

Why SA needs community-based approaches to mental healthcare

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With sustained high levels of stress and trauma experienced across the world over the past few years, mental health and well-being is in the global spotlight. Struggling to cope with adversities is nothing new for South Africans. As one of the world's most traumatised societies, we routinely rank at the top of lists when it comes to the prevalence of anxiety, depression and other mood disorders, as well as substance abuse and domestic violence.



Despite the commonness of mental health conditions across all communities in South Africa, there's still a significant stigma that prevents identifying issues as mental disorders and people accessing the interventions and treatments that can change lives for the better.

Unfortunately, not much has changed when it comes to mental health services in the 30-or-so post-apartheid years. The White Paper on the Transformation of the Health System, published well over a decade ago, specifically argued for a shift to community-based healthcare when it comes to mental health. It envisaged communities being actively involved in planning and executing mental health strategies and having a form of ownership when it comes to substance abuse prevention, management and rehabilitation in their own community. This has not happened, and we still see great barriers to mental healthcare including stigma as well as lack of services and qualified mental healthcare workers on the ground in South African communities.

Despite this, community-based approaches to mental healthcare hold much promise in creating a tide of mental well-being in South Africa. Dr Poppy Masinga is an icon in the country's social work sector who is currently serving as the President of ASASWEI, the Association of South African Social Work Education Institutions while also heading up the Social Work and Community Development faculty at [Sacap](#) (The South African College of Applied Psychology). Dr Masinga will be chairing an esteemed panel on the topic at the Sacap webinar: [The relevance of community-based approaches to mental healthcare in South Africa](#) on Thursday, 22 September 2022 from 6pm to 7.30pm.

The upcoming online event is pertinent to those thinking about further social sciences studies, such as Sacap's Bachelor of Social Work or Master of Social Science in Community Mental Health promotion. It will also be of interest to those actively working in community-based mental health programmes, social work, community development and mental healthcare

services; or those considering a career move into the country's mental healthcare spaces.

The Sacap webinar will include a Q&A session, and Dr Masinga will be joined by:

- **Professor Thirusha Naidu**, a clinical psychologist, head of the Clinical Psychology Unit at King Dinuzulu Hospital and associate professor in the Department of Behavioural Medicine at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, South Africa
- **Mamiki Ramaphakela**, executive director at Gauteng Children's Rights Committee who holds a master's degree in Social Work and has 38 years of experience in the field. Her areas of expertise include children's rights and welfare as well as women's socio-economic development.
- **Grisel Pretorius**, project coordinator at the Friends of Valkenberg Trust who is currently completing her Master of Social Science in Community Mental Health Promotion at Sacap and holds an honours degree in psychology
- **Lindiwe Dlamini**, a social development practitioner in private practice with a Master of Social Work degree and 29 years' experience in NGO/CBO governance, social development, health care, entrepreneurship development, and environmental justice programmes.

Don't miss the opportunity to join the conversation about community-based approaches to mental healthcare. Registration is free [here](#).

Sacap webinar – The relevance of community-based approaches to mental healthcare in South Africa

Date: Thursday, 22 September 2022

Time: 6pm to 7.30pm

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