

SA Mental Health Conference 2023



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24 - 25 April 2023
Gauteng, Emperors Palace

RAPPORTEUR FEEDBACK REPORT



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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TRACK 1: Clinical, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences

Key Themes

- Gaps in research on the evaluation of interventions**
- Mental health and traditional healing**
 - Collaboration between western and traditional practices.
 - Legislative framework
 - Cultural sensitivity
- Mental health among young adolescents and young adults**
 - Develop tailored interventions
 - Improving mental health outcomes for students.

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TRACK 1: Clinical, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences

Key Themes

- Mental health among professionals and across institutions**
 - Workplace pressure contribute to rates of anxiety and depression
 - Understand the stress, coping and resilience pathways for professional workers.

- Clinical factors**
 - Integration of mental health services into primary healthcare.
 - Diagnostic stability of psychotic disorders, relapse in schizophrenia and sexual dysfunction in first episode schizophrenia.
 - Syndemic relationship between mental health, HIV, TB, NCD and COVID-19.

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TRACK 2: Technology and Innovation

Key Themes

- **Mental Health Tech Works:** Evidence that technology driven interventions can be beneficial.
- **Anonymity:** Young people indicated they can actually prefer a tech - based intervention.
- **Capacity Enhancement:** Opportunity to serve vast overlooked populations
- **Health System Enhancement via Stepped Care:** Technology as an enhancement to increase capacity, not a replacement.
- **A Focus on Safety:** Evidence based and research driven initiatives. Privacy Protection.

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TRACK 3: Policy and Public Health

Key Themes

Reflection

- Exciting and insightful papers, with an engaged audience.
- Mobilising around public health policy and the movement is growing.
- Speakers has more similarities than differences, despite the diversity of topics.
- Demographics: pregnant teens, adolescent, mother, leaner, person living with HIV, key populations, and critically, HCWs.



TRACK 3: Policy and Public Health

Key Themes

Theme 1: Problematic access to health care services

- **Systemic level:** mental health support not readily accessible.
- **Individual level:** low uptake of available services because of internalised and externalised stigma.
- **Common mental health conditions:** depression, anxiety and suicidality. Frustrated by lack of systematic, reliable and adaptable support (especially during COVID-19).
- **Organic coping mechanisms:** positive mind set and peer support.

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TRACK 3: Policy and Public Health

Key Themes

Theme 2: Being part of the solution

- Range of solutions: task shifting, multi-disciplinary collaboration and finding opportunities in interventions such as NHI funding and investment case.
- Specifically:
 - ✓ Systemic support, with various options
 - ✓ Mainstream mental health promotion in schools, communities and inductions and trainings of HCWs.
 - ✓ Long-term plan for cadres at primary level providing mental health services.

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TRACK 3: Policy and Public Health

Key Themes

Conclusion:

We need a thoughtful integration of services, where human resources are trained and capacitated, and crucially, having an approach that allows for monitoring and evaluation. So that we can have a good return of investment not just in financial terms, but in gradually improving on people's health and well-being.



TRACK 4: Best Practices and Programmes

Key Themes

Recommendations

- Care for the users, healthcare workers, parents and families too
- Revise the nursing curriculum that includes (and expands) on the mental health

Finding creative ways:

- to interact between public and private sector
- Use of sports for youth to facilitate mental health
- Collaboration between different professions & sectors



TRACK 5: Communications and Community Engagement

Key Themes

Themes:

- Mixed media presented (podcasts, film, music, radio)
- Ending stigma through storytelling
- Importance of centering persons with lived experience at every stage

Recommendations:

- Be Creative (communications is not only about the written word)
- Center persons with lived experience and share their stories