



SOUTHERN AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR
COUNSELLING AND DEVELOPMENT
IN HIGHER EDUCATION



SAACDHE Matters

EDITION 3 • 2024

FOCUS ON THE REGIONS:

SAACDHE Vaal
North-West Region

SAACDHE Western
Cape Region

SAACDHE KZN Region

IN OTHER NEWS

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

2024 is a special year for SAACDHE – this year we celebrate 45 years in existence, a truly remarkable achievement when one considers the vast changes that higher education and support services in higher education have undergone over the course of the last 45 years.

SAACDHE has had to continuously adapt, evolve and grow in order to stay relevant in these changing times. This is as true in 2024 as it has ever been. Over the course of 2023, the SAACDHE GMC identified the need to reconsider the organisation’s founding documents to ensure that the work of the organization reflects the changing work environment faced by our members. Changes brought about by the 4th Industrial Revolution, global and glocal needs, hybrid work contexts, advancements in AI and a young student generation raised in an increasingly technological driven world, bring about demands that could not be duly anticipated or articulated in existing policies.

The focus of the SAACDHE EMC for 2024, will therefore be to bring SAACDHE founding documents in alignment with our changing higher education landscape. This reflection on the past, combined with looking toward the future, is reflected in the theme for the 44th annual SAACDHE conference, hosted by the KZN region this year: Journey of 45 Years: Reflecting, Celebrating, Inspiring. Honouring the past, Embracing the future.

We invite our members to join us on this journey of both looking back to the successes of the past, honouring what has been and what has brought us to where we are today, whilst also embracing a new higher education landscape, and the opportunities and possibilities that the future hold for higher education in Southern Africa.

Thank you!

ANÉ





VAAL NORTH-WEST:

Vaal North West Region hosted a regional meeting on 23 August 2023 at the Vaal University of Technology. Elections were hosted, with the following members being elected for the current term.

1. Ms Onelihle Makedama (Regional Chairperson)
2. Mrs Salome Smith (Administrator)
3. Dr Trishana Soni (Treasurer)
4. Ms Bianca Brits (Public Relations Liaison Officer)

Congratulations to all!



REGIONAL CHAIRPERSON

Onelihle Makedama

Onelihle is the current Regional Chairperson for the SAACDHE Vaal North West Region.

She is a Registered Counsellor, who is currently employed at North West University, Mahikeng Campus. Onelihle is involved in individual counselling, career counselling, psycho-educational workshops, training and co-coordinating peer counsellors who assist the department's counselling unit with after-hour crisis management.

Areas of interest include:

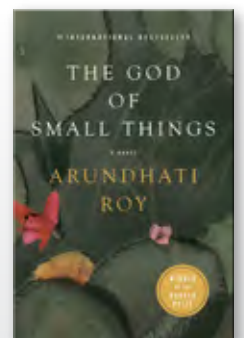
Raising awareness about Mental health in the black community, Youth empowerment and development, Trauma counselling and Gender-based violence.

Hobbies:

Cooking, baking and reading

Current read:

The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy



ONELIHLE MAKEDAMA



REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR: SALOME SMITH

Mother of two energetic boys, psychometrist, and member of SAACDHE since 2011. Salome has served on the GMC as administrative officer more than once, as well as chairperson for two years. She is currently the administrative officer for the Vaal-North West Region. Salome completed her undergraduate degree in Communication Studies majoring in Psychology, after which she completed her honours degree in Psychology at the NWU Potchefstroom campus. She registered as Registered Counsellor with the HPCSA and later did her psychometry training through UNISA. She also completed a master's degree in Positive Psychology which she passed Cum Laude. Salome is currently the psychometrist at NWU Student Counselling and Development, Potchefstroom campus, where she assists students with career guidance, subject choices, study skills, and also offers emotional support to students struggling to adjust to University life or who are experiencing



SALOME SMITH

emotional distress. She is a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society and hopes her positive outlook on life will offer hope to students who are struggling with life's challenges.



The Vaal North-West Region has had a busy 2024 to date. Some initiatives undertaken by our institutions in the region include:

NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY
MAHIKENG CAMPUS

NWU Meet and Greet

12 MARCH 2024

The event aimed to accommodate the returning students as well as the 2024 first years who may not have been acquainted with the support services available on the campus and to share information regarding the access thereof. Stakeholders that were invited were in Disability Rights Unit, Center of Teaching and Learning, Health Care Center, Protection Services and the Library.

Invited stakeholders were stationed with their department stalls between The Great Hall and the



Main gate from 07.00 – 10.30. As off-campus students entered the campus they were greeted by the various stakeholders, encouraged to take pamphlets which they could read on their own. Each student was given a muffin and coffee as a small incentive. The target was 500 and it was reached.



Psycho-social Services Day

19 MARCH 2024

The event aimed at psycho-educating students about the function of the Psycho-social unit in the Student Counselling and Development Center and

to share information regarding access to services as well as other support services that are available in the Mmabatho / Mahikeng community. Stakeholders that were invited included the Department of Social Development, Department of Home Affairs, FAMSA, Resurrection Hope Foundation and Ultrapex Sustainable Development. The event was a success.

Mind Your Mental Health

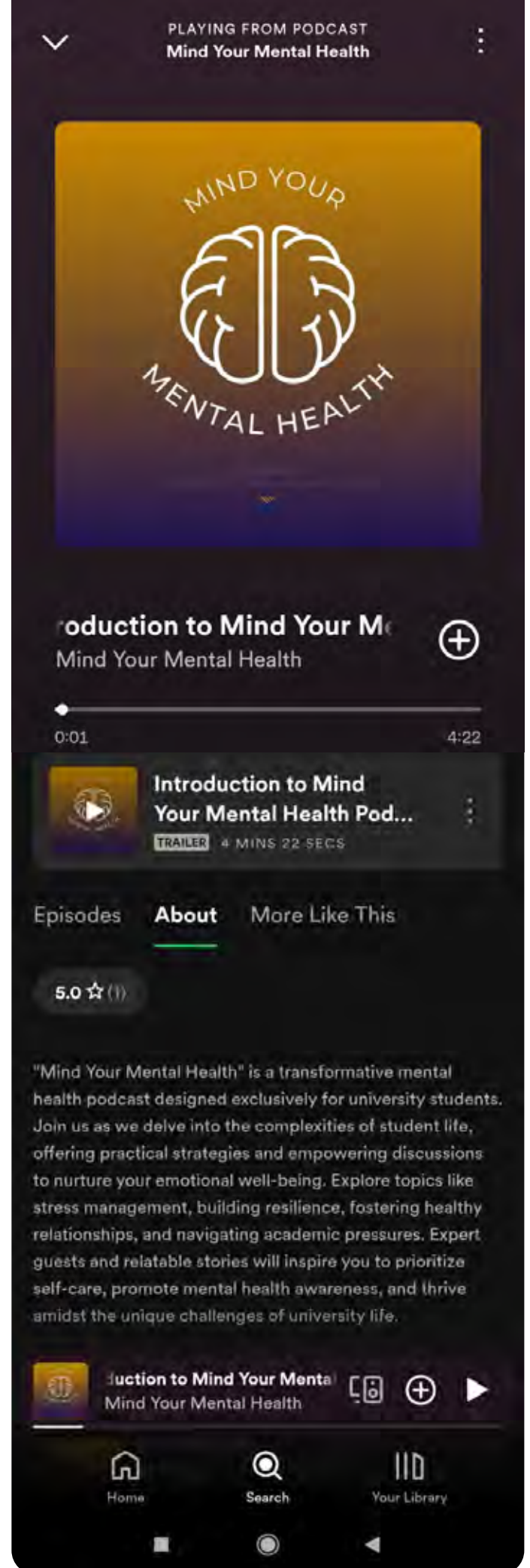
(PODCAST- ONGOING),
LAUNCHED IN 2023

The podcast is a platform that was created for psycho-educational and referral purposes. It is aimed at addressing challenges that are experienced by students through dialogue/discussions. Topics of discussion mainly focus on mental health, psycho-social and personal development. It is available on public platforms such as Spotify and iTunes.

SAACDHE and the Vaal North-West region would also like to congratulate Dr Sihle Maseko on the completion of his PhD in Education at the University of Johannesburg. Research Topic: *Care and support for school youth who intend to disclose their non-heterosexual orientation.*

The study looked at three high schools (former model c, township, private), interviewing the school principal, an SBST member, a Life Orientation (LO) teacher and a teacher who does not teach LO. The study focused on exploring how those tasked with providing care and support to learners do it for LGBT school youth. The results of the study showed that care and support for LGBT school youth tend to be accidental, unstructured, poorly equipped and inconsistent. The existing policies around care and support are not implemented due to a lack of awareness, and the study found that schools tend to be a reflection of the principal's principles and that learners were vulnerable to the values their class teacher espoused when they needed care and support. Going forward, Dr Maseko hopes to implement the recommendations he gave and to explore how effective they would be.

Congratulations to Dr Maseko!



Led by Mrs Laetitia Permall, from UWC, the region had a very successful 2023, and have gone from strength to strength into 2024. Instead of featuring our regional representatives in this edition, we will feature two stand out initiatives hosted by institutions in this region for the 2024 year to date:

UWC Launches WYSA: AI Chatbot for Mental Health Support



As mental health concerns continue to rise among university students globally, South African institutions face a particularly challenging landscape. A national study across 17 universities revealed alarming figures: 21% of students showed signs of clinical trauma, while 37.1% reported anxiety symptoms. These statistics underscore the urgent need for proactive measures to support students' mental well-being.

The University of Western Cape (UWC) has long recognized the importance of addressing mental health on campus. With a deep understanding of the challenges faced by both students and staff, UWC has taken a proactive stance in tackling this issue. Drawing from research and acknowledging the limitations of traditional mental health services, UWC sought innovative solutions to provide accessible and effective support.

In October 2023, UWC introduced Wysa, an AI-driven mental health support platform, as part of its

comprehensive approach to student and staff well-being. This initiative reflects UWC's commitment to fostering a supportive environment where individuals can thrive academically and personally.

Since its implementation, Wysa has gained significant traction on campus. With 2,368 users engaging with the platform, including both students and staff members, Wysa has become a valuable resource for the UWC community. Users commonly report challenges related to motivation and anxiety, highlighting the prevalence of mental health issues on campus.

The engagement with Wysa has been notable, with users exchanging an average of 51.33 messages per session and spending 28.19 minutes in a single session. Moreover, 47.01% of users return for 5 or more sessions, indicating sustained engagement with the platform's support.

Wysa's effectiveness in crisis intervention is particularly noteworthy, successfully directing users to emergency helplines and appropriate support services. Feedback from users has been overwhelmingly positive, with 91.78% rating Wysa as helpful, underscoring its efficacy in addressing mental health needs.

UWC's proactive approach to mental health reflects its commitment to creating a supportive and inclusive campus environment. By embracing technology like Wysa, UWC aims to provide accessible and stigma-free support to students and staff, ensuring that mental health remains a priority in the university's mission.

Moving forward, UWC recognizes the importance of continued collaboration and research in the field of mental health. By leveraging innovative solutions and holistic approaches, UWC strives to foster a culture of well-being and resilience among its community members, empowering them to thrive both academically and personally.





Thuthuzela Care Centre

On the 20th of March 2024, Dr Jill Ryan, Stellenbosch University's Equality Unit's Gender non-violence Coordinator, presented at the SAACDHE Western Cape regional meeting. The presentation focused on GBV in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and SU's response. Discussion points included an overview of GBV in HEIs, policies and legislation aimed to mitigate GBV in university spaces, reporting processes, and resources available to aid the campus community affected by GBV.

SU has bolstered its commitment to the fight against gender-based violence by accepting the Ring for Peace Cape Trust's (RfPCT) invitation to actively participate in establishing the SU INSPIRE (Initiative for Non-violence, Support, Prevention, Intervention, Research, and Education) facility within the Stellenbosch GBV Centre. Located in Ida's Valley in Stellenbosch, the facility is a collaboration with RfPCT, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), the provincial Department of Social Development, the Western Cape Department of Health and Wellness, and South African Police Services (SAPS). It includes an NPA Thuthuzela Care Centre (TCC), with extended emergency accommodation for victims of GBV.

All higher education institutions students within the Western Cape province have access to this TCC.

SAACDHE KZN REGION

The SAACDHE KZN Region is led by the dynamic and experienced Dr Saloschini Pillay, who is also the current President of SAACDHE. Dr Pillay's profile was shared in the newly rebranded, 1st edition of this newsletter, published in 2023. This region will be hosting the 2024 SAACDHE conference, however, and for this reason, the focus on the region, for this edition, will be dedicated on current activities in the region, the upcoming conference and everything that members can look forward to in KZN this September!

ACTIVITIES FOR 2024

The KZN region is pleased to share its activities for the current period which has been primarily focused on conference planning and logistics. A team of members from UKZN, MUT and UNISA met twice to discuss the conference plans. Since then the COC has made visits to the venue to meet with the banqueting manager, the reservations manager to negotiate costs and secure the bookings.

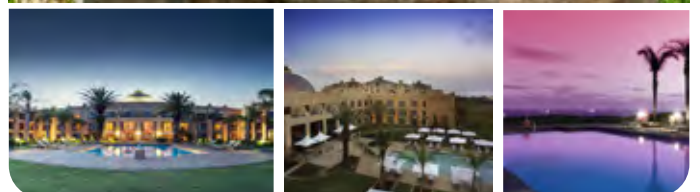
As we gather for the 44th Annual Conference, we step into a momentous occasion for SAACDHE, being the 45th anniversary of SAACDHE's existence. The air is charged with excitement and joy as we commemorate this significant milestone. The COC will be guided by the SAACDHE EMC on the anniversary celebrations and branding of the conference.

The **Conference Organizing Committee** (COC) has been diligently working on confirming the logistics for the 2024 conference. The region is thrilled to announce that the Sibaya Casino and Entertainment will serve as the venue for the 2024 conference. The newly upgraded Imbizo Conference venue at Sibaya promises an unforgettable experience for all SAACDHE Conference attendees.



Conference Venue: Conference accommodation will be available at the Sibaya Lodge with capacity for 118 delegates so it will be first come first serve. Below is a view of the SIBAYA LODGE accommodation.

Registrants will receive a conference communicate containing the booking code for lodging at Sibaya Casino and Entertainment, as well as information on alternate accommodation in the Umhlanga area.



MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The SAACDHE KZN Region, is very small in membership and is actively seeking new members. Recruitment efforts include hosting drives with members from UKZN, MUT, DUT, and UNISA (paid members). Additionally, the region plans to engage private higher education centers and TVETS, through targeted marketing.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

At a recent regional meeting, the region discussed

midyear CPD training as part of the regional strategy with the focus on enhancing the well-being of student counsellors and practitioners.

We look forward to welcoming our membership to the annual SAACDHE conference and celebrating the 45 year rich history of SAACDHE.

See you in September at Imbizo Conference Centre-Sibaya Casino and Entertainment – Durban KZN!

Our regions featured in the previous edition of this newsletter have also kept busy in 2024.

Here is a brief look into the activities, initiatives and projects our other regions have been involved in:

IN OTHER NEWS

SAACDHE FREE STATE REGION

Although the University of the Free State is the only SAACDHE member in the Free State region, active collaborations continue with the Central University of Technology (Bloemfontein and Welkom), as well as the Sol Plaatje University (Kimberley). These institutions are learning together, laughing together and working together!

At UFS, Student Counselling and Development (SCD) on Bloemfontein campus hosted a movie night for first year students in February, as part of their welcoming programme for new comers, and the event had more than a 1000 students attending! This was a gesture from SCD to say welcome to the campus and to advertise their services. The event was a huge success!

In addition, SCD at UFS has been running a Counselling Internship Programme for the second year in a row - the HPCSA will be auditing the programme in April. Please hold thumbs with the programme for a positive outcome!

Student Counselling and Development (SCD)
proudly presents

9 February
17:00

MOVIE NIGHT

Venue:
Kopanong Auditorium
(Gate 5)

FREE POPCORN AND
DRINKS

FREE ENTRY

UFS
UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
STUDENT COUNSELLING
AND DEVELOPMENT (SCD)

VISION130
Vision and Ambition
for Africa

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

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STUDENT COUNSELLING
AND DEVELOPMENT (SCD)

SAACDHE GAUNOLANGA REGION



The SAACDHE Gaunolanga Region hosted a CPD Workshop on the 1st of March - A Guided Imagery Music (GIM) experience as self-care for Caregivers by Kobus Fourie.

Attendees enjoyed an informative explanation of how GIM works and can

be used in therapy and then completed two practical exercises during which they were guided through music before using art to put that experience on paper. Everyone who attended seemed to enjoy the session and felt more relaxed at the end. Thank you to Kobus Fourie for presenting such an important workshop.

During a regional meeting hosted at Tshwane University of Technology, the Gaunolanga Region elected a new Regional Administrator – Lynne Malan, a previous SAACDHE President.

Congratulations Lynne!

SAACDHE EASTERN CAPE REGION



The Eastern Cape Region is hosting a regional meeting and CPD activity will take place in June 2024. To all members in the region, please keep an eye out for communication in this regard!

SAACDHE, and the Eastern Cape Region, would like to congratulate Dr Christine Lewis, a former Regional Chair in Eastern Cape, and a former EMC member, on graduating with a PhD in 2023. Christine completed her PhD in the Department of Psychology at Rhodes University. Her PhD thesis was titled: The relevance of career counselling in higher education: a study following students at a South African university. Christine was supervised by Professor J Akhurst.

Congratulations Dr Lewis!

UPCOMING EVENTS

1. MEMBERSHIP

Please be reminded to ensure timeous membership registration in order to benefit from all that SAACDHE has to offer!

2. CONFERENCE SAVE THE DATE



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COUNSELLING AND DEVELOPMENT
IN HIGHER EDUCATION



Journey of 45 Years
Reflecting, Celebrating, Inspiring
Honouring the past, Embracing the future
44th ANNUAL
SAACDHE CONFERENCE
HOSTED BY SAACDHE KZN REGION



SAVE the DATE

9 – 11 September 2024

IMBIZO CONFERENCE CENTRE
SIBAYA CASINO & ENTERTAINMENT

