



CARE

STUDENT COUNSELLING AND DEVELOPMENT

ANNUAL REPORT



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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



TABLE OF CONTENTS



01 MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR	1
02 INTRODUCTION	2
SCD's mission	2
03 PILLAR ONE: PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS	4
3.1 SCD Services and Resources	4
3.1.1 Individual counselling	4
3.1.2 On Call / emergency sessions.....	6
3.1.3 Career counselling.....	8
3.1.4 Social Work Services	9
3.1.5 Developmental workshops, programmes, and presentations	10
Webinars and workshops	10
Programmes	13
3.1.6 Online mental health resources	14
3.2 Partnerships, Collaborations, and Networking Opportunities.....	15
3.2.1 UNIBS	15
3.2.2 SADAG careline and screening	15
3.2.3 Project Empower	18
3.2.4 ER24	18
3.2.5 Higher Health.....	19
3.2.6 Department of Social Work	19
3.2.7 Department of Psychology	21
3.2.8 Protection Services	21
3.2.9 Housing and Residence Affairs	21
3.2.10 CUADS	22
3.3 SCD Student Profile	23
04 PILLAR TWO: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT	26
4.1 Developmental opportunities for staff.....	27
4.1.1 Professional development and training attended.....	27
4.1.2 Staff well-being.....	28
4.1.3 Funding provided for HPCSA / SACSSP annual fees and CPD training	29
4.1.4 Long-service award	29
05 PILLAR THREE: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION	30
5.1 Communication and Marketing.....	31
5.2 DoDay Mental Health Campaign.....	32
5.3 Man2Man Mental Health Programme	33
5.4 Mental Health Awareness Fun Day	33
5.5 SCD Influencers	34
06 STUDENT COUNSELLING AND DEVELOPMENT STAFF.....	37
07 CONCLUSION	41



*Coming together is a **beginning**.
Keeping together is **progress**.
Working together is **success**.*

– HENRY FORD –

01

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

DR MUNITA DUNN-COETZEE

During 2023, the Henry Ford quote symbolised the processes of the Student Counselling and Development (SCD) team. As my second year as Director of SCD, it was necessary to understand what holds the team together, as well as to define my role to ensure that working together is successful. Thank you to each member of the SCD team; thank you for your diligence, dedication, and creative, innovative contributions.

When you scroll through the annual report, you will be able to read about the excellent and pioneering work being done – I will just touch on a few highlights. The strengthening of partnerships not only within the Division of Student Affairs (DSA), but also within the University of the Free State (UFS) remained a priority. The annual report speaks of a variety of collaborative efforts that strengthen our service delivery to students. This was also the first year since 2012 that SCD was able to appoint three intern counselling psychologists to complete their internships, with approval from the Health Professions

Council of South Africa. Another highlight this year was the integration of DSA social work services into SCD. Adding social work services to SCD's offering not only helps our students to receive a more holistic service; SCD is moving to a multi-disciplinary approach that educates staff and students about the scope of the role players involved.

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

*Good times become great ones when
the members **trust each other** enough to
surrender the me for the we.*

– PHIL JACKSON –

02

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, clinical and 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, as well as Research and Innovation. This process encapsulates the vision and mission of SCD, which – after several consultations with the entire team – were adjusted to the following.

SCD'S MISSION IS TO

- A** improve the 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.

SCD's journey through 2023 will be shared according to the three strategic pillars and the activities integrated within.

03

PILLAR ONE: PSYCHOLOGICAL 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 after the COVID-19 lockdown, students may still choose which platform of counselling they prefer:

- Telephonic counselling
- Online video counselling
- Face-to-face counselling

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

The tables below illustrate the number of sessions per campus during 2023.

Bloemfontein Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	38	315	491	371	610	482	343	508	470	663	623	36	4 950
Total sessions attended	30	228	344	251	395	280	201	309	333	410	376	30	3 187
Difference	8	87	147	120	215	202	142	199	137	253	247	6	1 763
Cancelled by student	3	31	28	45	66	54	49	67	27	86	45	0	501
Cancelled (other)	2	19	32	13	43	17	19	44	6	31	11	0	237
Missed by students	3	37	88	61	110	131	66	84	100	145	187	3	1 015
Total	8	87	148	119	219	202	134	195	133	262	243	3	1 753
New students booked	24	186	176	96	150	92	48	78	98	129	109	0	1 186
New students attended	23	147	136	78	115	59	35	67	80	104	88	0	932

Table 1: Sessions Bloemfontein Campus

South Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	0	4	36	746	85	50	25	74	92	74	33	0	519
Total sessions attended	0	0	21	31	55	22	9	47	53	47	26	0	311
Difference	0	4	15	15	30	28	16	27	39	27	7	0	208
Cancelled by student	0	2	3	3	4	5	1	10	14	7	0	0	49
Cancelled (other)	0	0	1	0	2	5	9	6	1	2	0	0	26
Missed by students	0	2	11	12	24	18	6	11	22	17	7	0	130
Total	0	4	15	15	30	28	16	27	37	26	7	0	205
New students booked	0	2	9	9	33	8	5	18	98	12	0	0	194
New students attended	0	0	1	8	22	2	5	12	80	8	0	0	138

Table 2: Sessions South Campus

Qwaqwa Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	0	367	181	218	276	255	441	738	202	164	85	0	2 927
Total sessions attended	0	267	128	134	185	135	245	443	140	91	47	0	1 815
Difference	0	100	53	84	91	120	196	295	62	73	38	0	1 112
Cancelled by student	0	36	37	34	36	39	62	83	25	21	11	0	384
Cancelled (other)	0	25	8	10	16	26	37	85	0	22	12	0	241
Missed by students	0	39	18	16	39	55	89	123	37	29	9	0	454
Total	0	100	63	60	91	120	188	291	62	72	32	0	1 079
New students booked	0	206	81	68	119	14	73	166	57	51	25	0	860
New students attended	0	161	65	42	90	14	53	130	47	33	19	0	654

Table 3: Sessions Qwaqwa Campus

The next table indicates the total sessions for 2023, highlighting that 1414 sessions were missed by students across all three campuses. This is calculated at 19% of the total booked sessions, which is concerning high.

Totals for all campuses	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	38	367	708	635	971	857	476	804	764	901	741	36	7 298
Total sessions attended	30	267	493	416	635	488	270	491	526	548	449	30	4 643
Difference	8	100	215	219	336	369	206	313	238	353	292	6	2 655
Cancelled by student	3	36	68	82	106	105	67	90	66	114	56	0	793
Cancelled (other)	2	25	41	23	61	51	37	89	7	55	23	0	414
Missed by students	3	39	117	89	173	214	94	129	159	191	203	3	1 414
Total	8	100	226	194	340	370	198	308	232	360	282	3	2 621
New students booked	24	206	268	173	302	221	81	185	175	192	134	0	1 961
New students attended	23	161	210	129	227	149	61	151	142	145	107	0	1 505

Table 4: Total sessions for 2023

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 a timeous intervention. Individual appointments are set aside for emergency sessions to assess and contain the emergency and make the relevant referrals.

The tables below illustrate the number of emergency sessions per campus during 2023.

Bloemfontein Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call (emergency) sessions booked	5	31	52	34	45	23	22	39	38	41	31	0	361
On call (emergency) attended	5	25	42	33	37	17	16	33	33	35	46	0	322

Table 5: Emergency 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	1	3	7	2	2	6	4	5	3	0	33
On call (emergency) attended	0	0	0	2	5	1	2	5	2	4	2	0	23

Table 6: Emergency sessions South Campus

Qwaqwa Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call (emergency) sessions booked	0	0	7	5	18	14	4	4	6	6	2	0	66
On call (emergency) attended	0	0	7	7	20	14	4	4	7	4	2	0	69

Table 7: Emergency sessions Qwaqwa Campus

The next table indicates the total sessions for 2023, highlighting that 47 sessions were missed by students across all three campuses. This is calculated at 10% of the total booked sessions, which is not ideal, but manageable.

Totals for all campuses	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call (emergency) sessions booked	5	31	60	42	70	39	28	50	48	52	36	0	461
On call (emergency) attended	5	25	49	42	62	32	22	42	42	43	50	0	414

Table 8: Emergency sessions 2023

Through the data, it was evident that the months of March, May, August, October, and November had significantly more students requesting therapeutic assistance, as well as emergency sessions. The significant increase in requests during the first semester (March and May) has not been the norm at SCD. The second semester's increase in requests during August, October, and November relate to what has been experienced previously. The top 10 reasons why students report to SCD can be seen in the tables on the following page.

	January		February		March		April		May		June	
1	Anxiety	20	Anxiety	149	Overthinking	156	Overthinking	122	Anxiety	169	Overthinking	171
2	Depression	18	Overthinking	147	Anxiety	155	Anxiety	111	Overthinking	157	Anxiety	163
3	Eat/sleep	14	Financial	99	Depression	97	Depression	73	Depression	109	Academic performance	133
4	Overthinking	13	Depression	95	Family related	96	Academic performance	66	Family related	103	Depression	126
5	Poor self-esteem	13	Stress	90	Poor self-esteem	83	Family related	66	Academic performance	95	Family related	101
6	Stress	12	Poor self-esteem	78	Stress	80	Poor self-esteem	63	Stress	94	Eat/sleep	80
7	Anger	11	Eat/sleep	73	Eat/sleep	73	Stress	59	Eat/sleep	91	Stress	79
8	Death	9	Panic attacks	69	Panic attacks	71	Eat/sleep	52	Panic attacks	82	Financial	78
9	Financial	9	Family related	66	Suicidal	71	Panic attacks	52	Financial	81	Poor self-esteem	72
10	Panic attacks	8	Anger	47	Financial	65	Suicidal	51	Poor self-esteem	79	Panic attacks	69

Table 9: Top 10 reasons (January-June)

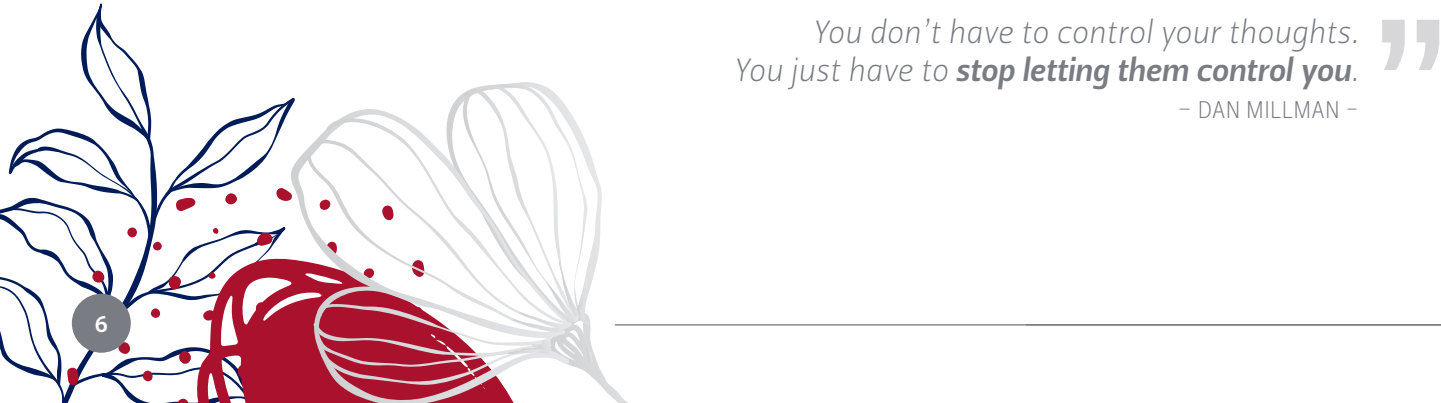
	July		August		September		October		November		December	
1	Overthinking	81	Overthinking	180	Overthinking	142	Overthinking	160	Overthinking	55	Overthinking	3
2	Anxiety	80	Anxiety	166	Anxiety	129	Anxiety	155	Anxiety	51	Anxiety	3
3	Depression	64	Depression	111	Suicidal	93	Depression	123	Depression	37	Romantic relationships	3
4	Academic performance	52	Academic performance	101	Depression	80	Academic performance	76	Family related	26	Eat/sleep	3
5	Family related	45	Stress	98	Academic performance	80	Stress	85	Stress	29	Depression	2
6	Panic attacks	41	Family related	97	Poor self-esteem	76	Family related	84	Suicidal	26	Financial	2
7	Financial	40	Financial	91	Family related	75	Eat/sleep	80	Eat/sleep	25	Panic attacks	2
8	Poor self-esteem	37	Poor self-esteem	88	Eat/sleep	66	Panic attacks	80	Financial	24	Stress	1
9	Stress	34	Suicidal	83	Stress	61	Poor self-esteem	88	Panic attacks	20	Suicidal	1
10	Suicidal	33	Panic attacks	82	Panic attacks	59	Regret/guilt	41	Panic attacks	19	Regret/guilt	41

Table 10: Top 10 reasons (July-December)

The top ten reasons for students visiting SCD during 2023 are summarised in Table 11 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 Depression (*this involves a depressed mood or loss of pleasure or interest in activities for long periods of time*) are significantly higher than the rest of the reasons.

TOP 10 REASONS FOR STUDENTS VISITING SCD	1	Overthinking	1 387	6	Self-esteem	696
	2	Anxiety	1 351	7	Academic performance	640
	3	Depression	1 034	8	Panic attacks	635
	4	Family related	759	9	Eat/Sleep	557
	5	Stress	722	10	Financial	489

Table 11: Top 10 reasons (2023)



3.1.3 Career counselling

This specialised process will assist the student in knowing and understanding themselves and the world of work 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 numbers being consolidated in the last table.

Bloemfontein Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Intake interviews booked	2	7	8	6	8	25	16	15	26	7	17	1	138
Intake interviews attended	2	5	4	6	7	20	12	13	13	3	10	1	96
Feedback sessions booked	2	5	4	5	5	6	6	5	4	2	8	3	55
Feedback sessions attended	2	4	3	3	4	5	6	3	4	1	4	3	42

Table 12: Career Counselling: Bloemfontein Campus

South Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Intake interviews booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Intake interviews attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Feedback sessions booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
Feedback sessions attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4

Table 13: Career Counselling: South Campus

Qwaqwa Campus	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Intake interviews booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Intake interviews attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
Feedback sessions booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Feedback sessions attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2

Table 14: Career Counselling: Qwaqwa Campus

Totals for all campuses	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Intake interviews booked	2	7	8	6	8	25	16	15	31	8	18	1	145
Intake interviews attended	2	5	4	6	7	20	12	13	18	4	11	1	103
Feedback sessions booked	2	5	4	5	5	6	6	5	5	7	8	3	61
Feedback sessions attended	2	4	3	3	4	5	6	3	5	6	4	3	48

Table 15: Total of Career Counselling sessions 2023

Student Feedback Regarding Workshops

- The therapist was very gentle, and she explained everything to me and gave me tasks to do to help evaluate the kind of person I am.
- All that I can say is that I am definitely leaving here as a better person.
- I didn't expect to get the insight I did.
- Glad to say I've reached my objective surprisingly sooner than I thought.
- I am happy with the administration, because I was made aware of my appointments. The therapeutic process has helped me change my perspective and focus on what I can change, not what I cannot change.
- I am very happy with all the progress that I have made throughout the year. I came here shattered and somehow found a way to put myself back together.
- I have learned a lot about myself, and I have to say I'm not that bad of a person! I love it over here!!
- I loved the opportunity of being allowed to choose which professional I would like to work with.
- I want to compliment the professionalism of SCD and taking the students mental health seriously. I am truly satisfied with the help I received.
- I have learned that it is okay to notice that you need help.
- I am so happy with my experience – I have found closure and healing.
- It was a great journey of healing and I had the most amazing people holding my hand.

”

3.1.4 Social Work Services

Social Work Services within the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) have historically reported directly to the Executive Director: DSA. Social Work Services consisted of Elizabeth Msadu (Bloemfontein and South campuses) and Selloane Phoofole (Qwaqwa Campus). Neo Ravhuhali joined the Social Work Services team on the South Campus during December 2022. To ensure stronger alignment and integration with support services to students, Social Work Services moved to Student Counselling and Development on 1 January 2023.

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 Foodbank 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 per campus can be seen in the table below.

	Term 1				Term 2				Term 3				Term 4				Total
	Bfn Campus	South Campus	Qwaqwa Campus	Total: Term 1	Bfn Campus	South Campus	Qwaqwa Campus	Total: Term 2	Bfn Campus	South Campus	Qwaqwa Campus	Total: Term 3	Bfn Campus	South Campus	Qwaqwa Campus	Total: Term 4	
Total sessions booked	158	10	289	457	208	53	49	310	294	134	77	505	100	34	32	166	1 438
Total sessions attended	157	17	289	463	180	50	81	311	160	100	74	334	58	24	32	114	1 222
Difference	1	-7	0	-6	28	3	-32	-1	134	34	3	171	42	10	0	52	216
Cancelled by student	1	0	0	1	19	3	0	22	6	3	0	9	2	2	0	4	36
Cancelled (other)	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	5	6	0	3	9	6	0	0	6	20
Missed by students	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	5	72	22	0	94	34	38	0	72	171
Total	1	0	0	1	29	3	0	32	94	25	3	112	42	40	0	82	227
New students booked	140	9	289	438	121	38	115	274	63	78	45	186	19	8	32	59	957
New students attended	140	9	289	438	117	38	115	270	56	73	82	211	16	8	32	56	975
On call booked	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
On call attended	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3

Table 16: Social Work Services' Sessions 2023

The integration of Social Work Services into the service offering of Student Counselling and Development not only enhanced the multi-disciplinary focus of the department, but also allowed for better understanding and collaboration between the disciplines. The top five reasons why students access 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	Financial concerns	Psychosocial problems including rape, suicidal thoughts, grief, pregnancy, relationships, and food insecurity	Financial concerns
2	Anxiety	Academic exclusions	Overthinking
3	Overthinking	Financial concerns	Anxiety
4	Depression	Accommodation concerns	Family-related matters
5	Family-related matters	Trauma	Stress-related matters

Table 17: Top 10 reasons for Social Work students visiting SCD

3.1.5 DEVELOPMENTAL WORKSHOPS, PROGRAMMES, AND PRESENTATIONS

Webinars and workshops

Group sessions are presented with the purpose of imparting skills and supporting students in resolving challenges that may impede the fulfilment 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 on the following pages provide an overview of all group interventions presented during 2023 per campus.

Bloemfontein Campus		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Workshops	Booked	1	8	13	7	7	7	12	13	5	7	1	1	82
	Attended	37	558	367	199	246	92	385	72	96	69	30	90	2 241
REBT	Booked	251						198						449
	Completed	12						12						24
Self-Esteem 8 weeks 1 per semester	Signed up	60						51						112
	Attended 1st	24						23						47
	Completed	16						16						32
GROW	Booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	53	60
	Attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	14	21
On the Red Couch	Booked	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	7
	Attended	0	0	0	0	5	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	10

Table 18: Group interventions on the Bloemfontein Campus

South Campus		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Workshops	Booked	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	4
	Attended	0	0	104	44	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	0	180

Table 19: Group interventions on the South Campus

Qwaqwa Campus		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
Workshops	Booked	0	0	0	4	9	4	1	3	4	2	0	0	27
	Attended	0	0	0	359	754	85	45	533	112	2	0	0	1 890
Power Club	Booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	8
	Attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	0	0	15

Table 20: Group interventions on the Qwaqwa Campus

The table on the following page indicates the group interventions on all three campuses during 2023; a total of 4 602 individuals participated in group interventions.

SCD on the Qwaqwa Campus launched an Adjustment to University workshop, which was offered throughout the first semester. The workshop was targeted at first-year students, with the aim of providing them with the skills, guidance, and relevant information to assist them in successfully managing their adjustment process from high school to university. It was very successful and was attended by many students.



SCD presented seven *On the Red Couch* webinars during the year, reaching thirteen staff members. These sessions create valuable discussions with staff about SCD's role, mandate, and how to really assist distressed students. These sessions have been revamped for 2024 and will be hosted over lunchtimes as time constraints seem to be the main reason for staff not attending, or withdrawing just before the session starts.

Totals for all campuses		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Workshops	Booked	1	8	14	12	16	11	13	16	9	11	1	1	113
	Attended	37	558	471	602	1000	177	430	605	208	103	30	90	4 311
REBT Programme	Signed up	251						12						263
	Completed	198						12						210
Self-Esteem Programme 8 weeks, 1 per semester	Signed up	60						51						112
	Attended 1st	24						23						47
	Completed	16						16						32
GROW Programme	Booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	53	60
	Attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	14	21
On the Red Couch	Booked	0	0	3	0	9	16	0	1	4	1	0	0	34
	Attended	0	0	0	0	5	3	0	0	4	1	0	0	13
Power Club	Booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	8
	Attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	0	0	15

Table 21: Group interventions on all three campuses

Student Feedback Regarding Workshops

- We (School of Accountancy) arranged a workshop for our postgrad students on ‘emotional intelligence’ (in general). We also asked for ‘coping skills’ and that the workshop should be really practical (tips, advice, skills, etc., rather than theoretical). Therefore, I think the presenter effectively combined the ‘emotional intelligence’ workshop with the ‘mental health survival guide’ (per our request), which was awesome of her (to meet our needs)!
- I am motivated to attend more workshops. Excellent presentation.
- I am really thankful, because that’s what I really needed before I could start with my exam; the workshop really boosted my courage.
- I am really thankful about this programme; it has really changed my life.
- I am very impressed with the SCD service.
- I became aware of things I did not know were stressors.
- I benefited from this workshop; at least now I know what feeling emotions do to my body.

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-two students completed the programme during 2023.



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 2023, the programme had 449 registrations, with 24 students completing the programme.

Student Feedback Regarding the REBT Programme

- It shows that I am a human, and I am unique. I should not be hard on myself.
- The explanations of irrational beliefs and their impact on emotions and behaviours were insightful and relatable.
- What I liked and enjoyed about this programme is that it can be applied to a wide range of issues, including anxiety, depression, anger management, and relationship problems. This versatility makes it a valuable therapeutic approach.
- I could open up about any emotion I feel at a certain time and not wait to talk to someone.
- I liked everything about the programme, and it really helped me manage my anxiety disorder.
- I know now that my reaction to things determine how they are going to affect me.

”

Be like a flower, survive the rain and **use it to grow.**
– BRIAN FORD –



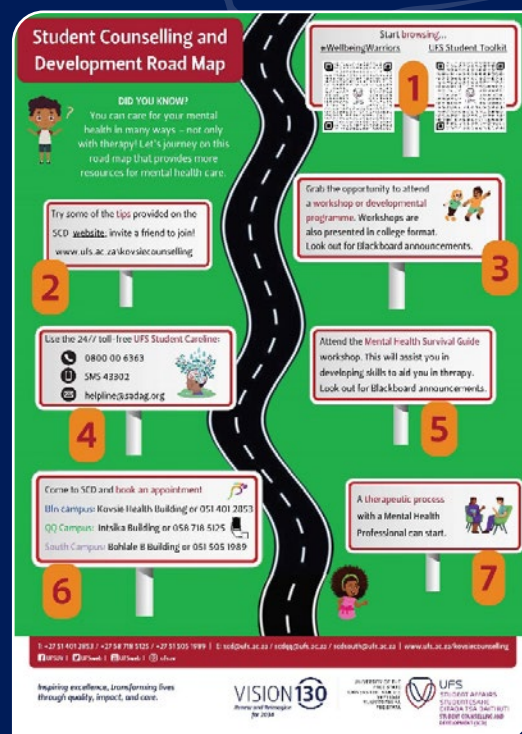
The *GROW project* is a scientifically designed mental health project that aims to develop participants to engage life in a way that creates **G**rowth, builds **R**esilience, cultivates **O**ptimism, and achieve overall **W**ellness (i.e. GROW). We used the social sciences and research evidence to create 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. Seven students completed the six-week programme in 2023.

3.1.6 Online mental health resources

The services offered to students at SCD are multi-layered, with one of these layers being online mental health resources. An online presence is 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, an SCD Road Map was developed during 2023. This visually depicts the different services offered by SCD and the various ways in which students can be assisted.

www.ufs.ac.za/kovsiecounselling



3.2 PARTNERSHIPS, COLLABORATIONS, AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

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 with training 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 with offering 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 seven intern psychologists. Through our collaboration with UNIBS, we had three interns on the Phelophepa train for two weeks in February, accompanied by one of our psychologists, Vhutali Ndou.



Phelophepa train in Greytown, February 2023



Psychology interns Ruani, Chané, and Mosa on the Phelophepa train

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. Each student caller's details and location 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 on the following page provide a monthly overview of the number of students assisted by SADAG through 2023.

Month		January		February		March		April		May		June	
Number of calls		361		389		548		548		625		423	
Gender		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
		66%	34%	77%	23%	82%	18%	82%	18%	84%	16%	72%	28%
Race	African	91%		73%		86%		86%		72%		81%	
	White	6%		14%		6%		6%		4%		12%	
	Coloured	3%		9%		5%		25%		21%		7%	
	Indian	0%		4%		3%		3%		3%		0%	
Campus	Bfn	59%		60%		76%		76%		71%		90%	
	QQ	16%		6%		3%		3%		1%		8%	
	South	0%		0%		0%		0%		2%		0%	
	Undisclosed	16%		34%		21%		21%		26%		2%	
Top three reasons For calls		Information 17%		Anxiety 15%		Academic stress 14%		Anxiety 16%		Academic stress 14%		Academic stress 19%	
		Depression 17%		Depression 14%		Anxiety 16%		Academic stress 14%		Anxiety 12%		Family issues 14%	
		Academic stress 11%		Information 10%		Depression 14%		Depression 14%		Depression 11%		Depression 10%	
Support provided		Psychological first aid 11%		Psychological first aid 33%		Psychological first aid 35%		Psychological first aid 35%		Psychological first aid 40%		Psychological first aid 36%	
		Referred to SCD 25%		General student support 20%		General student support 25%		Referred to SCD 25%		General enquiries 11%		Referred to other NGOs 18%	
		General student support 18%		Referred to other NGOs 13%		Referred to SCD 25%		Referred to other NGOs 21%		Referred to SCD 10%		Referred to SCD 12%	

Table 22: SADAG statistics January to June 2023

Month		July		August		September		October		November		December	
Number of calls		581		632		687		668		643		391	
Gender		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
		78%	22%	85%	15%	61%	39%	68%	32%	65%	35%	67%	33%
Race	African	80%		62%		55%		75%		71%		78%	
	White	13%		23%		30%		16%		19%		22%	
	Coloured	2%		10%		12%		5%		3%		0%	
	Indian	5%		5%		3%		4%		7%		0%	
Campus	Bfn	77%		55%		56%		75%		81%		67%	
	QQ	2%		1%		3%		11%		4%		11%	
	South	4%		1%		1%		0%		0%		0%	
	Undisclosed	17%		43%		40%		14%		15%		22%	
Top three reasons For calls		Academic stress 15%		Academic stress 14%		Academic stress 16%		Academic stress 18%		Anxiety 20%		Anxiety 21%	
		Anxiety 13%		Depression 11%		Depression 14%		Anxiety 14%		Academic stress 17%		Academic stress 18%	
		Family issues 13%		Anxiety 11%		General enquiries 11%		Depression 12%		Depression 10%		Depression 16%	
Support provided		Psychological first aid 41%		Psychological first aid 34%		Psychological first aid 37%		General student support 33%		Psychological first aid 45%		Psychological first aid 38%	
		Referred to SCD 20%		General student support 24%		General student support 25%		Psychological first aid 31%		General student support 29%		Referred to SCD 17%	
		Referred to other NGOs 7%		Referred to SCD 23%		Referred to SCD 11%		Referred to SCD 16%		Referred to SCD 7%		General student support 32%	

Table 23: SADAG statistics July to December 2023

During 2023, a SADAG containment room was established at SCD on the Bloemfontein Campus. This is a dedicated space where students can consult with the SADAG counsellor telephonically.

This ensures that the walk-in student receives immediate assistance. The feedback from students, and SADAG, has been very positive. The table below provides a comparison of the number of students assisted during 2022 versus the number of students assisted in 2023. It is evident that the use of the SADAG Careline by UFS students is escalating. During 2023, a total of 1 394 more students were assisted!

Month	2022	2023	Difference
January	367	361	6 (-)
February	375	389	14 (+)
March	392	548	156 (+)
April	409	548	139 (+)
May	392	625	233 (+)
June	416	423	7 (+)

Month	2022	2023	Difference
July	402	581	179 (+)
August	434	632	198 (+)
September	486	687	201 (+)
October	502	668	166 (+)
November	538	643	105 (+)
December	389	391	2 (+)

Table 24: SADAG statistics comparing 2022 to 2023

3.2.3 Project Empower

SCD collaborated with KopsieSport and supported 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. An article about this amazing collaboration with KopsieSport was published on the UFS web along with the picture below.

On 27 October 2023, the GROW Certificate and Celebration Ceremony 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 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 the serious sports injury, psychological, physical (injuries), to illness and the management of 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 expectation 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 be able to physically go to a student in case of emergency. The severity and frequency of our students' mental health challenges



have been increasing 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 to 31 March 2023. The pilot was successful and significantly impacted service delivery, after which a one-year contract was signed with ER24. The one-year contract will lapse on 15 May 2024. As these service providers have a national footprint, they can respond to a registered UFS student's emergency nationwide. This has assisted greatly 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 2023 can be seen in the table below.

Type of service	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Group sessions	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Trauma counselling	0	7	20	30	22	2	3	28	11	7	0	0	130
Telephone counselling	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	4
Total	1	7	21	31	22	2	3	30	11	8	0	0	136

Table 25: ER24 statistics

3.2.5 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 is the appointment of peer educators to assist with the rolling out of awareness programmes, training, and facilitating discussions. During 2023, 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 flow from the Higher Health grant, including awareness campaigns and intervention programmes on substance use, sexual health, mental health, and gender-based violence.



3.2.6 Department of Social Work

There is close interaction between the Department of Social Work and the colleagues from Social Work Services within SCD. Social work interns (fourth-year students) are placed in SCD, and the social workers serve as field instructors as well as supervisors. The student interns are assisted with individual cases, group processes, and must fulfil a community work project.

One of the 2023 social work interns, Abigail Webb, received the prestigious Best Student Achievement Award from the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI), standing out among the nation's top-ranking students. This accolade, beyond acknowledging academic prowess, demands a notable contribution to the community – a criterion that Abigail undeniably fulfilled. Elizabeth Msadu, Assistant Director: Social Work Services in SCD, was her supervisor. We are very proud of Abigail!

Community work projects on the South Campus resulted in three projects being designed and implemented. Projects were targeted at students and included a substance abuse awareness session (including suggestions/tips on what to use instead of harmful



Nelisiwe Vilakazi (Head of Department for Social Development: KZN) and Abigail Webb during the ASASWEI International Conference and Awards 2023

substances), tips on how students can make their money stretch further, and a resource list for the students.

Group work resulted in two groups being facilitated on the South Campus this year. The first was a growth-orientated group for the residence assistants of the day residence. The second group had a time management focus and was conducted with students in preparation for their exams and general management of their time.



SCD's social workers attending the ASASWEI conference



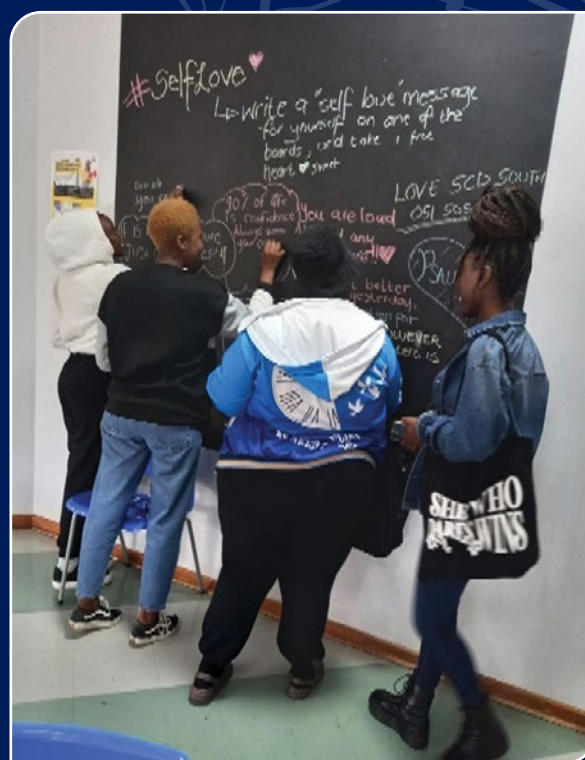
Substance Abuse workshop

Students on the South Campus were encouraged to consciously love themselves and engage in self-loving behaviour. Messages of self-love were placed on sweets, and these were distributed to students. Students also had the opportunity to use the chalkboard in the cafeteria and write self-love declarations. The aim of this successful initiative was to encourage students to see the need to invest in themselves, as they need to love themselves first in order to love other people.

Students are now applying for the No Student Hungry programme online. Furthermore, this office has once again received sponsorship from Gift of the Givers on a monthly basis for 2023. Non-perishable food and toiletries for men and women were also received.

The No Student Hungry impactors hosted a substance abuse awareness dialogue on the Qwaqwa Campus to raise awareness about the dangers of substances and equip the students with skills to make healthy and harmless decisions regarding their social and interpersonal lifestyle choices.

A gender-based violence awareness dialogue was held on the Qwaqwa Campus. A GBV survivor shared her story of survival with the students to encourage them and give them hope that they can survive if they choose not to stay in abusive relationships.



#Self-love declaration at the cafeteria.



No Student Hungry information session: Qwaqwa Campus.

Gender-based violence awareness dialogue on the Qwaqwa Campus.



Article on the substance abuse awareness campaign featured in the New Era newspaper.

3.2.7 Department of Psychology

The Department of Psychology invited SCD to be part of the panel for their annual master's in Counselling Psychology selections. Vhutali Ndou served as a panellist for the week-long process, assisting the department

in selecting students best suited for the programme. SCD also values the relationship with the Department of Psychology in collaborating on our counselling psychology internships.

3.2.8 Protection Services

SCD partnered with Protection Services to develop a flyer with cryptic information on where to obtain assistance when a sexual offence has been experienced. This was done campus-specific; a flyer for the Bloemfontein and South campuses was developed, as well as a flyer for the Qwaqwa Campus. The flyer also provided access to a document with frequently asked questions to provide more detailed explanations, should this be needed.



3.2.9 Housing and Residence Affairs

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 seven counselling psychology interns facilitate workshops throughout 2023.

Central College			
Workshop	Date	Time	Venue
Coping with Stress	6 March 2023 (Monday)	17:00–19:00	Soetdoring Gazelle
MHSG	9 May 2023 (Tuesday)	17:00–19:00	Wag-'n-Bietjie Gazelle
Suicide Awareness	26 July 2023 (Wednesday)	17:00–19:00	Akasia Gazelle
East College			
Workshop	Date	Time	Venue
Coping with Stress	28 September (Thursday)	17:00–19:00	Khayalami
MHSG	8 May (Monday)	17:00–19:00	House Roosmaryn
Suicide Awareness	7 March (Tuesday)	17:00–19:00	House Ardour Gazelle
North College			
Workshop	Date	Time	Venue
Coping with Stress	17 May (Wednesday)	17:00–19:00	Tswelopele Residence
MHSG	16 March (Thursday)	17:00–19:00	Welwitschia Residence
Suicide Awareness	5 June (Monday)	17:00–19:00	Vergeet-My-Nie Residence

South College			
Workshop	Date	Time	Venue
Coping with Stress	1 August (Tuesday)	17:00–19:00	Lehakwe
MHSG	2 August (Wednesday)	17:00–19:00	Villa Bravado
Suicide Awareness	10 August (Thursday)	17:00–19:00	Emily Hobhouse
West College			
Workshop	Date	Time	Venue
Coping with Stress	27 July (Thursday)	17:00–19:00	Multipurpose Room
MHSG	26 September (Tuesday)	17:00–19:00	Multipurpose Room
Suicide Awareness	11 October (Wednesday)	17:00–19:00	Multipurpose Room
Additional workshops			
Workshop	Date	Time	Venue
Coping with Stress	3 August (Thursday)	17:00–19:00	Multipurpose Room
MHSG	9 October (Monday)	17:00–19:00	Harmony Residence
Suicide Awareness	18 September (Monday)	17:00–19:00	Multipurpose Room

Table 26: 2023 College workshop schedule

Within the residence spaces, Beyers Naude Residence – in collaboration with the Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Office (GEADO) – hosted a talk where Vhutali Ndou was part of the panel. The topic for the session was 'In her/their shoes', as part of an annual series of talks called the Gentlemen's Series. Students signed a canvas to show their commitment to eradicating gender-based violence. They also talked about the damaging effects of patriarchy, toxic masculinity, and the importance of femininity and equity. They also educated each other about consent. SCD's contribution to the talk was to help the group of predominantly male students understand the experience of a woman or the experiences of people who come to therapy because of GBV, highlighting the importance of healing and making them aware of the resources available in SCD.



In her/their shoes: committing to eradicate GBV

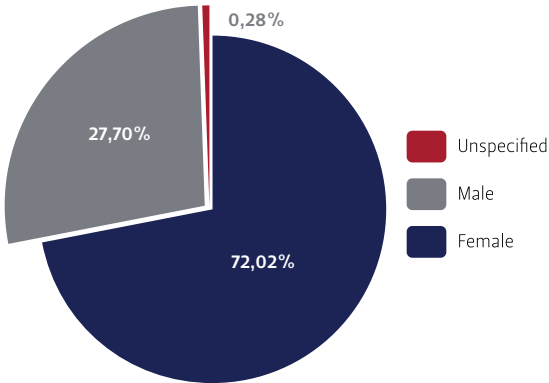
3.2.10 CUADS

The Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support's (CUADS) Policy on Universal Access and Disability Support for students with disabilities was approved and CUADS repositioned itself to assist with policy implementation. Previously, extra-time applications were administrated by SCD, but this responsibility shifted to CUADS from 2023.

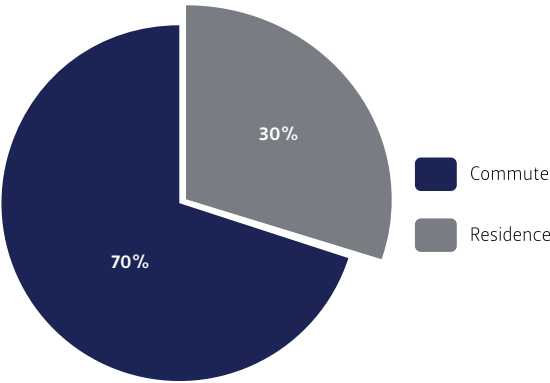
The overarching Reasonable Accommodation Panel resorts with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic, who approved the establishment of the panel's subcommittee to only deal with extra-time applications. The function of administering extra-time applications has now been added to the responsibilities of a 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. Ndou assists CUADS in reviewing applications to identify and help students facing academic challenges regarding learning difficulties. She assisted in reviewing 90 applications for the year 2023.

3.3 SCD STUDENT PROFILE

The information in the following section provides a glimpse of the student clientele using the services of SCD on all three campuses. On the Bloemfontein Campus 1 186 students were assisted, on the Qwaqwa Campus 860, and on the South Campus 194.

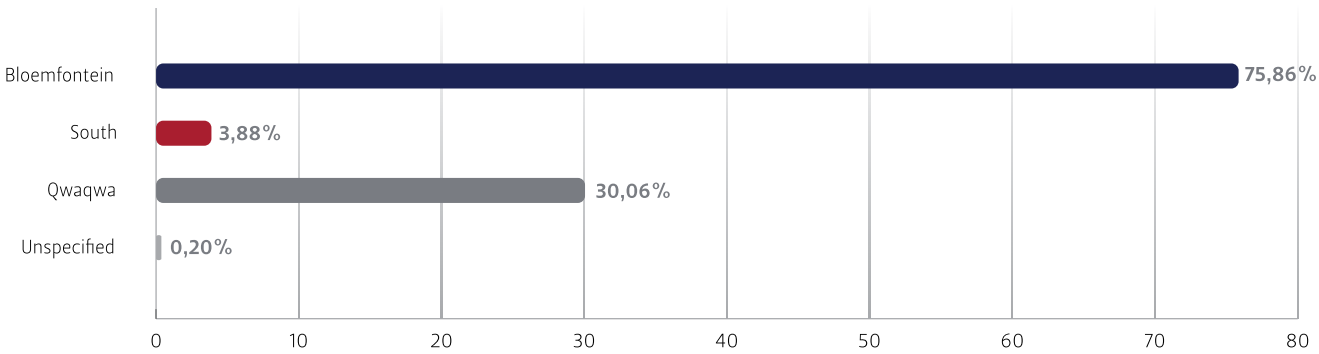


Graph 1: Gender distribution of SCD clients

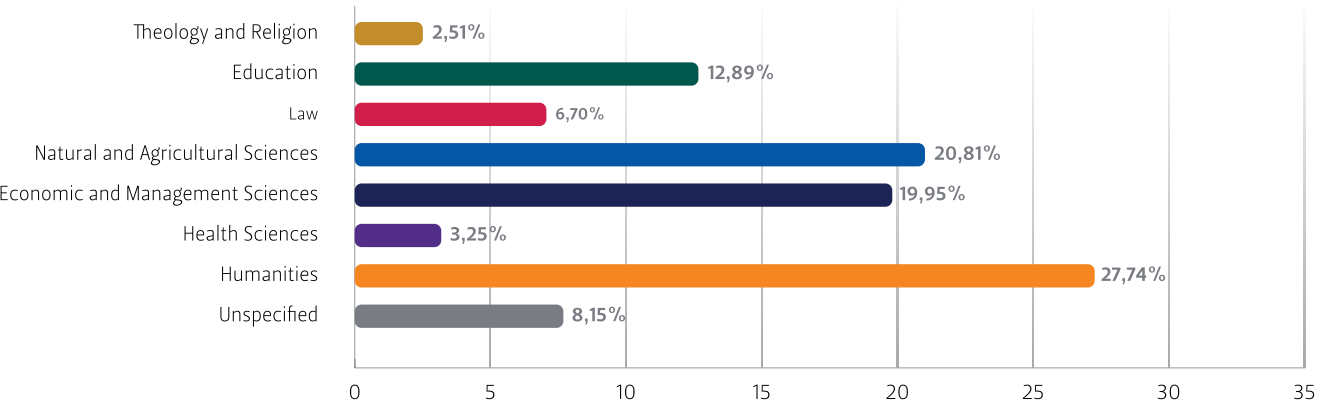


Graph 2: Accommodation status of SCD clients

Graphs 1 and 2 indicate that the majority of clients visiting SCD on all three campuses during 2023 were female and living off campus.

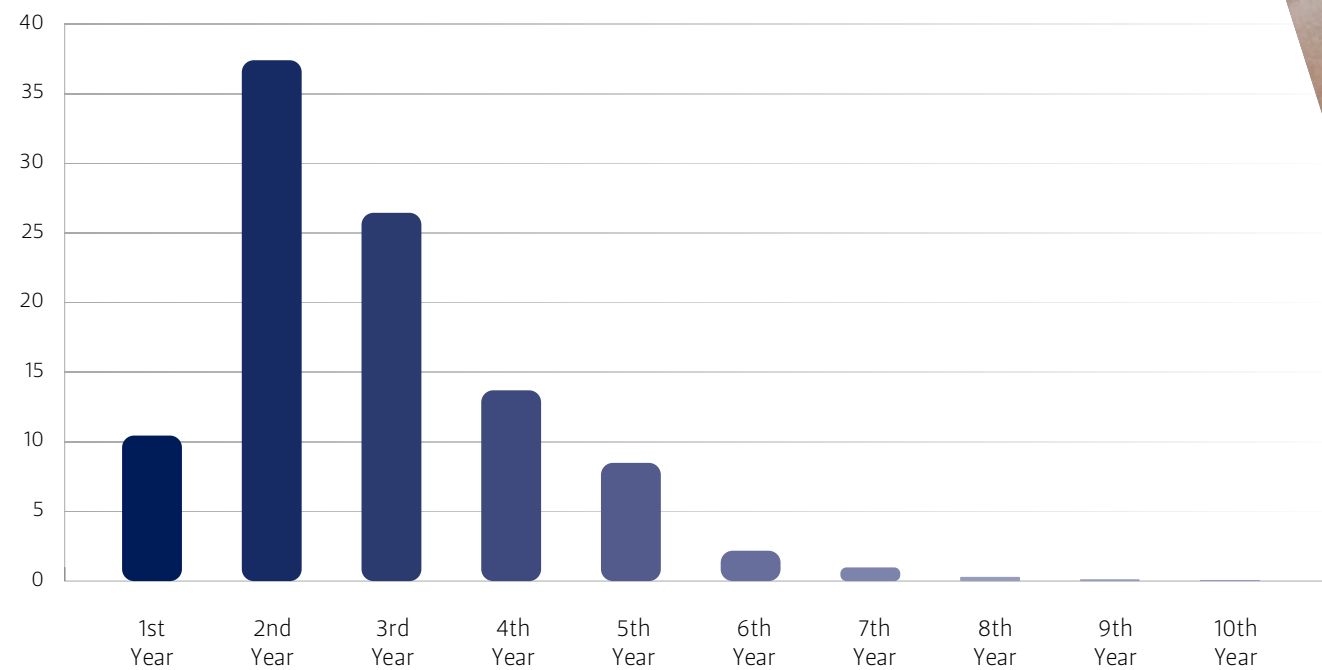


Graph 3: Campus distribution of SCD clients

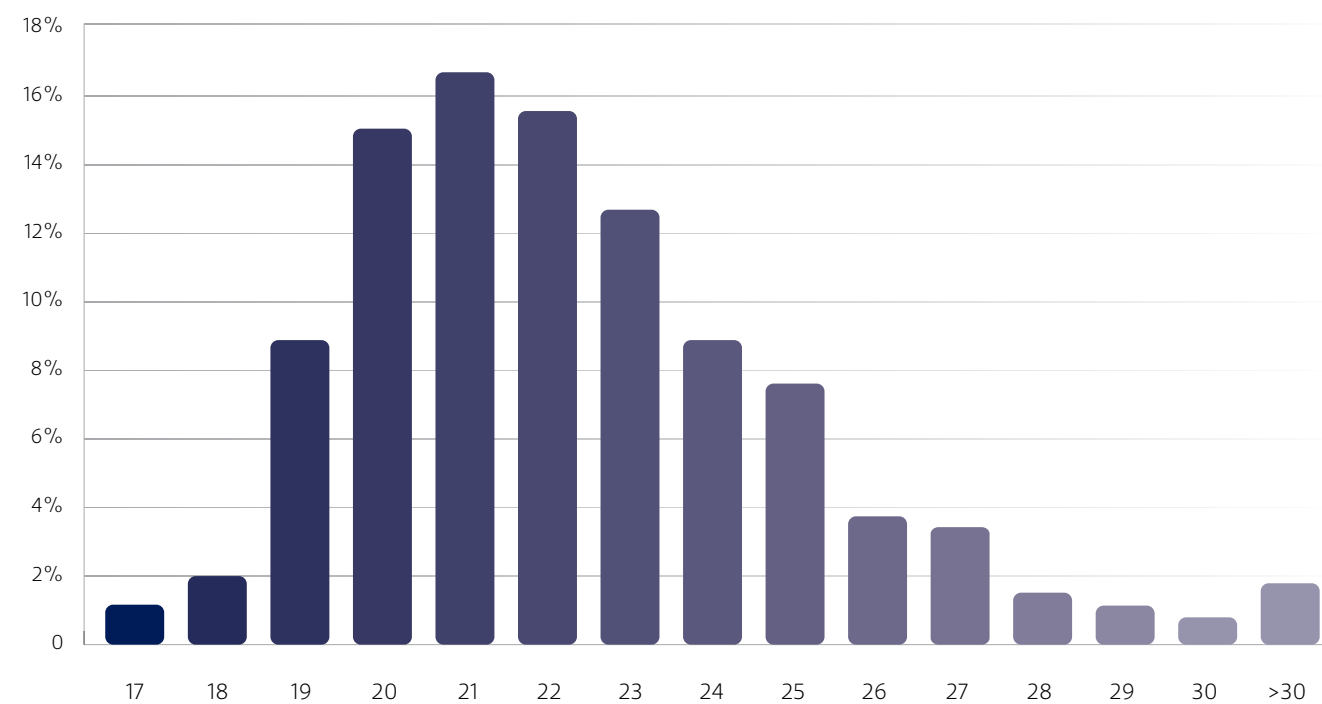


Graph 4: Faculty distribution of SCD clients

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' year of study



Graph 6: SCD clients' age distribution

SCD clients' year of study is mostly second year (Graph 5), and the majority of students presenting at SCD as clients are aged 21 (Graph 6).

“Life doesn't make any sense without interdependence. **We need each other**, and the sooner we learn that, **the better for us all**.
– ERIK ERIKSON –

04

PILLAR TWO: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1 DEVELOPMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF

Staff were exposed to different professional development and training opportunities during 2023.

4.1.1 Professional development and training attended

- Supervision training was offered to all mental health professionals (MHPs). This training was presented by Dr Shahieda Jansen and Dr Shariefa Hendricks, both clinical psychologists.
- Group therapy training was provided to all MHPs and was presented by Dr Shahieda Jansen (clinical psychologist).
- Childhood trauma was presented to all MHPs by Loni Ribeiro, clinical psychologist.
- Three SCD colleagues attended the 43rd Annual South African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE) Conference in Stellenbosch. Tobias van den Berg spoke as the outgoing President, and Vhutali Ndou and Nonhlanhla Moleleki (standing in for Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee) shared how SCD used an ecosystemic approach to reconnect students.
- Three SCD social workers attended the Annual Conference of the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions (ASASWEI) in Durban, hosted by UKZN.
- A Grief Counselling workshop was presented by Irene Kotze, clinical social worker from the Family and Marriage Society of South Africa (FAMSA) in Bloemfontein. Four social workers and a registered counsellor attended.
- Two colleagues attended the virtual Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) Accreditation Programme and successfully completed their examinations.



Vhutali Ndou presenting at SAACDHE



Nonhlanhla Moleleki, Vhutali Ndou, and Tobias van den Berg at the SAACDHE conference

- Two of SCD's developmental programmes, Self-Esteem and GROW, were presented in order to train all psychologists and intern psychologists to present these programmes in future.
- Virtual Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) training, Level 1, was presented by clinical psychologist, Werner Teichert.
- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) training was presented by Prof Stephen Walker, counselling psychologist.
- Canva training was presented virtually by Lize van den Bergh to SCD staff on the South and Qwaqwa campuses. Canva is a graphic design platform that assists SCD in creating marketing materials, articles, and posters.
- SCD's second-layer leadership, along with the Director, participated in the DSA's strategic discussions, reflections, and planning.



SCD staff attending training



DSA first- and second-layer leadership

4.1.3 Funding provided for HPCSA / SACSSP annual fees and CPD training

The budget for SCD has been revised to guarantee sufficient funds to cover the registration fees of all MHPs with the appropriate professional boards. Additionally, it ensures adequate resources for annual continuous development and training opportunities.

The following can be highlighted:

- SCD sponsored the annual professional board registration fees for all permanent employees.
- SCD funded all the training as mentioned in 4.2.
- Fees paid to register for MyCPD or a similar online CPD platform. MyCPD is an online platform where mental health professionals can receive CPD points.
- SCD has extended the opportunity to fund all SCD staff members with up to R7 500 for any additional training opportunities that fall within their line of work (e.g. advanced Microsoft training, supervision sessions, executive coaching). For SCD staff dealing daily with student clients, this amount can also be used to consult external supervisors.

4.1.2 Staff well-being

Staff well-being, particularly within the dynamic realm of counselling and development, is imperative, and nurturing a supportive environment for staff cannot be overstated. In this context, the staff was introduced to a spectrum of well-being initiatives. These initiatives were carefully curated to foster a culture of holistic support, ensuring that the well-being of each team member remained a top priority.

- A drumming team-building activity was held for all three campuses in Bloemfontein.
- Staff gatherings were held throughout the year, including baby showers, welcome lunches, and farewells for staff members. These gatherings were not only used to celebrate the staff members, but for the team to connect and socialise.
- Quarterly wellness afternoons were held, which included fun connection activities (e.g. human bingo), strengths-based activities, and a campus tour. The SCD team also participated in UFS sports days – a combined netball team was a lot of fun!
- The Annual UFS Women's Breakfast was also attended by staff.
- Joyce Ras, industrial psychologist, did MBTI testing with the staff members. She facilitated a team-building day for colleagues across all three campuses, based on the results.



4.1.4 Long-service award

Petro Herbst, SCD's Office Manager on the Bloemfontein Campus, received a long-service award during 2023. She has been with the UFS for 25 years! Congratulations, Petro!



Petro Herbst receives a long-service award.

05

PILLAR THREE: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

5.1 COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

During 2023, 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.

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 to do mental health awareness. Self-Injury Awareness Month was in March. The influencers distributed orange balloons attached to coping cards and other SCD materials such as pens, etc.

April was Stress Awareness Month, and Autism Spectrum Disorder Awareness Day was on 2 April. Michelle, our ad hoc social media specialist, assisted with creating and posting images and a video to commemorate this. On 7 September (Varsity Football Derby: UFS and CUT), 500 tickets were sponsored by Higher Health for mental health awareness, and these were distributed to our students.

Social Support Week – SADAG staff who ran our 24/7 Careline came to visit and market their services at the SCD stall.

The overall aim this year was to improve SCD's online presence on social media. The Instagram and Facebook pages have been a focus to advertise and psycho-educate our students on these pages. Social media awareness was done on the following topics:

- 1 August – International Overdose Awareness
- August – Women's Month
- 10 September – Suicide Awareness Day



5.2 DODAY 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 campaign's overall goals 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 primary target audience was registered UFS students, with a secondary target of UFS staff. 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 underpin proactive self-care and encourage care for others.

The results indicated that a targeted and structured approach can create engagement and awareness regarding mental health and health-promoting activities.

SCD entered the campaign for the Marketing, Advancement and Communication in Education (MACE) Excellence Awards, which took place on 16 November 2023. SCD won a silver medal for its entry. These awards take place annually, recognising and celebrating excellence and the achievements of specialists and practitioners in marketing, communication and advancement in the higher education sector.



5.3 MAN2MAN MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME

Mental health challenges among university students, particularly male students, are a growing concern worldwide. Recognising the need for targeted support, SCD initiated the Man-to-Man Mental Health Programme on the Qwaqwa Campus. The programme aimed to address male student challenges, with a specific focus on grief and substance abuse, through open dialogues and counselling on Saturday mornings. Male students participated, engaged, and were disappointed that the programme concluded. Feedback was positive and this discourse will be continued in 2024.



One of the sessions in the Man2Man programme

5.4 MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS FUN DAY

SCD Qwaqwa Campus hosted its second annual Mental Health Awareness Fun Day during the Mental Health Awareness Month of October to promote mental health awareness among the students. The day was celebrated through a #SelfieForMentalHealth campaign, face painting, green ribbons, and fun games that promoted social cohesion. The #SelfieforMentalHealth campaign generated images that the students shared on their social media platforms, thus creating a virtual community of mental health awareness ambassadors. In addition to the interactive activities, the SCD staff and SCD influencers shared valuable information about student mental health matters. Information stalls were set up, offering SCD resources, brochures, and expert advice to students seeking guidance or information.



Students enjoying the fun day



#SelfieforMentalHealth campaign

5.5 SCD INFLUENCERS

The SCD influencers are a group of students who volunteer in the Office of Student Counselling and Development, and in essence, they become the 'Mental Health warriors' among the students on campus.

The SCD Influencers are essential in promoting mental health and overall well-being among students. Their responsibilities and contributions typically include the following:

- **Raising Awareness:** SCD Influencers are instrumental in raising awareness about mental health issues, reducing stigma, and normalising discussions about mental well-being.
- **Providing Information:** They offer accurate information about the mental health resources that SCD offers on each campus. This includes counselling services, career counselling, support groups, an emergency number, and developmental programmes.
- **Advocacy:** Influencers may advocate or make suggestions for improvements, such as suggesting areas where SCD might need to be visible off and on campus. They advocate for the student population, thus connecting UFS students and SCD.

There were 14 influencers on the Bloemfontein Campus, 6 on the South Campus, and 10 on the Qwaqwa Campus. They began the year with orientation: meet and greet, which covered expectations from SCD and the influencers and collaboration between SCD programmes, influencers, and mental health awareness. The influencers also received training throughout the year to empower them for their role – social media and digital citizenship training as well as being an ambassador for SCD.

Throughout the year, there were informative activations at the bridge on the Bloemfontein Campus, where the influencers would inform students about SCD, the role that SCD plays, the programmes offered, and even directions to SCD.

In collaboration with the Department of Communication and Marketing, the influencers were featured on the UFS Facebook page. The influencer's pictures and mental health-related quotes were posted daily for 14 days on the UFS Facebook page in October.

The Prestige Awards of the Executive Director: Division of Student Affairs (EDSA) is an event in October where

students are recognised for their achievements. During 2023, the influencers were included in the EDSA Awards. One of the influencers on the Bloemfontein Campus, Oarabile Sehunoe, was acknowledged and received an award as the Influencer of the Year.

SCD on South Campus had influencers for the first time during 2023. There was close collaboration between the South and Bloemfontein campuses with regard to training and development.

On the Qwaqwa Campus, the first task for the influencers was to write messages of hope on the SCD blackboard mounted outside our offices. The purpose of this activity was for students to read the positive messages as they walked past the blackboard when they came to our department.

During the Qwaqwa Campus open day, the influencers were responsible for the SCD stall. They provided prospective students with information about SCD's services, and also marketed the career assessment and counselling service available to Grade 11 and Grade 12 learners.

At the end of the year, all SCD influencers received a certificate from the Director: SCD for their contribution to the growth of SCD, as well as a letter of reference acknowledging their role on campus.



Sinolwethu September



Oarabile Sehunoe



Thabang Dlamini



Mojelenki Legegeru



Mpho Mashoane



Itumeleng Mollo





06 STUDENT COUNSELLING AND DEVELOPMENT **STAFF**

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
Vhutali Ndou	Counselling Psychologist
Mosa Setlaba	Counselling Psychologist
Philile Phungula	Counselling Psychologist
Kuhle Mashamba	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
Elelwani Mbadi	Assistant Officer
Katlego Masike	Assistant Officer
Cathrine Molefi	Assistant Officer
Administrative interns	
Ayela Ndelela	Mapaseka Tlaetsi
Intern Counselling Psychologists	
Ruani Nel	Siya Maganga
Mosa Mathebe	Sach Galhanage
Chané de wet Muller	Lara Odendaal
Ruben Langenhoven	
Ad hoc staff	
Lize van den Bergh	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Bodley van der Westhuizen	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Mathuli Mbhamali	Social Worker
Nonkululeko Selele	Social Worker
Elzani Burger	Registered Counsellor
René Chikwira	Clinical Psychologist
Francois Naudé	Counseling Psychologist
Nada Laurie	Finances

Qwaqwa Campus	
Permanent Personnel	
Lerato Makoba	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Mapula Adams	Counselling Psychologist
Aubrey Moloto	Registered Counsellor
Nonhlanhla Moleleki	Registered Counsellor
Selloane Phoofole	Social Worker
Contract administrative staff	
Ntobizodwa Mabanga	Assistant officer
Martin Senoko	Assistant officer
Siphesihle Nyoka	Assistant officer
South Campus	
Permanent Personnel	
Penny Mathumbu	Counselling Psychologist
Neo Ravhuhali	Social Worker
Contract administrative staff	
Khanyi Mqushulu	Assistant officer

Unfortunately, Bonolo Mophosho (Senior Counselling Psychologist), Nico Venter (Senior Counselling Psychologist), Obakeng Phofu (Counselling Psychologist), and Cliné Payne (Counselling Psychologist) resigned during 2023. The main reasons being to venture into private practice or to move closer to family. Cathrine Molefi (Assistant Officer) resigned for a position at a legal firm.



07

CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to share the highlights of the Department of Student Counselling and Development's journey 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, while mitigating, reducing, and preventing mental health challenges. Please contact the Director should any additional information be needed.



One can practice SELF-CARE by doing the following:

- Practice self-reflection. Write a list of all your positive attributes as well as your achievements, and put the list in a place where you can see it to remind you of your strengths and accomplishments.
- Take care of your physical well-being. Get plenty of exercise, plenty of sleep, and eat a healthy, balanced diet. Make time to just relax and enjoy your life.
- Take care of your emotional well-being. Stay in touch with close friends and family. A simple phone call or visit to someone who listens to you and makes you feel better can improve your well-being.
- Take up a hobby. Spend time doing what you enjoy! Discover an activity that interests you, such as dancing, singing, sports, or shopping.
- Put aside leisure time. Use this time to relax, read, listening to music, drawing and/or poetry - activities that you enjoy.
- Get together with friends. Learn to say "no" when something does not sit well with you. Remember that you cannot make everyone happy - especially when it is at the expense of your own mental health.
- Remember that your self-care is for your own benefit, therefore you get to decide the type of self-care that works well for you.



Compiled by Lenore Mahabala

“
My dark days made me stronger.
Or maybe **I already was strong**, and
they made me prove it.
— EMERY LORD —

The page features a large, vertical photograph as its background. It depicts multiple arms and hands of various ethnicities—light-skinned, dark-skinned, and medium-toned—reaching upwards from the bottom edge towards the upper right quadrant. The composition suggests themes of unity, growth, and collective effort.

Promise me you'll always remember:
**You're braver than you believe, and
stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.**

– CHRISTOPHER ROBIN FROM WINNIE THE POOH –

Thank you for helping us to have more unashamed conversations.

Notes

A series of horizontal grey lines providing space for handwritten notes.

42

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YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA UFS
STUDENT COUNSELLING
AND DEVELOPMENT

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