

# STUDENT COUNSELLING AND DEVELOPMENT (SCD)

## ANNUAL REPORT

20  
22

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

UNIVERSITY OF THE  
FREE STATE  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE  
VRYSTAAT  
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FREISTATA



**UFS**  
STUDENT COUNSELLING  
AND DEVELOPMENT



# CONTENTS



<b>1. MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. PILLAR ONE: PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1 <i>SCD Services and Resources</i> .....	5
3.1.1 <i>Individual counselling</i> .....	5
3.1.2 <i>On call / emergency sessions</i> .....	6
3.1.3 <i>Career counselling</i> .....	8
3.1.4 <i>Developmental workshops, programmes, and presentations</i> .....	8
3.1.5 <i>Extra time applications</i> .....	10
3.1.6 <i>Online mental health resources</i> .....	10
3.2 <i>Partnerships, Collaborations, and Networking Opportunities</i> .....	11
3.2.1 <i>UNIBS</i> .....	11
3.2.2 <i>SADAG careline and screening</i> .....	11
3.2.3 <i>Next Chapter</i> .....	14
3.2.4 <i>Project Empower</i> .....	14
3.2.5 <i>ER24</i> .....	14
3.2.6 <i>Moshal Scholarship</i> .....	15
3.2.7 <i>Higher Health</i> .....	15
3.3 <i>SCD Student Profile</i> .....	16
<b>4. PILLAR TWO: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT .....</b>	<b>19</b>
4.1 <i>Developmental Opportunities for Staff</i> .....	20
4.2 <i>Professional Development and Training Provided</i> .....	21
4.3 <i>Staff Well-being</i> .....	21
4.4 <i>Funding provided for HPCSA (Health Professions Council of South Africa)</i> <i>annual fees and CPD training</i> .....	21
<b>5. PILLAR THREE: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION .....</b>	<b>22</b>
5.1 <i>Communication and Marketing</i> .....	23
5.1.1 <i>Website changes</i> .....	23
5.1.2 <i>Webinars, the Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) programme,</i> <i>and promotional materials</i> .....	24
5.1.3 <i>Institutional mental health campaign</i> .....	25
5.1.4 <i>On the Red Couch (OTRC) series</i> .....	26
5.2 <i>SCD Influencers</i> .....	27
<b>6. SCD Staff .....</b>	<b>28</b>
6.1 <i>Organogram</i> .....	30
<b>7. CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>34</b>



01

MESSAGE FROM  
THE DIRECTOR

*Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee*

*Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much*

-Helen Keller-

This quote from Helen Keller resonates with me when I reflect on 2022 – it was the year ‘after’ the COVID-19 pandemic, and my first full year as Director of Student Counselling and Development (SCD) at the University of the Free State (UFS). First things first; I have to credit the SCD team for not only adjusting to a new leader during 2022, but also having to adjust to being physically back at work and no longer working virtually from home. The amount of mental energy needed to adjust while navigating students through the adjustment process was significant.

When you page through the annual report, you will be able to read about the excellent and pioneering work being done – I am merely going to touch upon a few highlights. A focus area was the rekindling of partnerships within the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) to enhance collaboration and integrate service delivery to students within a multi-campus model. The first-ever SCD Strategic Plan 2022-2026 has been produced, guiding the SCD team in terms of strategic goals, intended outcomes, and aligning closely with the vision and mission of both DSA and the UFS. A marketing strategy was developed specifically for SCD, and our website was revamped to be more student friendly. An application to train intern counselling psychologists from 2023 was approved by the Health Professions Council of South Africa during 2022; we are extremely proud of this achievement!

My sincere thanks to everybody who has contributed to the success and growth of the SCD during the past year – especially to Mr Temba Hlasho (Executive Director: DSA), the Student Affairs Senior Leadership Group, and each SCD staff member. Thank you for a year full of challenges, reconnecting, and hybrid caring for one another. It has been a tough year on many levels, but we made it.

***Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.***

- William Arthur Ward -

# INTRODUCTION

# 02



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 is an SCD office on the Qwaqwa, South, and Bloemfontein campuses. The staff complement consists of 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 also from various cultural backgrounds across South Africa, as well as international students. The strategic direction of SCD 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 – have been 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 to 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 2022 will be shared according to the activities within each pillar. Throughout students' experiences of SCD will be shared anonymously.

# 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 lockdown, students may still choose which platform of counselling they prefer:

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

Bloemfontein Campus	Jan	Feb	Mrt	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	53	201	415	369	533	406	380	546	473	742	825	113	5 056
Total sessions attended	36	145	283	249	358	245	230	338	348	507	482	66	3 287
Difference	17	56	132	20	175	161	150	208	125	235	343	47	1 769
Cancelled by student	8	30	31	31	46	47	38	43	31	52	81	9	447
Cancelled (other)	4	10	33	25	38	19	12	39	23	47	19	1	270
Missed by studentS	5	17	67	64	91	95	100	126	71	136	243	38	1 053
Total	17	57	131	120	175	161	150	208	125	235	343	48	1 770
New students booked	21	61	101	91	129	107	84	116	103	213	216	9	1 251
New students attended	18	49	76	75	108	77	61	70	85	170	149	7	945

South Campus	Jan	Feb	Mrt	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	0	0	35	29	33	40	30	54	43	62	70	15	411
Total sessions attended	0	0	18	15	23	20	16	39	23	31	44	6	235
Difference	0	0	17	14	10	20	14	15	20	31	26	9	176
Cancelled by student	0	0	5	7	5	7	6	5	6	7	8	1	57
Cancelled (other)	0	0	5	7	0	7	0	1	1	7	3	4	35
Missed by students	0	0	7	0	5	6	8	9	13	17	15	4	84
Total	0	0	17	14	5	20	14	15	20	31	26	9	176
New students booked	0	61	17	4	10	5	4	15	11	8	12	0	147
New students attended	0	49	7	3	9	2	3	12	10	7	9	0	111

Qwaqwa Campus	Jan	Feb	Mrt	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Total sessions booked	7	33	54	107	137	133	93	123	132	172	173	113	1 277
Total sessions attended	4	10	54	75	75	88	66	93	105	117	113	66	866
Difference	3	23	0	32	62	45	27	30	27	55	60	47	411
Cancelled by student	0	5	2	8	7	12	8	6	8	11	19	9	95
Cancelled (other)	0	12	8	9	48	18	6	1	2	7	10	1	122
Missed by students	3	6	6	15	7	15	13	23	17	37	31	39	212
Total	3	23	16	23	62	45	27	30	27	55	60	49	429
New students booked	7	17	34	43	69	52	52	67	58	82	81	9	571
New students attended	4	7	29	35	41	39	39	59	43	57	59	7	419

Table 1: Sessions scheduled

### Student Feedback Regarding Therapeutic interventions

- I am satisfied that I was able to talk about things that bother me and finding ways on how to create a healthy balance.
- I am very grateful for SCD and my therapist. I came here to deal with one problem, but it unlocked so many other which I was able to deal with as well.
- I commend SCD on their service; it really helped me – patience really goes a long way.
- I feel it was a great process and helped a lot in knowing myself.
- I got the chance to talk about whatever was bugging me, and it was healing.
- I am very happy and ready to tackle all the jaws of life.
- It was nice to be part of such a warm environment. I will definitely be back if times get tough again.
- I loved it here; it became my second home.

#### 3.1.2 On call / emergency sessions

This entails confidential counselling for emergency-related issues (suicide attempts; suicidal thoughts; trauma). Individual appointments are set aside for emergency sessions, to assess and contain the emergency, and make the relevant referrals.

Bloemfontein Campus	Jan	Feb	Mrt	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call (emergency) sessions booked	0	11	36	37	41	32	30	50	33	23	19	2	314
On call (emergency) Attended	0	9	27	33	37	28	25	43	30	23	14	1	270

South Campus	Jan	Feb	Mrt	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call (emergency) sessions booked	0	0	0	2	3	0	1	3	8	6	6	0	29
On call (emergency) Attended	0	0	0	1	3	0	1	3	6	5	4	0	23

Qwaqwa Campus	Jan	Feb	Mrt	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
On call (emergency) sessions booked	0	0	0	0	6	3	2	4	3	8	1	1	28
On call (emergency) Attended	0	0	0	0	6	3	2	4	3	8	1	1	28

Table 2: Emergency sessions scheduled

Throughout the data, it was evident that the month of August had significantly more students requesting therapeutic assistance, as well as emergency sessions. The top 10 reasons why students report to SCD can be seen in the table below. Anxiety was the top reason in 11 of the 12 months during 2022.

	January		February		March		April		May		June	
1	Anxiety	25	Anxiety	79	Anxiety	105	Anxiety	77	Anxiety	92	Anxiety	92
2	Stress	17	Depression	59	Depression	74	Depression	47	Depression	62	Depression	65
3	Problems friend/fam	15	Poor self-esteem	39	Stress	66	Problems friend/fam	44	Stress	59	Stress	55
4	Poor self-esteem	12	Panic attacks	38	Poor self-esteem	51	Thoughts I can't stop	41	Eat/sleep	57	Thoughts I can't stop	54
5	Financial	11	Stress	38	Eat/sleep	48	Eat/sleep	40	Poor self-esteem	47	Eat/sleep	52
6	Panic attacks	9	Problems friend/fam	25	Problems friend/fam	47	Panic attacks	39	Problems friend/fam	45	Poor self-esteem	49
7	Depression	8	Regret/guilt	25	Panic attacks	43	Poor self-esteem	39	Thoughts I can't stop	44	Panic attacks	41
8	Anger	8	Financial	24	Thoughts I can't stop	38	Financial	29	Panic attacks	43	Problems friend/fam	40
9	Death	7	Anger	22	Anger	34	Death	25	Regret/guilt	34	Anger	37
10	Regret/guilt	7	Death	22	Trauma	32	Problems romance	23	Anger	33	Death	36

	July		August		September		October		November		December	
1	Anxiety	69	Anxiety	148	Anxiety	115	Anxiety	67	Anxiety	34	Study skills	6
2	Depression	61	Depression	104	Depression	87	Stress	83	Depression	25	Course uncertainty	2
3	Eat/sleep	45	Stress	96	Stress	83	Depression	43	Stress	25	Suicide	1
4	Poor self-esteem	44	Poor self-esteem	72	Death	66	Eat/sleep	40	Problems friend/fam	18		
5	Problems friend/fam	42	Death	70	Eat/sleep	61	Poor self-esteem	30	Eat/sleep	17		
6	Stress	40	Problems friend/fam	70	Thoughts I can't stop	59	Death	30	Panic attacks	17		
7	Anger	37	Eat/sleep	69	Problems friend/fam	56	Problems friend/fam	29	Poor self-esteem	17		
8	Panic attacks	33	Panic attacks	66	Poor self-esteem	52	Panic attacks	26	Regret/guilt	16		
9	Thoughts I can't stop	32	Thoughts I can't stop	66	Panic attacks	52	Regret/guilt	25	Anger	16		
10	Regret/guilt	26	Anger	63	Financial	46	Financial	23	Death	15		

Table 3: Top 10 reasons for students visiting SCD

**Student Feedback Regarding Administrative Services**

- ➔ Thank you! The service is highly appreciated.
- ➔ Everyone was nice and sweet.

### 3.1.3 Career counselling

This specialised process assists the students 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.

BLOEMFONTEIN CAMPUS	JAN	FEB	MRT	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Intake interviews booked	4	3	6	1	4	9	5	1	4	6	23	4	70
Intake interviews attended	3	2	4	1	3	8	3	1	3	4	23	3	58
Feedback sessions booked	5	4	4	1	0	3	3	6	7	3	17	9	62
Feedback sessions attended	3	3	3	1	0	2	3	1	6	2	11	7	42

SOUTH CAMPUS	JAN	FEB	MRT	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Intake interviews booked	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Intake interviews attended	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Feedback sessions booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Feedback sessions attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

QWAQWA CAMPUS	JAN	FEB	MRT	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
Intake interviews booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Intake interviews attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feedback sessions booked	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3
Feedback sessions attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1

Table 4: Career Counselling feedback sessions scheduled

### 3.1.4 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 100 workshops/webinars during the year, reaching 3 005 students. This 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 are Coping with Stress, Suicide Awareness, Mental Health Survival Guide, and Self-Care.

SCD presented eight *On the Red Couch* webinars during the year, reaching 108 staff members. These sessions create valuable discussions with staff about SCD's role, mandate, and how to really assist distressed students.



### Student Feedback Regarding Therapeutic interventions

- “Amazing workshop, it’s immensely beneficial. I’ve realised a lot of new things about myself.”
- “Everything was good. I loved it and would love to hear from them again.”
- “Good workshop. I have learnt a lots of things about suicide.”
- “Helpful and understandable.”
- “I believe this is what I have been in need of for a very long time and I was unaware.”
- “I enjoyed being part of this workshop because it helps me understand better about things like relationships.”
- “I enjoyed the session as it made me self-reflect on my emotions and how I’ll handle them.”
- “I enjoyed the workshop, everything that was presented will definitely help me cope with stress.”
- “I have learned a lot about tips during and after exam, how to manage interruptions.”
- “I loved it!”

#### Programmes:

SCD’s two flagship programmes are focused on Self-Esteem and REBT. 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.

SEMESTER	SIGNED UP	ATTENDED FIRST SESSION	ATTENDED AT LEAST SEVEN SESSIONS	ATTENDED ALL EIGHT SESSIONS	CERTIFICATES
First semester	23	16	1	9	10
Second semester	39	31	4	14	18
Total		47	5	23	28

Table 5: Self-Esteem 2022

The *REBT programme* is a practical, action-oriented approach to assisting individuals to overcome and cope with adversity, achieve goals, and enhance personal growth by addressing attitudes, unhealthy emotions, and maladaptive thought patterns and behaviours. During 2022, the programme had 543 registrations, with 87 students completing the programme.



### **Student Feedback Regarding Therapeutic interventions**

- “The programme is the best; the team is amazing. Thank you for having us.”
- “It was easy to navigate and easy to see which sections I have completed. It was always good to be able to go back for revision. The reflections were personalised so that I can reflect and write what I am experiencing, not generic. The team was also on standby on emails and on Blackboard to answer our questions and explain the parts better. The time that was given to us was reasonable. It was really worth it, and I am now equipped with new skills. Thanks to REBT!”
- “I think you guys are doing a great job. I’m thankful I could participate.”
- “I would like to say that the REBT programme has really uplifted my positivity in life and I appreciate it very much.”
- “I would like to say that moving from now onwards I will use what I have learned in this programme to lift myself up when I feel discouraged so that I improve my life.”
- I really enjoyed the workshop, and how it helped me to understand more about mental health and how someone can manage it. Thank you.

#### **3.1.5 Extra time applications**

A specialised process that will assist registered students and UFS departments in making optimal educational decisions. One such example is the *extra-time process*.

Students facing academic challenges regarding learning difficulties apply for assessment concessions. The process is followed in collaboration with CUADS and the Department of Occupational Therapy. **101 concession reports** were written during 2022.

#### **3.1.6 Online mental health resources**

Due to aspects such as staff capacity, long waiting periods, and providing faster support to students, it is vital to have a variety of online mental health resources available to students.

#### **#WellbeingWarriors**

The rationale behind the #WellbeingWarriors campaign is to foster the mental health of UFS students and to assist them in building resilience. This initiative was started during 2021 as a tool to assist students through the pandemic and was expanded during 2022. Mental health self-help literature (articles, videos, and podcasts) was developed, designed, and distributed on a weekly basis via email to each registered student, and placed on Blackboard, the UFS website, and social media.

#### **Student Toolkit**

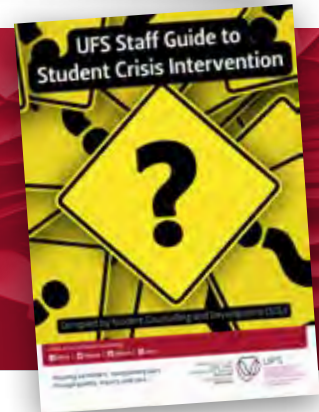
The Toolkit was developed to provide students with basic therapeutic tools, strategies, and resources for self-help application in combating academic and personal challenges. The Student Toolkit is available in both hard copy and electronic format (Blackboard). Students access the necessary resources on Blackboard, based on their specific needs or challenges.

## Mind Matters

*Mind Matters* is an e-magazine published by SCD, addressing a variety of relevant topics. It relates to difficulties experienced by students within higher education, and provides reading material, practical tips, and reflection exercises on these challenges. There are also video clips and interactive material available to assist students while journeying through the content. This is available on the SCD website.



SCD developed a crisis intervention protocol to assist staff in dealing with students in distress. Many staff members are encountering students with mental health concerns and do not feel equipped or trained to deal with it. SCD has developed a multi-layered approach to assist students and has taken hands with SADAG as well as ER24. These different role-players ensure that a 24/7 emergency service can be provided to all registered UFS students.



## 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 the training of intern counselling psychologists.

UNIBS is a specialised unit focusing on the training of intern counselling psychologists.

The training is designed in accordance with the prescripts set by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and ensures that the core competencies (as identified by this professional body) are inculcated. The unit also renders specialised services in the wider community and prioritises evidence-based and research-supported interventions.

A stronger partnership with UNIBS and the Department of Psychology has been established. A monthly Head of Department meeting with Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee, Prof Adelene Grobler (Director: UNIBS), and Dr Edwin du Plessis (Head of Department: Psychology) was held to ensure that we work together and that we are informed about what is happening in the different contexts of dealing with students and training of psychology students.

### 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. The table below provides a monthly glance of the number of students assisted by SADAG through 2022.

MONTH		JANUARY 2022		FEBRUARY 2022		MARCH 2022		APRIL 2022		MAY 2022		JUNE 2022	
<b>NUMBER OF CALLS</b>		<b>367</b>		<b>375</b>		<b>392</b>		<b>409</b>		<b>392</b>		<b>416</b>	
<b>GENDER</b>		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
		73%	27%	80%	20%	78	22	79%	21%	76%	24%	75%	25%
<b>RACE</b>	<b>African</b>	75%		87%		93%		79%		83%		74%	
	<b>White</b>	9%		8%		2%		19%		8%		11%	
	<b>Coloured</b>	11%		4%		4%		2%		4%		6%	
	<b>Indian</b>	5%		1%		1%		0%		5%		9%	
<b>CAMPUS</b>	<b>Bfn</b>	55%		77%		78%		39%		52%		59%	
	<b>QQ</b>	36%		21%		17%		2%		1%		8%	
	<b>South</b>	9%		2%		5%		0%		2%		1%	
	<b>Undisclosed</b>							59%		45%		32%	
<b>TOP THREE REASONS FOR CALLS</b>		Information 29%		Anxiety 19%		Information 19%		Information 19%		Information 17%		Academic stress 22%	
		Anxiety 19%		Academic stress 17%		Anxiety 17%		Academic stress 15%		Academic stress 16%		Depression 21%	
		Bereavement 12%		Information 15%		Family issues 13%		Family issues 11%		Anxiety 13%		Anxiety 16%	

<b>SUICIDAL IDEATIONS</b>	0%	2%	0%	3%	5%	0%
<b>SUPPORT PROVIDED</b>	Referred to SCD 26%	Referred to SCD 18%	Psychological first aid 19%	Referred to SCD 21%	Referred to SCD 21%	Psychological first aid 29%
	High-risk referrals 19%	Psychological first aid 14%	Referred to SCD 18%	High-risk referrals 19%	Psychological first aid 25%	Referred to SCD 25%
	Psychological first aid 16%	Referred to other NGOs 12%	Referred to other NGOs 6%	Psychological first aid 18%	Referred to other NGOs 3%	Referred to other NGOs 3%



SCD's #carebear



MONTH		JULY 2022		AUGUST 2022		SEPTEMBER 2022		OCTOBER 2022		NOVEMBER 2022		DECEMBER 2022	
<b>NUMBER OF CALLS</b>		<b>402</b>		<b>434</b>		<b>486</b>		<b>502</b>		<b>538</b>		<b>389</b>	
<b>GENDER</b>		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
		81%	19%	76%	24%	76%	24%	70%	30%	71%	29%	83%	17%
<b>RACE</b>	<b>African</b>	74%		64%		71%		72%		85%		89%	
	<b>White</b>	14%		33%		12%		15%		9%		0%	
	<b>Coloured</b>	8%		3%		15%		8%		6%		11%	
	<b>Indian</b>	4%		0%		2%		5%		0%		0%	
<b>CAMPUS</b>	<b>Bfn</b>	64%		52%		52%		54%		59%		50%	
	<b>QQ</b>	5%		1%		5%		3%		4%		33%	
	<b>South</b>	1%		2%		2%		2%		3%		%	
	<b>Undisclosed</b>	30%		45%		41%		41%		34%		17%	
<b>TOP THREE REASONS FOR CALLS</b>		Anxiety 14%		Anxiety 19%		Academic stress 14%		Academic stress 16%		Depression 16%		Academic stress 27%	
		Academic stress 12%		Bereavement 13%		Depression 12%		Anxiety 12%		Academic stress 13%		Information 19%	
		Depression 12%		Depression 10%		Family issues 12%		Family issues 9%		Family issues 12%		Stress 7%	
<b>SUICIDAL IDEATIONS</b>		10%		3%		11%		2%		4%		0%	
<b>SUPPORT PROVIDED</b>		General student support 29%		Psychological first aid 46%		Psychological first aid 34%		Psychological first aid 32%		Psychological first aid 36%		Psychological first aid 41%	
		Psychological first aid 22%		General student support 23%		General student support 23%		Referred to SCD 31%		General student support 23%		Referred to SCD 23%	
		Referred to SCD 18%		Referred to SCD 10%		Referred to SCD 10%		General student support 20%		Referred to SCD 12%		Referred to other NGOs 23%	

Table 6: SADAG statistics



When a student at SCD presents with emotional/psychological challenges that borders on an emergency, the first port of call will be to refer the student to a telephonic consultation with SADAG.

### 3.2.3 Next Chapter

Next Chapter is a student-led mental health advocacy group that aims to equip students with tools to deal with mental health-related challenges through advocacy work. Tshepang Mahlatsi is the founder, and SCD collaborated with the group during 2022. Their aim, among others, is to reduce stigma associated with mental health and to promote general awareness of mental well-being among students at the UFS.

Vhuthali Ndou represented SCD as part of the panel for the Next Chapter dialogue on why students are losing interest and motivation in their academic career. At least 70 students attended the event, and the following questions were addressed, which led to active engagement:



**How can we spark interest in academic life post COVID-19?**



**How can students work towards developing themselves to be employable?**



**The impact of mental health on academics and how students can respond to life challenges, traumatic events, and academic decline.**



**How to handle postgraduate studies and postgraduation depression.**

### 3.2.4 Project Empower

The overall objective of the initiative is for KovsieSport, specifically the football teams, and SCD to collaborate meaningfully to cultivate psychological resiliencies among a specific student-athlete cohort. The goals of the collaboration are aligned with both the aims of Project Empower, which was started by the KovsieSport Football unit to empower students with skills and knowledge that promote well-being holistically, and specific strategic objectives of SCD related to Pillar 1 (i.e., Psychological Interventions) and Pillar 3 (i.e., Research and Innovation).

### 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 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.



*Founder of Next Chapter,  
Tshepang Mahlatsi*

SCD therefore piloted a project with ER24 from 1 October 2022 for a period of six months. ER24 has a specific trauma counsellor on call for the UFS, and a dedicated phone number has been created for this purpose. When a staff member / person identifies themselves as affiliated with the UFS, a specifically tailored, limited, and authorised profile was available for the counsellor on call to assist appropriately<sup>1</sup>. EMS can be at an emergency within 20 to 45 minutes – being able to deal with sports injuries, psychotic students, rape, emotional breakdowns, injury from crowd unrest, motor vehicle accidents, trauma after muggings and robberies, etc. This includes students who are on sports tours off campus, field and study trips within South Africa, or private students at their homes or communes. As these service providers have a national footprint, they can respond to the 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 October and November can be seen in Table 8 below.

OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
1 group session	25 individual trauma counselling sessions
22 individual trauma counselling sessions	

Table 8: Ad hoc ER24 trauma counselling sessions

SCD is hopeful that a long-term relationship will develop with ER24 as a partner in providing 24/7 emergency assistance to students.

<sup>1</sup> Information sharing is in line with POPI requirements. This means that a student is authorising the sharing of minimal information when accessing the Emergency Medical Service.

### 3.2.6 Moshal Scholarship

The SCD partnered with the Moshal Scholarship programme for a three-year contract that began in August 2019 and ended in July 2022. The partnership offered Moshal students therapeutic services with two counselling psychologists (Vhutali Ndou and Nhlori Ngobeni) and administrative assistance (Kgalalelo Thaele). Moshal students could request workshops, book career counselling, and individual sessions without the average SCD waiting period of up to three weeks. An induction session was conducted with students via Zoom in January 2022, during which SCD services could be explained.

Individual, confidential counselling was offered to support students in resolving psychological, emotional, and developmental challenges that may impede the fulfilment of their potential. Individual sessions for up to 60 min (maximum) were held with students on an appointment basis. The reasons for referral varied from academic-related matters to trauma. SCD would like to sincerely thank the Moshal Foundation for a strong partnership and for its financial support.

### 3.2.7 Higher Health

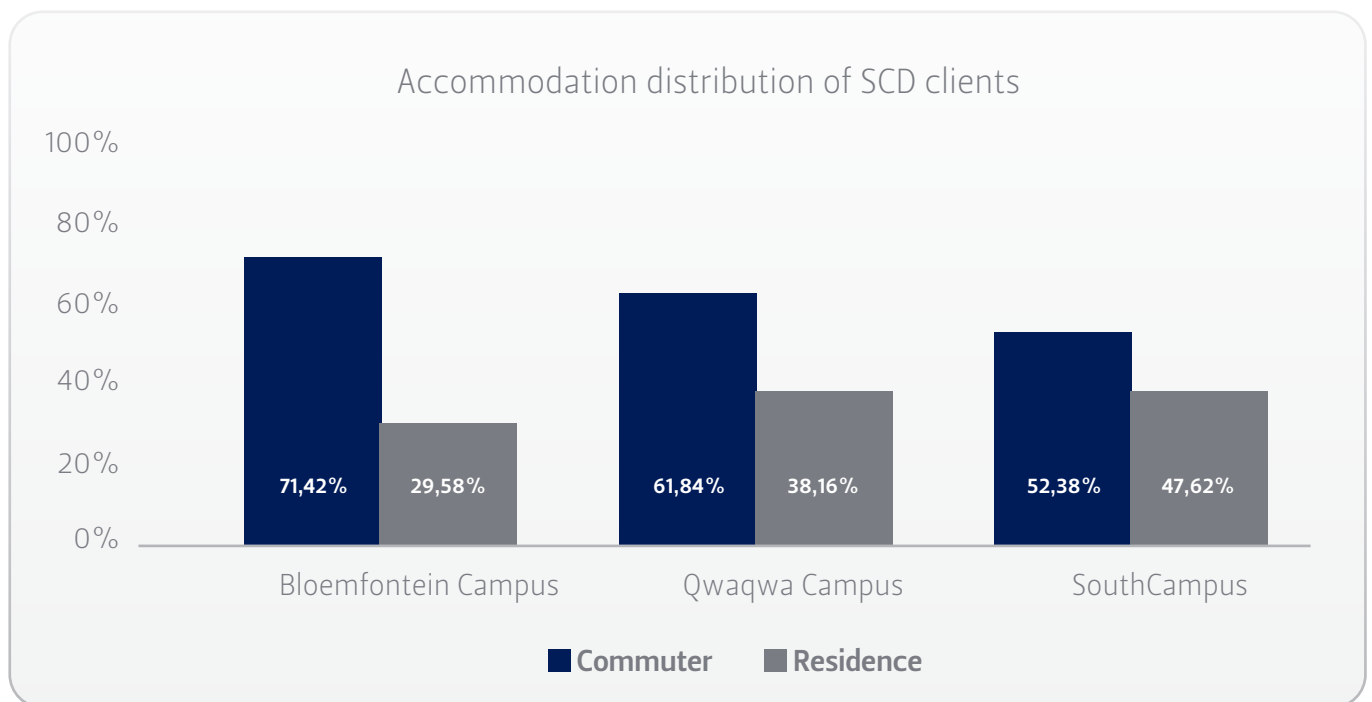
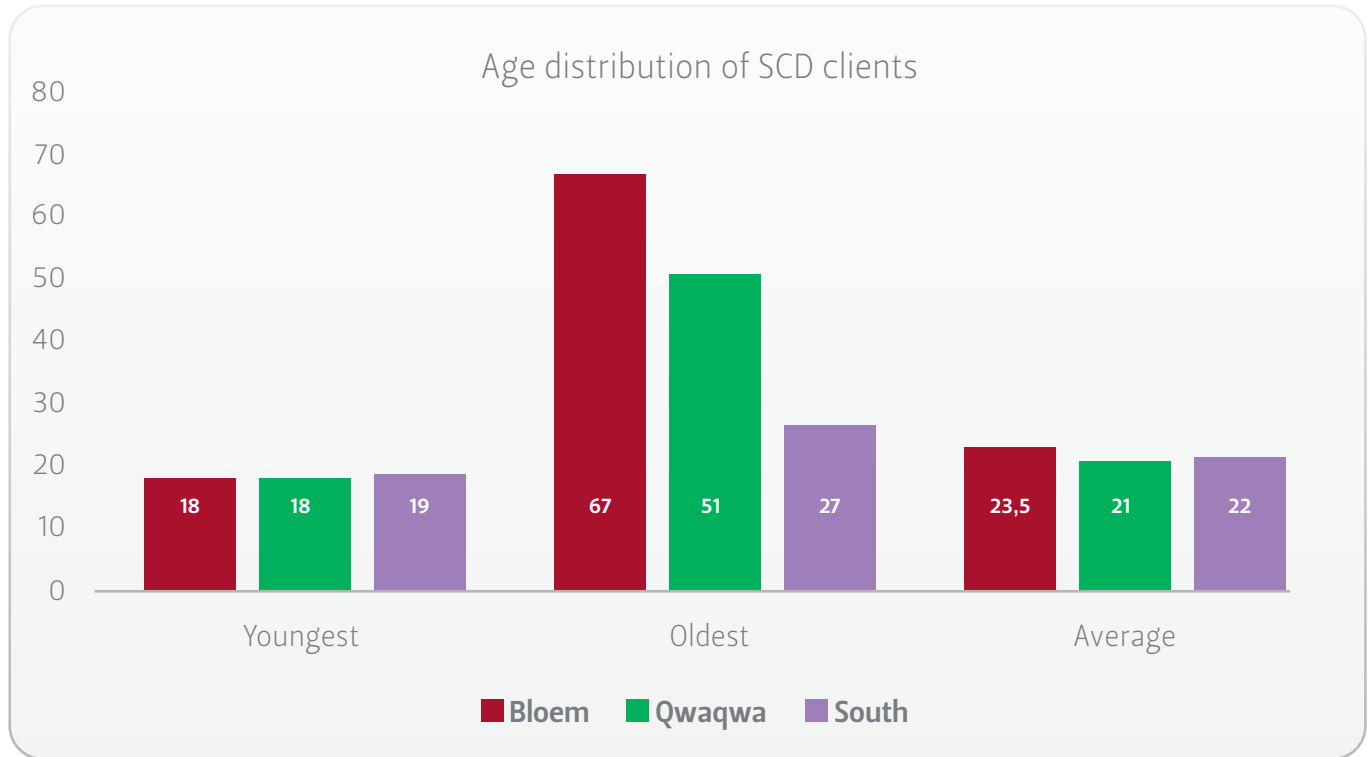
Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee (Director: SCD) serves as the Chairperson of the Student Health and Wellness Co-ordinating Committee, with the mandate to oversee all activities and expenditure within the Higher Health grant at the UFS. Part of the Higher Health grant implementation is the appointment of peer educators to assist with the rolling out of awareness programmes, training, and facilitating discussions. For the first time, SCD was 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.

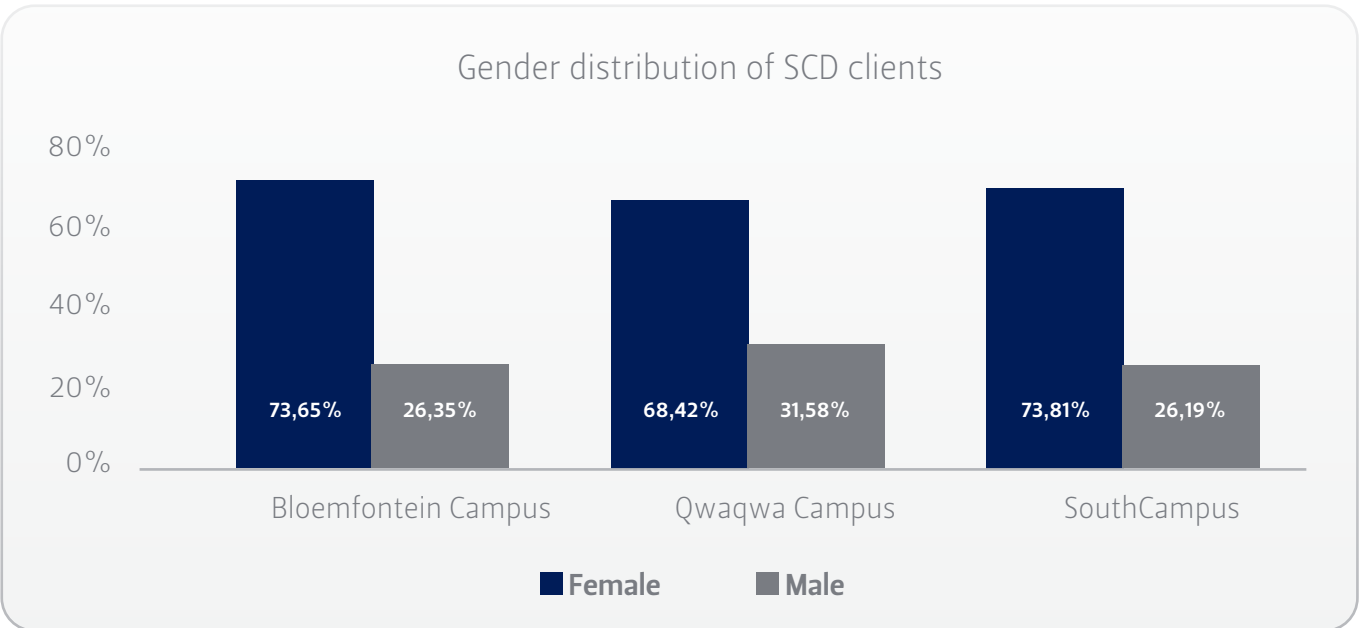
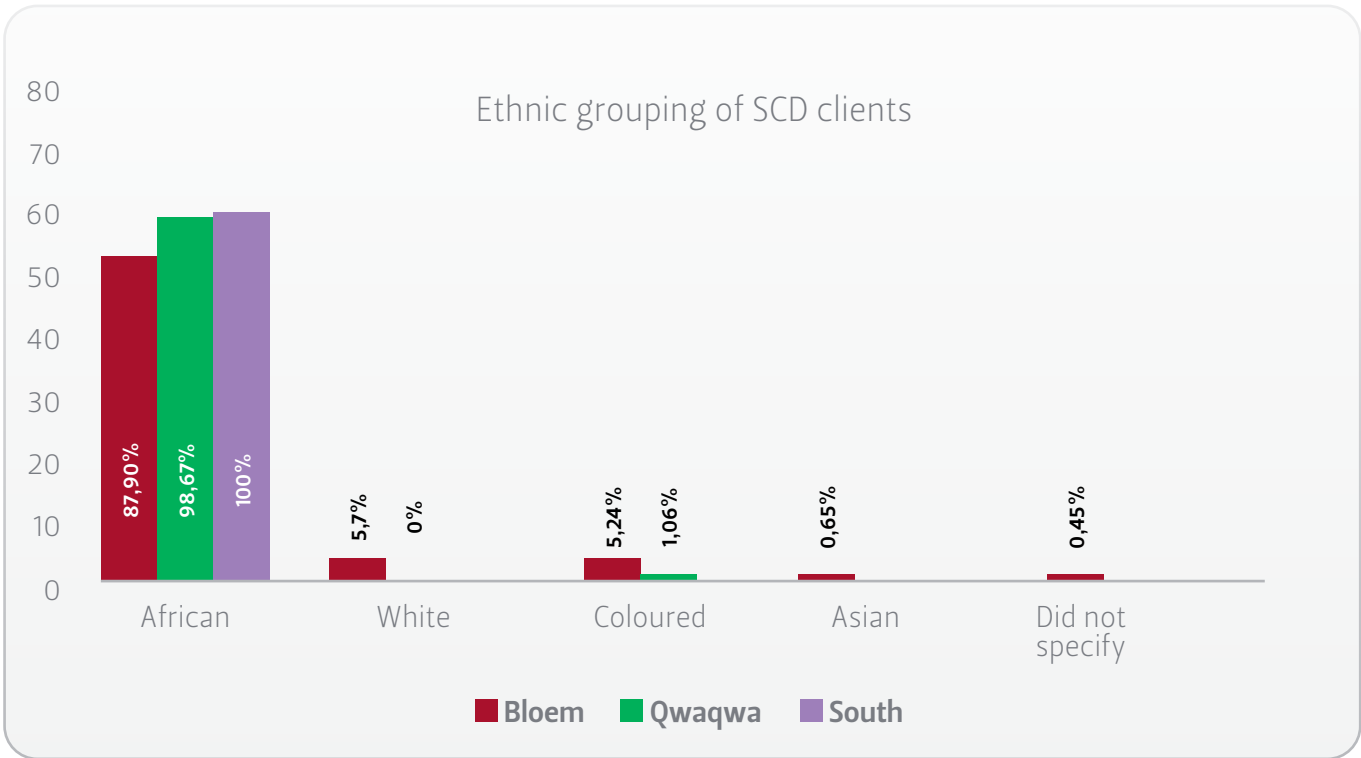


Khanyi, Neo and Obakeng marketing resources at South Campus

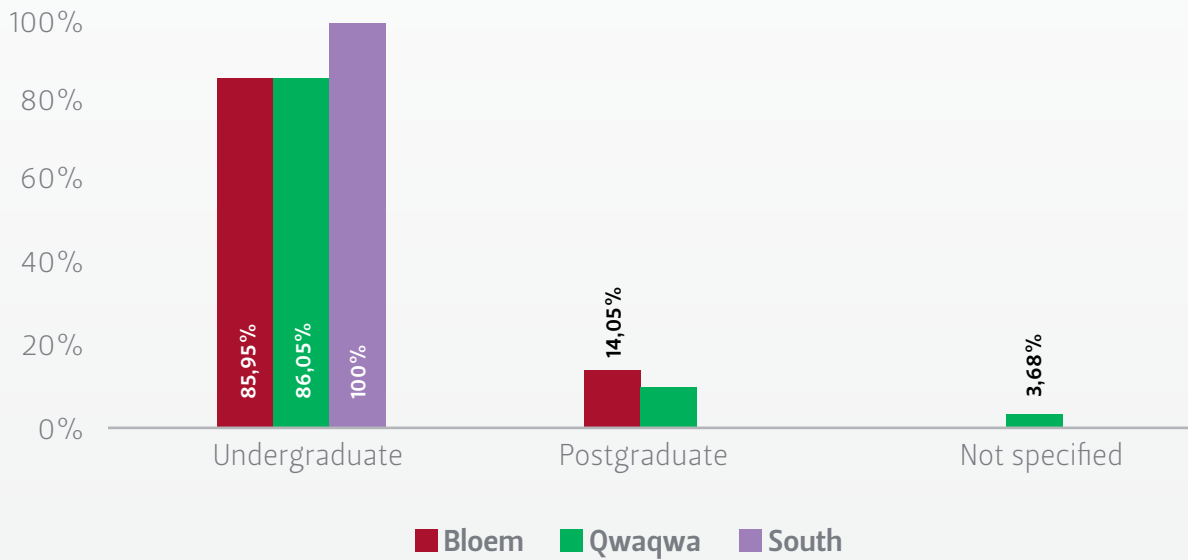
### 3.3 SCD STUDENT PROFILE

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 1 545 students were assisted, on the Qwaqwa Campus 380, and on the South Campus 42.

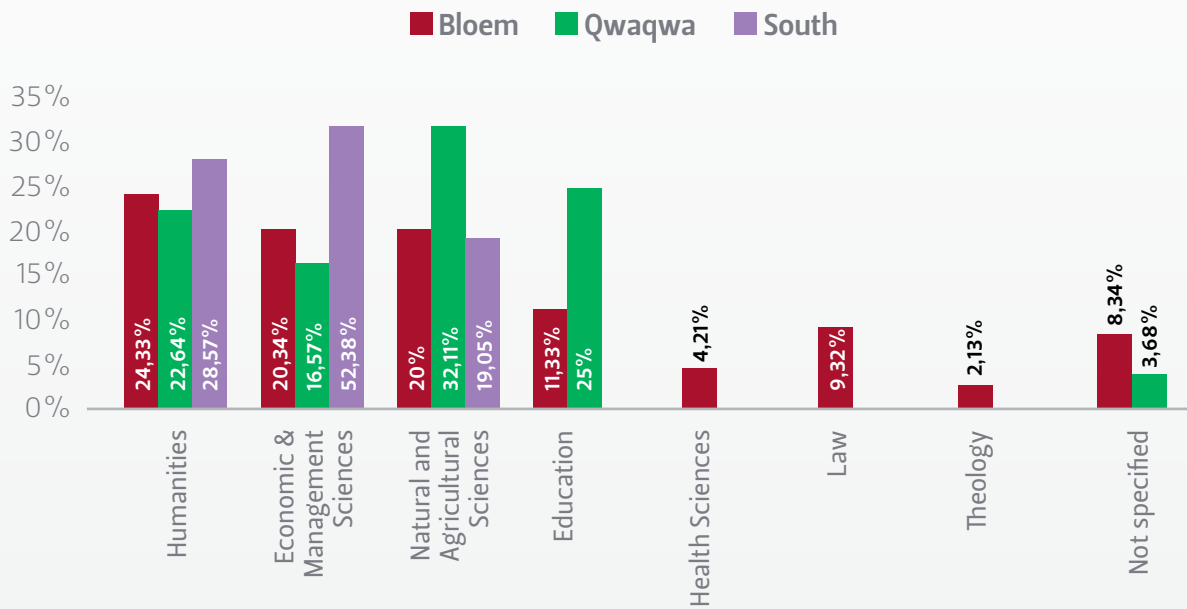




### Degree level of SCD clients



### Faculty distribution of SCD clients



# 04

## PILLAR TWO: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

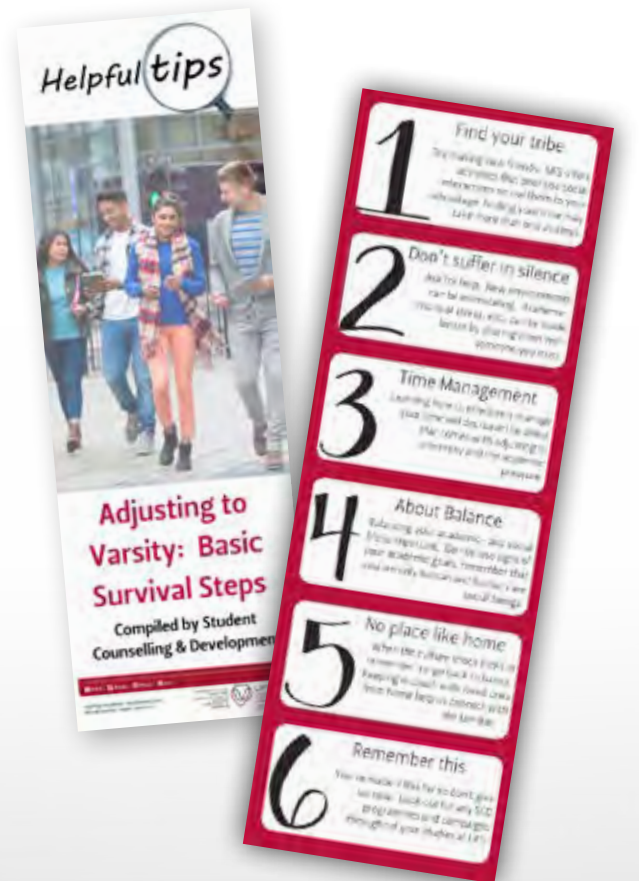


## 4.1 DEVELOPMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR STAFF

Staff were exposed to different professional development and training opportunities during 2022.

### Professional development and training attended

- Transgender Healthcare: A Gender-Affirming Multi-Disciplinary Approach Virtual CPD Symposium.
- DSM5 and Trauma training by Mr Henry Taylor. Mr Taylor is a lecturer in the Department of Psychology (UFS).
- Sharing the Journey of Survivors of Sexual Trauma, presented by Dr Henriette van den Berg.
- Adult ADHD presented by Prof André Venter.
- Thrive series: A Communication and Marketing Development training, presented by Dr Cinde Greyling.
- Six colleagues attended the 42nd Annual South African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE) conference.
- Training on Working with Transgender Students, Assisting with their Transitioning, by Jessica Lynn (global ambassador to the Kinsey Institute of Human Sexuality at Indiana University, United States).
- Watched two virtual Schema Therapy training sessions (hybrid sessions).
- Five colleagues attended a three-day Schema Therapy training, presented by Prof David Edwards.
- Occupational Health and Safety Training:
  - Firefighter training
  - Evacuators training
  - Health and Safety Rep training
- All SCD staff attended the Practical Steps to POPIA webinar.





## 4.2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING PROVIDED

The presentations and training provided by staff within SCD to both internal and external stakeholders are elaborated on in the following section:

- Seventh annual South African National Resource Centre: First-Year Experience. Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee presented *A Student Toolkit: Surviving to Thriving*.
- Around the Globe webinar series: Reflecting on Career Services in Higher Education. Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee served as a panel member.
- SCD presented a two-day Career Counselling and Trauma training course for eight UFS Industrial Psychology interns.
- Student Hospitalisation / Suicide Evaluation Training for UNIBS interns.
- Six colleagues presented at the 42nd Annual SAACDHE conference in Pretoria:
  - Vhutali Ndou presented on the topic *Wellness Wednesdays Wellness every day: a Psychologist's Experience of Wellness Interventions at Student Counselling and Development (SCD) at the University of the Free State (UFS)*.
  - Vhutali Ndou and Obakeng Phefo presented on the *GBV (Gender Based Violence) Awareness Series Project* (a project of SCD and the Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Office or GEADO).
  - Nadia Maloney and Nico Venter presented on *The Evolution of the REBT (Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy) Programme at the UFS*.
  - Tobias van den Bergh presented on *Say What? Using Health Communication and Marketing to Increase Help-Seeking Behaviour among South African University Students*.
  - Lize van den Bergh presented on *From Surviving to Thriving: A Creative Approach* (co-authored by Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee).

- Student Affairs Research Colloquium: Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee and Tobias van den Bergh presented.
- Staff Training: *On The Red Couch* is a handy pocket-sized book developed by SCD for UFS staff. It has been designed to equip UFS staff with the information needed to make good decisions concerning the mental health of students in our community. Several SCD staff members presented this training to UFS staff.
- Canva training was presented by Lize van den Bergh to SCD staff. Canva is a graphic design platform that assists SCD in creating marketing materials, articles, and posters.

## 4.3 STAFF WELL-BEING

The importance of staff well-being, especially in a counselling and development space, cannot be emphasised enough. Staff was exposed to the following well-being initiatives:

- Employee wellness: Managing generational differences in higher education, presented by Mrs Carmine Nieman. Mrs Nieman is a registered industrial psychologist at the UFS.
- Staff engage in monthly wellness activities, which include topics such as self-care and team building.
- The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is used to test SCD staff's burnout twice a year. It is a voluntary and anonymous process. This guides the SCD Director to determine if more wellness interventions are required and keeps staff accountable for taking care of their mental well-being.
- Staff is encouraged to take regular vacation leave.

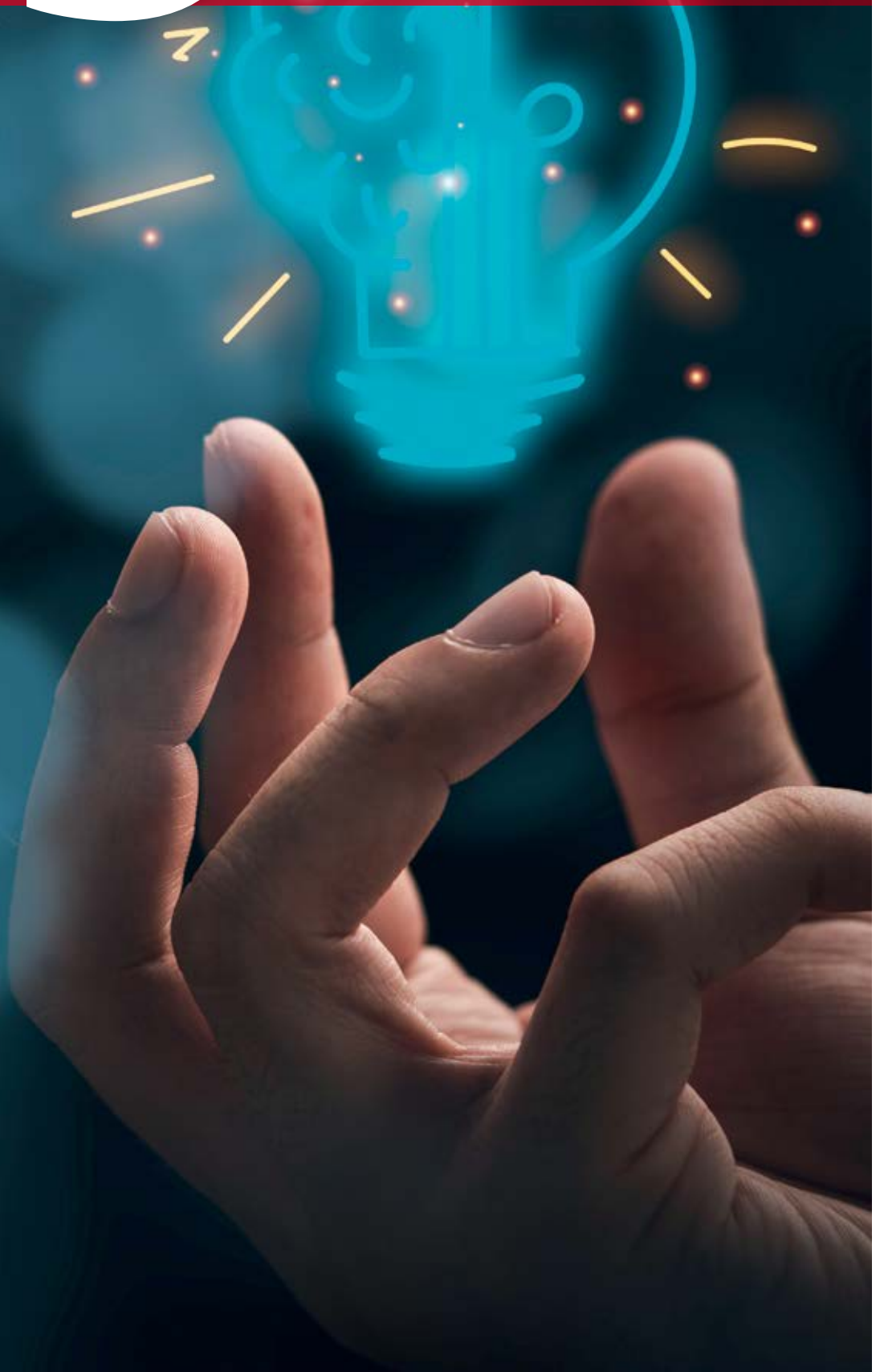
## 4.4 FUNDING PROVIDED FOR HPCSA (HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA) ANNUAL FEES AND CPD TRAINING

- SCD's budget has been adjusted to ensure that sufficient funding is available to pay all staff's registration fees with the relevant professional boards, as well as sufficient continuous development and training opportunities annually. The following can be highlighted:
  - SCD sponsors the annual professional board registration fees for all permanent employees.
  - SCD funded all the training mentioned in section 2.a.
  - 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 for articles read and questionnaires completed.



# 05

## PILLAR THREE: RESEARCH AND INNOVATION



## 5.1 COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

During 2022, SCD undertook a more deliberate approach to health communication and marketing. The overall aim was to change our communication and marketing activities to align and embody our values of professionalism, empowerment, compassion, and connection. This entailed several change activities, including altering the SCD website, improving the look of webinar communication outputs, utilising the intranet to reach staff, collaborating on the development and implementation of an institutional mental health awareness campaign, and designing an impactful and multi-faceted preventative campaign.

The following sections provide an overview and examples of several of these activities.

### 5.1.1 Website changes

The broad aims are to create a web space that visually represents the professional identity of SCD and that includes resources, tools, and information relevant to students, staff, and external role players. Additionally, the aim is to create communication outputs that grab the target audience's attention, promote engagement, and are user-friendly.

#### The departmental website alterations are organised into seven key and sequential developmental phases:

- Phase 1** — Changing the website's visual design (i.e. the look) and layout.
- Phase 2** — Changing and expanding content.
- Phase 3** — Obtaining student and staff feedback after initial change activities.
- Phase 4** — Integrating feedback and improving navigation.
- Phase 5** — Next level: Introducing innovative designs that promote user-friendliness, enable direct user feedback, and enhance user engagement.
- Phase 6** — Obtaining the website data analytics to establish a baseline.
- Phase 7** — Investing in deliberate marketing and communication activities to increase visits and interaction with the SCD website and content.



Although the developmental phases are structured chronologically, the process is continuous and overlapping. The website redevelopment process is labour intensive, with an 18-month developmental timeline for the seven phases. To support the redevelopment, SCD invested in the services of a web designer and intentionally dedicated staff to drive the redesign of the web space. Feel free to explore the webpage to gain a sense of the current state of our web space [here](#).

### 5.1.2 Webinars, the Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) programme, and promotional materials

SCD implemented a psycho-educational webinar series during the second semester. The communication aims were to create engaging, student-centred, and professional designs to market the webinars and inform students about mental health activities. The communication products were marketed in collaboration with the DCM and used several communication channels, including:

- Student emails.
- Blackboard.
- UFS Twitter and Facebook pages.
- SCD Facebook and Instagram pages.
- Student Bulletin.
- Posters.
- KovsieLife webpage – Spotlight.
- Direct and WhatsApp communication via the SCD peer-educator group.

Three of the designs were used as part of the collaborative institutional mental health campaign during October and November. These designs included the campaign's Twitter handle #MentalHealthMatters. The following are recommendations should SCD embark on a communication and marketing initiative related to a series of mental health activities, such as the webinar series:

- Use a service provider to manage social media platforms and marketing.
- Create and formalise a marketing and communication team consisting of SCD staff and representatives from DCM to enable, for instance, the full utilisation of institutional communication channels and to simplify the acquisition of data analytics.
- Create clear mental health project roles and responsibilities to promote effective communication and dissemination of marketing products.
- Critically evaluate whether the mental health service or activity is packaged in a way that speaks to the needs and preferences of the target audience. For instance, it might be that, in the post-COVID period, webinars lasting an hour or longer are less appealing to students.

- Use software and processes to create and manage student and staff databases that can be used for communication and marketing purposes.
- Consider using SMS and direct marketing to expand the communication reach of efforts.

The REBT programme is an online, self-paced mental health intervention that aims to identify, challenge, and replace unhelpful or maladaptive thinking patterns. The project leader used various communication platforms to market the initiative to students.

One part of SCD's communication efforts is to create brand awareness among students and staff. To this end, SCD designed and acquired branded promotional materials that were given away throughout the year. To date, we have distributed nearly a thousand branded promotional materials, such as stress balls, pens, water bottles, torches, and rulers.



### *Thrive: Staff communication and marketing training*

One of the SCD's strategic pillars concerns the training and development of staff. Since SCD staff frequently engage in communication and marketing activities, an internal training series named Thrive was designed and implemented.

The Thrive series consisted of four one-hour webinars and concluded with a three-hour practical workshop. A communication specialist, Dr Cinde Greyling, presented three webinars and the applied workshop, while the head of the Department of Career Services presented one webinar session. SCD staff from the three campuses were invited to attend the training sessions outlined in the table below.

SESSION	TOPIC
<b>Thrive 1: Webinar</b>	The Death of a Salesman: The Do's and Dont's of Modern Marketing – Dr Cinde Greyling
<b>Thrive 2: Webinar</b>	It's Only Words, and Words are All You Have – So, Know What You Want – Dr Cinde Greyling
<b>Thrive 3: Webinar</b>	How to Make Your Mark(eting): A Practical Showcase on Standing Out – Belinda Janeke
<b>Thrive 4: Webinar</b>	Sell a Story – Dr Cinde Greyling
<b>Applied/Practical face-to-face workshop</b>	Taking Your Communication and Marketing Efforts to the Next Level – Dr Cinde Greyling

*Table 9: The Thrive Series*

The feedback on the first webinar session was used to determine some of the critical developmental needs and preferences of SCD staff, and the relevance of health communication and marketing training to their work. The results show that marketing and communication activities are a frequent part of most staff's day-to-day work, with 80% of personnel indicating that they are always or often involved with marketing and communication tasks among UFS staff and students.

Similarly, most participants (80%) indicated that the content of the first communication and marketing training session was extremely important in their work with students and staff. Additionally, knowing what to write and how to effectively use visuals when creating communication and marketing materials related to mental health services were reported as key focus areas.

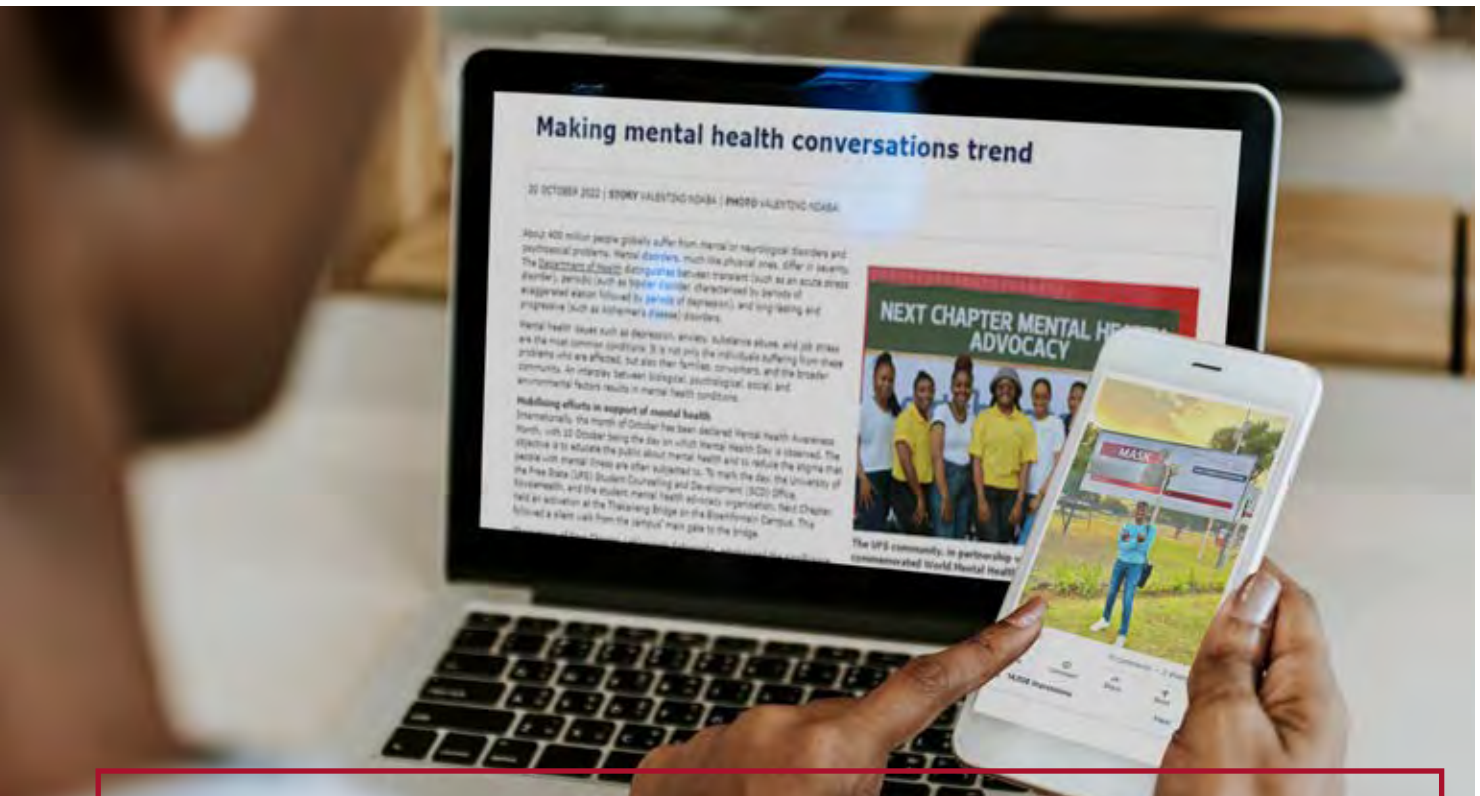
The feedback results for the four Thrive webinars were combined to provide an overall view of the staff's training experiences. A 10-point Likert scale was used to measure participants' (N=30) overall impression of the four webinar sessions. The results indicate a high degree of satisfaction, with an average score of 8,9 out of 10. Most participants indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the duration of the webinars, with an average score of 4,73 out of 5.

#### **5.1.3 Institutional mental health campaign**

SCD collaborated on an institutional mental health campaign led by the DCM and the mental health advocacy group, Next Chapter.

The campaign was implemented from October to November 2022 and consisted of specific communication, marketing, and physical activities to create awareness of mental health and illness. The overall objectives of the campaign, as stated in the communication plan, were

- to educate and create awareness around the various ways in which mental health issues can manifest;
- to foster conversations on campuses about mental health and to counter/falsify the growing stigma around mental health;
- to provide staff and students with the necessary skills to deal with their mental health challenges; and
- to equip students with the necessary information on how to identify if they or others in their echo chambers are going through challenges, and to equip them with information on where to go when in need of assistance.



The communication mediums earmarked for the dissemination of communication and marketing products, were

- the intranet, the UFS Digest and Student Bulletin, Kovsie FM;
- the UFS website, social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn); and
- podcasts, Vimeo, and billboards on the campuses.

The campaign was launched with an activation event on the Thakaneng Bridge on the Bloemfontein Campus, which included collaborative partners and internal and external role players.

#### 5.1.4 On the Red Couch (OTRC) series

The OTRC is a staff mental health webinar series to equip staff with knowledge and skills to manage student mental health challenges. The series was implemented from June to October 2022, with the topic *Responding to a Student in Distress*.

The OTRC was marketed via the UFS intranet and published in the DCM Digest. In addition, the webinars were communicated directly to staff cohorts through staff emails and included an online registration process. The following sections report on the characteristics of registrants.

An online registration portal was created using MS Forms, with a Bit.ly link provided to channel interested staff to the registration form. The information below provides a breakdown of the details of registrants. A total percentage of 89% (n=118) of registrants were from the Bloemfontein, 6% (n=8) from the South, and 5% (n=6) from the Qwaqwa campuses, respectively. The gender distribution of registrants was 67% female, with 33% male registrants. Furthermore, 46% of the series registrants were from an academic faculty, 35% from a support services department, and 16% were situated within academic support services. Registrants who indicated that they were from other divisions (e.g., Top management) constituted 3% of the total registrants for the series.

## 5.2 SCD INFLUENCERS

Everyone has a level of influence that can be harnessed for the greater good. In 2022, SCD launched an exciting new student engagement initiative: Student Counselling and Development influencers (SCDi). The purpose of this initiative was to implement student influencers to help raise awareness about our organisation and the services we provide. We wanted the influencers to be a bridge of congruence between our UFS students and Student Counselling and Development. It has been noted that many students often do not know where the SCD offices are situated or what resources and services we offer. It was therefore decided to assign student influencers who would offer accurate information and suggestions for our programmes, workshops, and services – to create optimal engagement with the students.

There were eleven students (seven on the Bloemfontein Campus and four on the Qwaqwa Campus) who volunteered to become part of the SCDi initiative. Tuckman's stages of group development (commonly known as: forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning) were followed to guide the group of influencers to develop maturity, ability, and shared leadership. They received brand ambassador training, training in basic counselling skills, and Canva training.

The influencers were then given the following key responsibilities:

- Being the face and voice of SCD among students – building rapport and communicating the value of our services
- Creating awareness by engaging with students in a professional and friendly manner
- Representing our office at promotional events and other marketing initiatives
- Communicating upcoming workshops and programmes
- Responding to student questions and concerns about SCD in person
- Promoting our brand via our social media accounts
- Attending events, and representing SCD outside of office hours
- Brainstorming ideas and participating in training and workshops.



SCD was privileged to have 11 influencers who were committed and enthusiastic about being part of the initiative throughout. They managed to have several public engagements with the students and have grown into a group we can count on. Even though the implementation of the group was deemed a success, the influencers have still played only a small role this year. Some challenges have also been experienced in having group cohesion across the two campuses. Moving forward in 2023, it was decided to keep the influencers independent and separate, specific to each campus. The SCDi initiative has shown great potential and promises to become a big asset to SCD should we also use our influencers as a bridge between SCD and the different colleges/residences. Except for two influencers who graduated this year, the rest have asked to continue being part of the initiative in 2023.

We hope to grow the group into a strong self-functioning branch enhancing SCD and what we offer.



# 06

## SCD STAFF

*“If everyone is moving forward together,  
then success takes care of itself.”*

– Henry Ford





**BLOEMFONTEIN CAMPUS**

Permanent Personnel	
Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee	Director
Ms Nadia Maloney	Acting Assistant Director and Senior Counselling Psychologist
Lize van den Bergh	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Bonolo Mophosho	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Nico Venter	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Tobias van den Bergh	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Vhutali Ndou	Counselling Psychologist
Nhlori Ngobeni	Counselling Psychologist
Cliné Payne	Counselling Psychologist
Mosa Setlaba	Counselling Psychologist
Philile Phungula	Counselling Psychologist
Petro Herbst	Office Manager
Kgalalelo Thaele	Assistant Administrative Officer
Catherine Sebokolodi	Messenger
Intern Counselling Psychologists	Administrative Interns
Amanda Mguwata	Mojalefa Rabolinyane
Diego Rex	Cathrine Molefe
Izelle van Tonder	
Robyn Mooney	
Karla van Reenen	

Ad hoc Personnel	
Karla van Reenen	Counselling Psychologist
Lizelle Hagenmeier	Social Worker
Nonkululeko Selele	Social Worker

**QWAQWA CAMPUS**

Permanent Personnel	
Lerato Makoba	Senior Counselling Psychologist
Mapula Adams	Counselling Psychologist
Nokuthula Chonco	Registered Counsellor
Nonhlanhla Moleleki	Registered Counsellor
Intern	
Ntobizodwa Mabanga	Administrative Intern

**SOUTH CAMPUS**

Permanent Personnel	
Obakeng Phefo	Counselling Psychologist
Intern	
Khanyi Mqushulu	Administrative Intern

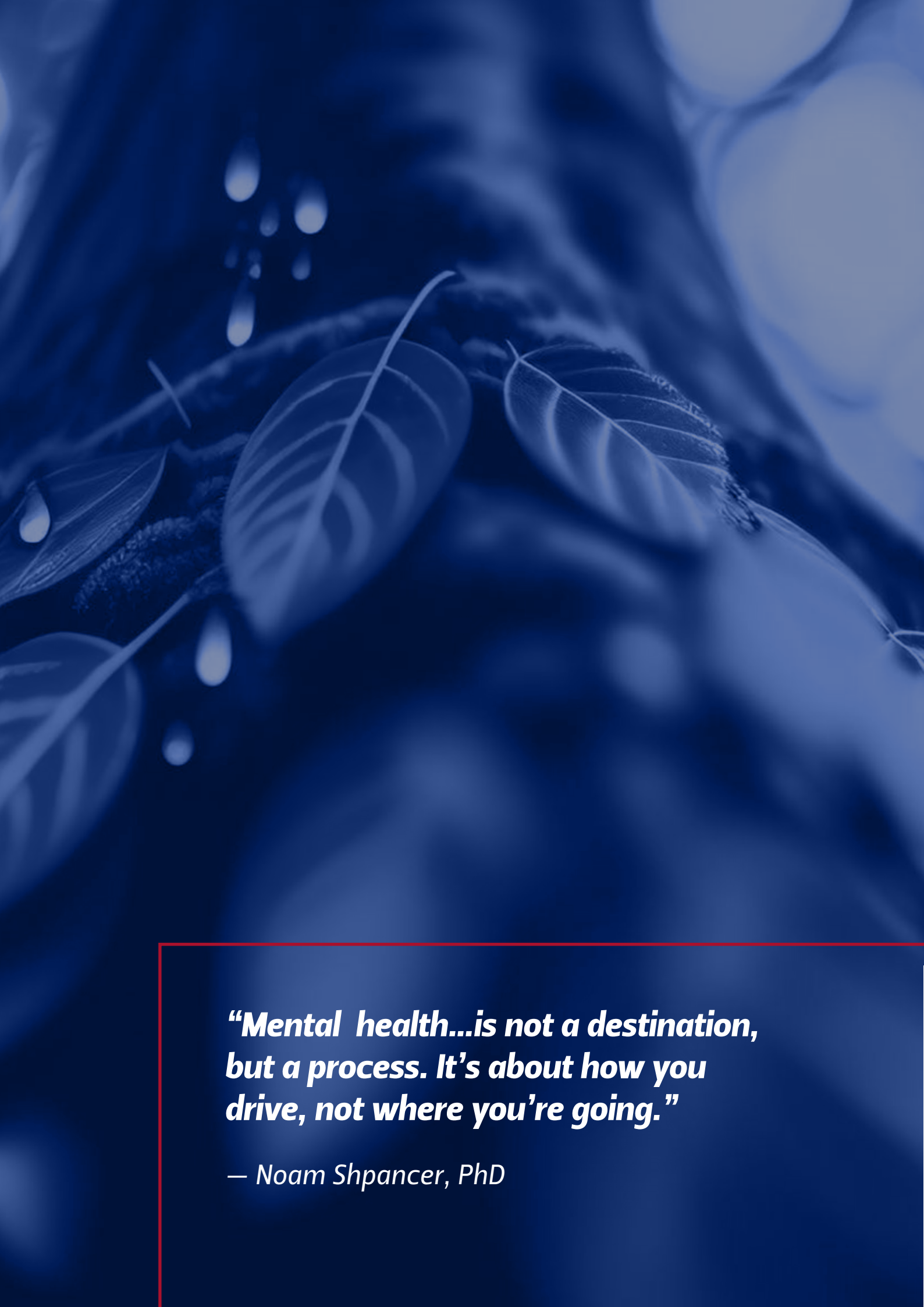
Unfortunately, Ms Nhlori Ngobeni (Counselling Psychologist) resigned during the year as she moved to Limpopo to be closer to her family. Ms Lize van den Bergh (Senior Counselling Psychologist) resigned later the year as she ventured into full-time private practice, but she continued to assist on an ad hoc basis at SCD.

## 6.1 ORGANOGRAM: STUDENT COUNSELLING AND DEVELOPMENT



\* Contract appointments



A blue-tinted background image featuring several leaves and raindrops. The leaves are in the foreground, with some showing detailed vein patterns. Raindrops are scattered throughout, some appearing as bright white spots and others as soft, blurred streaks. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

***“Mental health...is not a destination,  
but a process. It’s about how you  
drive, not where you’re going.”***

*— Noam Shpancer, PhD*



*Nonhlanhla and Nokuthula wearing traditional attire for a campus function*



*Prof Francis Petersen (Rector: UFS) visited the SCD team on Bloemfontein Campus on 15 February 2022.*



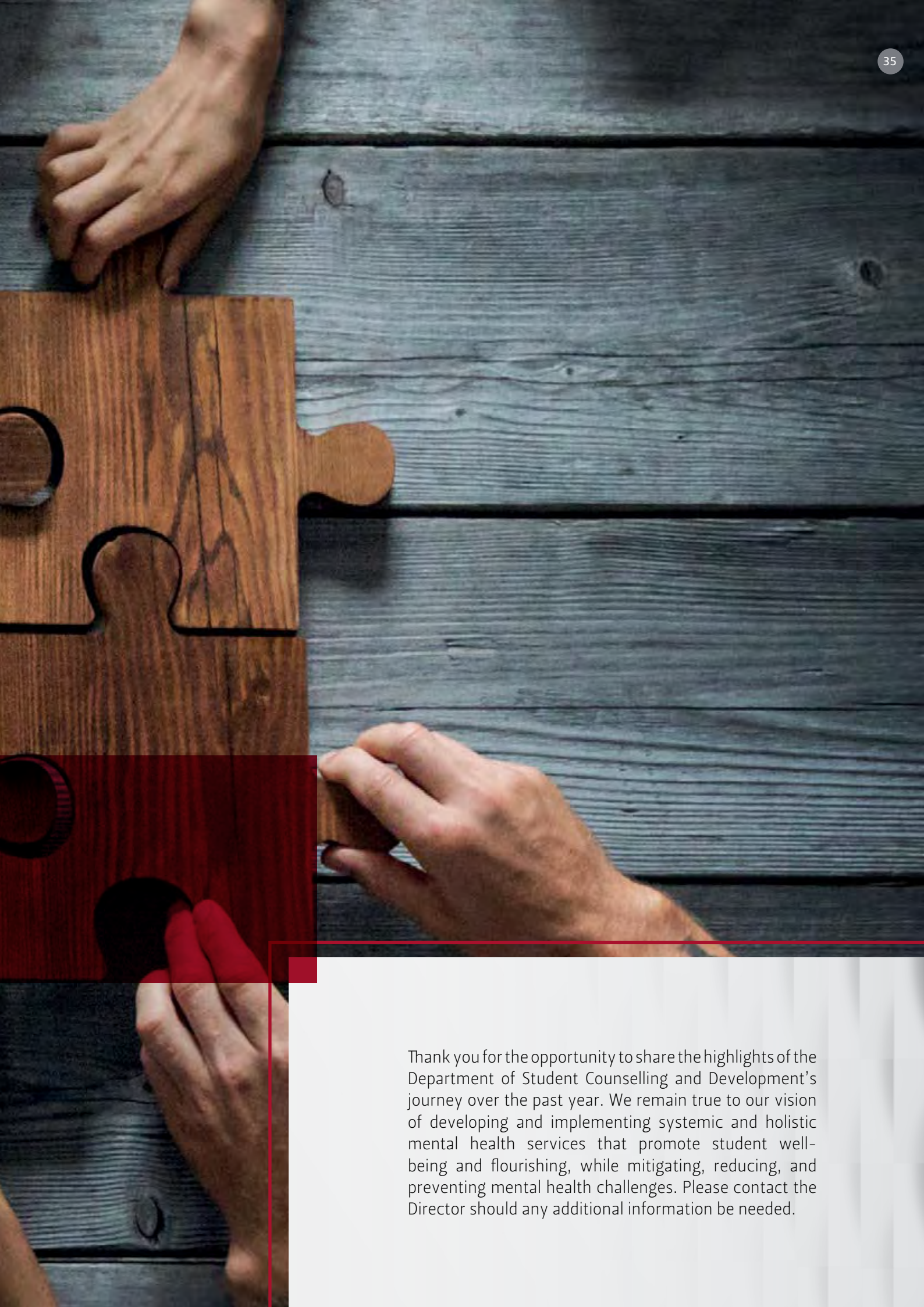
*SCD staff and influencers busy with awareness campaigns*





# 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.

