic models of CBT, DBT, acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), and schema therapy.
- SCD mental health professionals attended training on addiction, specifically looking at the manifestation of behaviour and treatment modalities. This training provided staff with practical ways of dealing with clients addicted to a variety of substances and behaviour. During the training, staff learned to identify common patterns of addiction, understand underlying psychological and emotional triggers, and apply evidence-based treatment approaches, such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), dialectic behavioural therapy (DBT), and motivational interviewing.
- Two staff members, Nadia Maloney and Moipone Marumo, received training on how to design, operate, and make back-end changes to the SCD Blackboard page. This will empower SCD to make changes and updates to their Blackboard page independently, without having to wait for BLISS (CTL) to assist.

Buen Vivir: Shared future for transformative change

An opinion piece (article) was published in celebration of World Social Work Day under the theme *Buen Vivir: Shared future for transformative change* by Neo Ravhuhali (Social Worker, South Campus). The article was published in at least seven newspapers/news platforms, including the following:

Opinion article by Neo Ravhuhali – World Social Work Day: 'Buen Vivir: Shared future for transformative change'	12	Neo Ravhuhali	Sowetan	https://www.gate5.co.za/read/116886/clip/106138380
			SowetanLive	https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/opinion/columnists/2024-03-14-neo-ravhuhali-social-work-seeks-to-enhance-the-well-being-of-all-humanity/
			Banoyi	https://banoyi.com/neo-ravhuhali-social-work-seeks-to-enhance-the-well-being-of-all-humanity-804166.html
			Dispatchist	https://dispatchist.com/news/world-social-work-day/
			Business Ghana	https://www.businessghana.com/site/news/general/303789/World-Social-Work-Day:-%22Buen-Vivir:-Shared-future-for-transformative-change%22
			IOL	https://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/opinion/social-workers-serve-as-beacons-of-hope-in-quest-for-better-tomorrow-02d60861-73e5-4d61-971a-733c3e0d6931
			The Mercury	https://www.gate5.co.za/read/116886/clip/106091824

The aim of the article was to highlight and appreciate the role and contributions made by social workers to individuals, families, communities, and overall society. Furthermore, SAFM – one of the radio stations in South Africa – invited Neo Ravhuhali for a radio interview on 19 March 2024 at 14:10. This interview is accessible at <https://omny.fm/shows/the-full-circle/opinion-piece-written-in-the-iol-social-workers-se>.

The Psychological Impact of Hazing

Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee (Director: SCD) added her voice to the public conversation following the discovery of two hidden rooms with disturbing images and material at the Wilgenhof Men's Residence (Stellenbosch University). The impact of hazing and the significant consequences it can have on a developing young individual are unpacked in this article. The article can be accessed [here](#).



4.1.3 Staff Well-being

As staff well-being is imperative within the space in which our mental health professionals are functioning on a daily basis, SCD aims to provide a nurturing environment where well-being initiatives are prioritised.

- Magnificent Monday was held on 4 March 2024. The UFS Department of Human Resources coordinated the afternoon for SCD. The wellness afternoon had an element of fun with co-workers to help with self-care, camaraderie, and group cohesion. We were divided into different groups and competed in interactive activities at different stations.
- Terrific Tuesday was held on 14 May. This wellness afternoon had various stations with different games (e.g. fingerboard, Jenga, board games). This was a relaxed, fun-filled, yet competitive afternoon with colleagues to promote group cohesion and support staff self-care.
- Term 3 commenced with each staff member receiving a small token of appreciation and a letter of gratitude. This was to set the tone for a productive second semester and to remind staff of the importance of taking care of themselves.
- On 21 August, SCD staff held their Wonderful Wednesday wellness afternoon. Staff were invited to dress up as their favourite movie character and were treated to a movie. Semester two is notorious for being filled with emergencies and an increase in workload; staff members were given the opportunity to relax for two hours by watching a movie at the office.



- On 23 August, the women of SCD had the opportunity to attend the annual UFS Women's Breakfast – an event dedicated to empowerment and reflection. The keynote address was delivered by Nicole Munitz, author of the powerful memoir *Fraud: How Prison Set Me Free*. Her speech, centred on personal growth, resilience, and the transformative power of adversity, was both inspirational and thought-provoking. Munitz shared candid insights from her life journey, offering attendees a profound perspective on overcoming challenges and finding freedom within oneself. The event left a lasting impact, fostering a sense of motivation and solidarity among all who attended.



On 23 October, Thrilling Thursday was hosted by SCD staff. During this wellness afternoon, colleagues were invited to participate in karaoke and board games. This gave colleagues time to connect with each other and have a fun-filled afternoon to relax and recharge.

4.1.4 Counselling Psychology Internship Programme

The Counselling Psychology Internship Programme is designed to provide intern counselling psychologists the opportunity to gain practical, hands-on experience in counselling settings. The programme was developed to provide interns with exposure to individual psychotherapy, psychometric assessments, case management, community engagement, training, and supervision.

Over the years, the programme has provided valuable training to interns, helping them transition from academic learning to professional practice in a supportive and supervised environment. This year, we welcomed five intern counselling psychologists, namely Mieke van Niekerk, Ontiretse Kalakgosi, Ntotole Maloba, Thembeke Mbokane, and Asanda Jiyane.

The interns demonstrated significant growth in their clinical and therapeutic skills, with feedback from supervisors indicating improved competence in conducting assessments and delivering therapeutic interventions.

The Psychology Internship Programme plays a vital role in shaping and preparing the next generation of mental health professionals in South Africa. Through continuing mentorship, hands-on training, and real-world experience, we are proud to help interns advance in their careers while contributing meaningfully to our organisation's work.



4.1.5 Audit by Health Professions Council of South Africa

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) visited SCD on 17 April to audit SCD's Counselling Psychology internship programme. In anticipation of this audit, extensive preparations were made, including the completion of a comprehensive self-report and various other logistical arrangements. The HPCSA panel conducted numerous interviews on the day. Interviews were held with the permanent staff of SCD, the internal and external supervisors, the 2023 intern psychologists, and the current intern psychologists.

The panel was provided with many documents, including, but not limited to, all SCD templates, standard operating procedures, intern portfolios, training programmes, SCD services, and marketing material. The outcome was favourable, and the HPCSA approved SCD as an accredited internship site for the next five years.

“

Any comments/recommendations with regard to the evaluation process

Staff working at the SCD are to be commended for the extensive work they have put into establishing a counselling psychology internship programme. The results of their work have yielded an internship programme that is of high quality and should attract noticeable interest from prospective interns. The internship programme is likely to offer interns an excellent standard of training.

4.1.6 Appointment as national evaluator

Dr Dunn-Coetzee has been appointed as an Evaluator Counselling Psychologist for Higher Educational Institution and Internship Site Programmes by the Accreditations and Quality Assurance Committee of the Professional Board for Psychology within the Health Professions Council (HPCSA). Her role entails visiting South African higher education institutions with Counselling Psychology internships and evaluating whether their internships align with the requirements of the HPCSA.

***The article is available here:
News Archive Item***



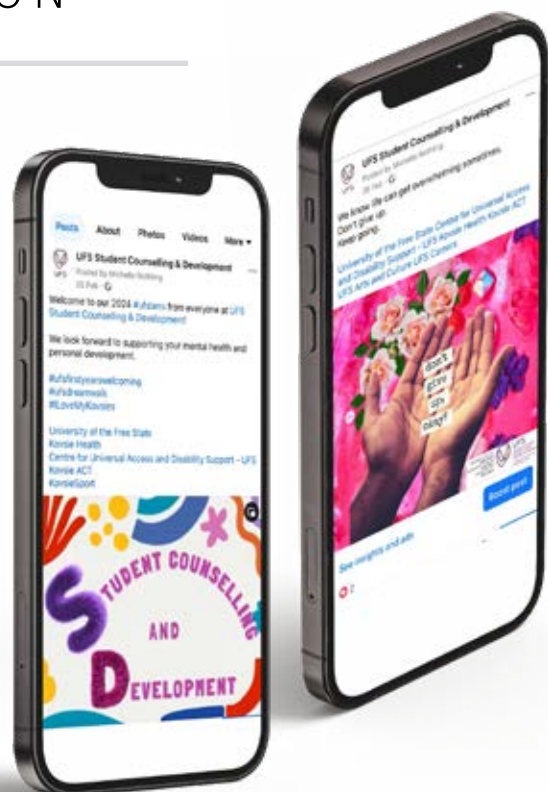


5 PILLAR THREE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

5.1 COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

During 2024, SCD furthered its deliberate approach to health communication and marketing. The overall aim was to be proactive in terms of communication, and to communicate with students in a visually appealing manner. SCD undertook a redesign of its Blackboard page to enhance its visual appeal and user-friendliness for students. The revamped layout aims to provide an improved interface that facilitates easier navigation and access to resources, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience for users.



One of the powerful marketing tools that SCD uses to create more awareness on our campuses is our SCD influencers. These students are volunteers assisting SCD with mental health awareness.

SCD is committed to promoting mental health awareness. For this purpose, social media posts were created to commemorate Self-Injury/Harm Awareness Month in March. Another online campaign was run during June to support Youth Mental Health Awareness Month in partnership with the Department of Communication and Marketing.



Youth Month Campaign

SCD organised a series of mental health awareness initiatives featuring diverse topics each month to engage and educate students. In honour of Women's Month in August, social media posts highlighted and celebrated the achievements and contributions of women. September was Suicide Awareness Month, and as part of the advocacy, SCD – with other stakeholders – bought 1 000 football tickets to give away to SCD clients to watch Varsity Football as part of the awareness activity. The tickets were for the UFS versus Central University of Technology (CUT) Free State derby. This was well received!





5.2 DODAY INSTITUTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN

The DoDay Mental Health Campaign was an entirely online (UFS social media and web) campaign, with some posters placed on campus. The overall goals of the campaign were to increase mental health awareness, promote and advocate for behaviour and habits that support mental health, increase awareness of mental health illnesses and issues, promote the destigmatisation of mental illness, and promote systemic participation and engagement in mental health. The campaign was implemented from 30 September to 31 October 2024, including 30 daily posts on the UFS Facebook and Twitter pages and the SCD Facebook and Instagram pages.

The primary target audience was registered UFS students, with UFS staff as a secondary target. The overarching message of the campaign was that students can DO something about their mental health. In collaboration with our mental health experts, 30 easy-to-do mental health actions were identified and presented as something to do on a specific day. These daily activities underpinned proactive self-care and encouraged care for others.

5.3 DAFFODIL COPING KITS

The daffodil coping kit was launched during the second term. The development of the kit served as a supplementary resource within our therapeutic interventions, particularly aimed at supporting severely distressed students. Comprising coping tips and strategies, including self-soothing techniques and grounding exercises, the kit was intended as a tangible resource that students could utilise beyond their sessions. It represented a continuation of the containment and empowerment initiated during the initial therapeutic session, providing continuous support and reinforcement outside of the counselling environment.



5.4 ON THE RED COUCH (OTRC) SERIES

SCD has revamped the OTRC series, transforming it into a more thematic format. The series now consists of lunch-hour sessions tailored for staff participation. OTRC serves as a collection of webinars designed to support staff in navigating these challenging aspects of their roles. The revamped series encompasses six key themes, each addressing various aspects of student support and crisis management within the institution.

- SCD services
- Promoting mental health among UFS students
- The distressed student
- The anxious student
- The student with depressive symptoms
- SCD: Referrals to assist students

The new approach seems to be working, as more staff are signing up and attending the discussions.



5.5 SCD INFLUENCERS

The SCD influencers (SCDi) are a group of students who volunteer at SCD to become *Mental Health Warriors* among the students on the three campuses. The SCD influencers assist in promoting mental health and overall well-being among students.

The influencers have three key roles to fulfil:

- **Raising awareness** – assisting in raising awareness about mental health issues, reducing stigma, and normalising discussions about mental health.
- **Providing information** – offering accurate information about the mental health resources offered by SCD.
- **Advocacy** – making suggestions to assist SCD in improving visibility on campus, and to act as connection between students and SCD.

There were 12 influencers on the Bloemfontein Campus, 5 on the South Campus, and 12 on the Qwaqwa Campus.

The Bloemfontein Campus influencers were:

- Chumile Sojada
- Katleho Mabula
- Mamokoai Nt'onyana
- Mbali Gigi
- Mpho Bookholane
- Paelsa Motloun
- Rethabile Mambane
- Sandiswa Phungula
- Sekhola Khiba
- Tsholofelo Mahomotse
- Tumelo Mats'ela
- Xola Mcingelwa





The South Campus influencers were:

- Karabo Morake
- Onke Rafu
- Ntombi Maluleka
- Sasikelelwa Matshayana
- Neo Malimabe

The South Campus influencers contributed to the success of a variety of activations throughout 2024 – from a mental health Q&A, emotional intelligence workshop to collaborations with KovsieSport, First Things First campaigns, as well as the SCD fun day and the DoDay mental health campaign.



Best Influencer of the Year (per campus)

From the left: Sasikelelwa Matshayana (South Campus), Aphiwe Mzolo (Qwaqwa Campus), Kgalalelo Thaele (SCD coordinator), Xola Mcingelwa (Bloemfontein Campus).



Twelve influencers were appointed on the Qwaqwa Campus:

- Aphiwe Mzolo
- Aphiwe Mavimbela
- Bandile Zulu
- Dimakatso Mampye
- Hope Motchesane
- Jeffrey Tsoela
- Nobuhle Nkosi
- Senzo Dubazana
- Sibongile Buthelezi
- Siyabonga Mota
- Thulani Tyebela
- Tshepiso Mokoena

The influencers on the Qwaqwa Campus had a busy year! From information sessions in faculties to organising movie nights where dialogues on mental health matters were facilitated. A suicide prevention awareness event was organised during September, with the theme *ungafi sikhona*, which is an isiZulu phrase meaning *do not die while we are here*.

A mental health fun day was organised on 10 October, where the influencers participated and engaged the students in various activities, such as stress ball relay, emotional charade, storytelling group discussion cycle, affirmation jaw, and dance challenge.

The Executive Director of the Division of Student Affairs, Temba Hlasho, hosts an annual event – the EDSA Prestige Awards – where students are honoured for their hard work and contributions throughout the year. The most active influencer, Aphiwe Mzolo, received an award at this year's Student Achiever Awards on the Qwaqwa Campus (12 September), as well as at the EDSA awards (12 October). An appreciation ceremony was hosted for the influencers to express gratitude for their hard work during 2024. Hope Motchesane was awarded as the best influencer of the year 2024!

“

Inspire others not by showing them your superpowers, but by helping them discover their own.



6 SCD STAFF



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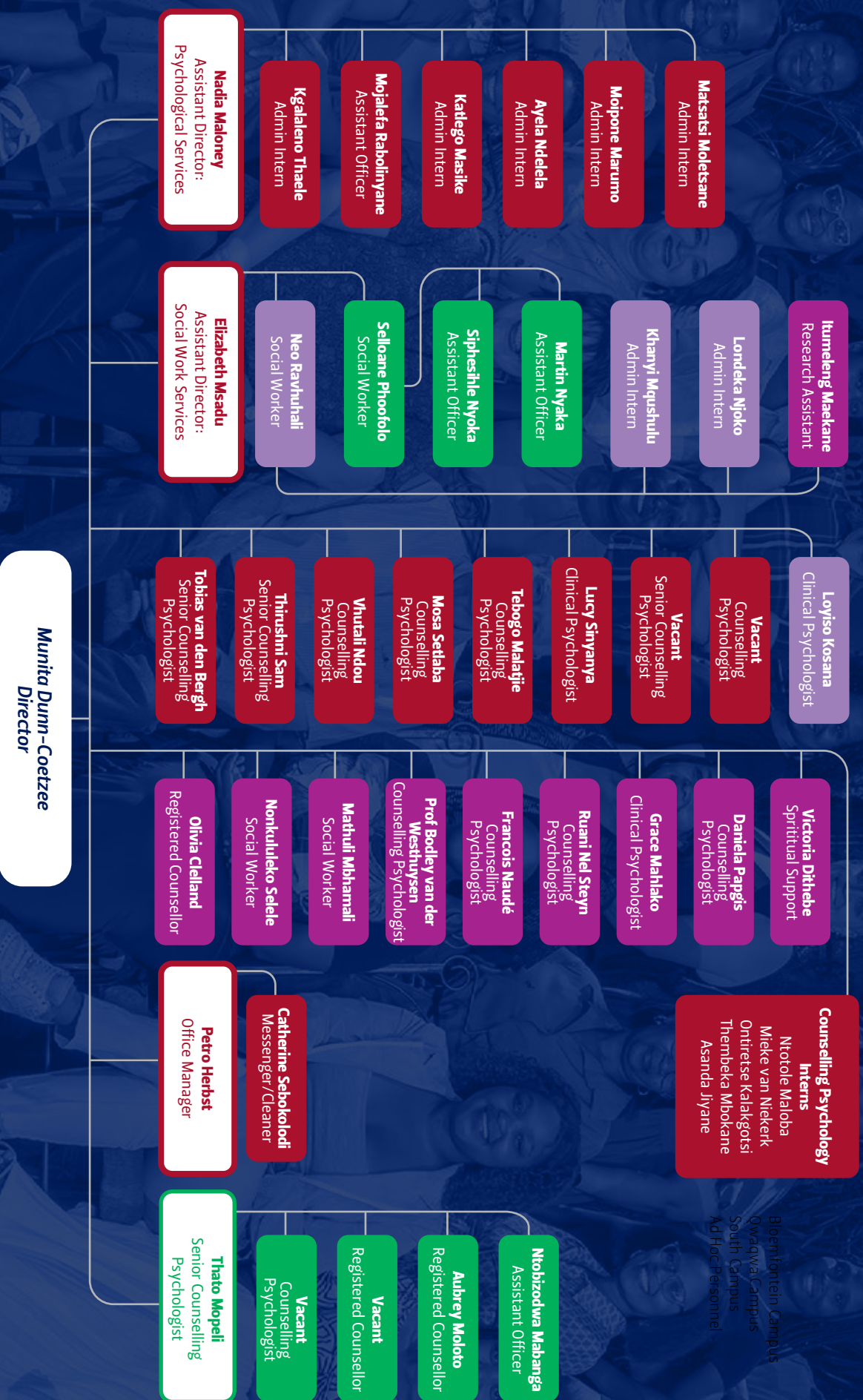
*I can do things you cannot, you
can do things I cannot: together
we can do great things.*

– Mother Teresa

BLOEMFONTEIN CAMPUS	
Permanent Personnel	
Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee	Director
Nadia Maloney	Assistant Director: Psychological Services and Senior Counselling Psychologist
Thirushni Sam	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Tobias van den Bergh	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Vhuthali Ndou	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Mosa Setlaba	Counselling Psychologist
Tebogo Malatjie	Counselling Psychologist
Lucy Sinyanya	Counselling Psychologist
Elizabeth Msadu	Assistant Director: Social Work Services
Petro Herbst	Office Manager
Kgalalelo Thaele	Assistant Officer
Catherine Sebokolodi	Cleaner and Messenger
Contract Administrative Staff	
Mojalefa Rabolinyane	Assistant Officer
Administrative Interns	
Ayela Ndlela	Moipone Marumo
Katlego Masike	Matsatsi Moletsane
Intern Counselling Psychologists	
Mieke van Niekerk	Ntotole Maloba
Ontiretse Kalagosi	Asanda Jiyane
Thembeka Mbokane	
Ad Hoc Staff	
Bodley van der Westhuizen	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Mathuli Mbhamali	Social Worker
Nonkululeko Selele	Social Worker
Ruani Nel Steyn	Counselling Psychologist
Olivia Clelland	Registered Counsellor
Francois Naudé	Counselling Psychologist
Grace Mahlako	Clinical Psychologist
Daniela Paggis	Counselling Psychologist
Angie Vorster	Clinical Psychologist
Nada Laurie	Finances
Victoria Dithebe	Spiritual support

QWAQWA CAMPUS	
Permanent Personnel	
Thato Mopeli	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Aubrey Moloto	Registered Counsellor
Selloane Phoofolo	Social Worker
Contract Administrative Staff	
Ntobizodwa Mabanga	Assistant Officer
Martin Senoko	Assistant Officer
Siphesihle Nyoka	Assistant Officer
SOUTH CAMPUS	
Permanent Personnel	
Loyiso Kosana	Clinical Psychologist
Neo Ravhuhali	Social Worker
Contract Administrative Staff	
Londeka Nyoko	Admin Intern
Itumeleng Maekane	Research Assistant
Khanyi Mqushulu	Assistant Officer

Unfortunately, Penny Mathumbu (Counselling and Clinical Psychologist, South Campus), Lerato Makoba (Senior Clinical Psychologist, Qwaqwa Campus), Nonhlanhla Moleleki (Registered Counsellor, Qwaqwa Campus), and Philile Phungula (Counselling Psychologist, Bloemfontein Campus) resigned during 2024. The main reasons being to venture into private practice, obtaining a more lucrative position, or to move closer to family.





7 CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to journey with you and sharing the highlights of the Department of Student Counselling and Development over the past year. We remain true to our vision of developing and implementing systemic and holistic mental health services that promote student well-being and flourishing. We aim to mitigate, reduce, and prevent mental health challenges in a student-centred way. Please contact the Director should any additional information be required.

mental health matters

*“Just because you don’t
understand it doesn’t
mean it isn’t so.”*

– Lemony Snicket, The Blank Book



