



**Evaluation of the
Higher Health Mental
health screening tool
amongst students at
institutions of Higher
learning.**

Introduction

- Mental health is an essential part of our general wellbeing and with a sound mind you are able to connect, function ,cope and thrive better in life. Young people in institutions of higher learning are faced with many challenges such as peer pressure,independency,budgeting,mjolo,having to make their own choices as they navigate through life home away from home.



Introduction cont.

- Higher Health which is a national entity that works in partnership with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), providing health & wellness services, development services, education, health promotion, prevention, care and support to all 26 public Universities with over 108 campuses, including 50 Technical and Vocational Education and Training(TVET) colleges with over 250 campuses and 9 Community Education & Training Colleges (CETs) with over 1800 campuses.



Introduction cont.

- Higher Health introduced a mental health screening tool in 2020 to be used at institutions of Higher learning as a way of assessing mental health issues among students.
- At the University of Limpopo in lieu of the above statement, a Mental Health Coordinator was appointed to oversee the Mental Health programme, using the screening tool as a diagnostic measure.



Screening tool example

MENTAL HEALTH AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RISK-SCREENING TOOL

Name & Surname (optional)	
Cell Number (optional)	
Gender	
Date of Birth	
Institution	
Campus	
Date	

I declare and understand that completing this questionnaire is voluntary and that my answers to the below questions will be kept confidential. I also give consent for the person receiving my completed risk-assessment tool to follow up with me if I may require further services, should I want them to. I also understand that this is a self risk assessment and is not a diagnostic tool and is not for research purposes but rather for creating insights into one's own vulnerability. The aim of HIGHER HEALTH is to determine the risk at early stages and to link to relevant services for further treatment, care and support. Early prevention saves lives.

Signature.....

Are you in the red?

Mental Health	Yes	No
1. Have you lost interest and motivation in activities you used to enjoy?		
2. Are you struggling to cope with daily activities because you are feeling tired and without energy or unnaturally excited with too much energy?		
3. Do you avoid people, have difficulty making conversation and dread social events (family functions/gatherings with friends)??		
4. Do you think about and plan different ways to kill yourself?		
5. Have your sleeping patterns changed where you're either sleeping too much or not being able to sleep at all?		
6. Are you hearing, feeling, or seeing things that other people cannot?		
7. Do you experience changing eating habits from having a loss of appetite to binge eating (eating huge amounts of food in one sitting)?		
8. Do you constantly feel and think that other people are trying to control you, are talking about you or trying to kill you?		
Gender-Based (GBV) and Domestic Violence	Yes	No
9. In the past 12 months, have you been threatened with physical or sexual violence by someone in your home or outside of your home?		
10. Have you ever been hit, punched, kicked, slapped, choked, hurt with a weapon, or otherwise physically hurt by someone in your house or outside of your house?		
11. Are you in a relationship with a jealous, controlling and/or possessive partner or family member?		
12. Do you feel anxious and afraid when your partner/a family member is in your presence?		
13. Have you been forced to have sex against your will?		
14. Were you ever forced to have sex in exchange for a "reward" [such as food, a job, a place at the college, good test and exam marks, money to support your family]?		
15. Were you ever physically forced or made to feel that you had to become pregnant against your will?		
16. Has anyone ever forced you to lose a pregnancy? (i.e. forced you to take medication, go to a clinic, or physically hurt you to end your pregnancy)		
17. Does your partner/family member isolate you by keeping you away from family and friends/your support network		

18. Is there someone in your home that makes you afraid/uncomfortable to talk to people when they are present?		
19. Do you feel put down/criticised and/or humiliated in public by someone you live with?		
20. Are you afraid of your partner's/family member's anger?		
21. Are you anxious or depressed, have lost confidence, or become unusually quiet due to being in a relationship you're afraid to leave?		
22. Are you reluctant to leave the children alone with your partner or a family member?		

If your answer to any of these questions is in a red square you are in the Red Zone. You may be at risk or vulnerable to mental illness and/or domestic and gender-based violence and should seek help and support from someone. The following person can be contacted for help and support: (contact person name) at (contact person number) at the (campus name) campus. Remember, you are not alone!

Statistics from March 2022-March 2023 using the Mental Health screening tool.

- Screened- 5930
- Identified with mental health challenges- 676
- Referred for counseling (Psychology)- 428
- Referred to the Social worker and Centre for Academic Excellence-150
- Outstanding still to be referred-98



Mental Health challenges identified through the tool.

- Panic/ anxiety attacks
- Eating disorders: Bulimia, Anorexia.
- Depression
- Suicide ideations
- Post traumatic stress disorders
- Social challenges
- Stress related challenges



Benefits of using the screening tool

- Early diagnosis
- Prevention of physical health problems associated with mental health problems e.g. Headaches, anorexia, malnutrition and dehydration etc.
- Academic excellence.
- Good quality of life.
- Proper referral to relevant departments.
- Coping mechanisms, life skills, emotional and mental resilience taught to the students.



Challenges

- Time consuming for consultation purposes.
- The tool is only accessible to students who come to consult and only during campaigns. Consulting for physical ailments not even are about their mental ailments. We are therefore missing a lot of students who do not access such services.



Recommendation

- HH to develop an online tool and make it accessible by all students.
- Plan monthly residence talks with peer educators.
- Hotlines for psychological support



Conclusion

- The HH mental health screening tool is ideal in identifying mental health challenges among students at institutions of higher learning. Having identified those few cases reported earlier, lives were saved and the quality of life was enhanced including academic improvement.
- Mental health screening tool to be made accessible/available to all students and to be given options on where to go when there are challenges identified.



Thank you !

