

# RESTORING DIGNITY TO CARERS AND FUTURE WORKFORCE AND CREATING A CARING CULTURE



**HACCSA**

Health Advocacy & Clinical Compliance South Africa

Est. 2018

**Presented By:**  
René Sparks

# RIGHT TO HEALTH



**DR. TLALENG MOFOKENG,  
UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON  
THE RIGHT TO HEALTH**

“ Everyone's right to the highest attainable standard of health must be protected, regardless of factors like sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression.

It is crucial to understand what dignity means for different groups and that prioritizing this approach, where dignity is recognised based on people's experiences and needs, leads to significant progress

Without health, we all have nothing... All of us benefit if we promote and respect all human rights because all of those rights have a direct impact on our health.

”

# WHO ARE THE CARERS?

01.

- Health professionals, counsellors, Community Health Workers, Social workers, Peer supporters
- Carers are the invisible infrastructure of health systems
- Many carers provide care at work **AND** return home to provide unpaid care for others



# EROSION OF DIGNITY IN CARE WORK

02.

---



Chronic overload and emotional labour

Burnout normalised as resilience

Moral injury: knowing the right care, lacking the means – fueled by inequity

Systems often assume carers go home to rest but many go to another shift of care

# THE FUTURE WORKFORCE IS WATCHING

03.

- Students and early-career professionals are learning what care looks like
- An intentional, real-world curriculum matters
- Campus health shapes future expectations of health systems at Higher Institutions of Learning
- Orientation, peer support and a structured supervision programme is crucial – with protected time



# EXPECTED RESPONSES

04.



- Where are the funds to do this?
- We are short staffed, we don't have this luxury?
- Self-care and safe spaces costs money and other resources
- This is a waste of time - we need to do the work and leave our issues at home.
- Its a nice concept but my Boss will never allow this, we do not have the resources or time.



# WHAT RESTORING DIGNITY REQUIRES

05.

**STRUCTURAL CARE: SAFE WORKLOADS, TIME TO REST**



**PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY: DEBRIEFING AND SUPERVISION**

**DIGNIFIED LEADERSHIP: REFLECTIVE, TRANSPARENT**



**INTERGENERATIONAL CARE: MENTORSHIP AND MODELLING**







# STORY TIME

06.



## CARERS WORLDWIDE MODEL

We have developed a model comprising five core elements, which together transform the holistic well-being of unpaid family carers.

**Headquarters in UK, working in Nepal, India and Bangladesh**



# STORY TIME - GLOBAL

07.

## THE FIVE CORE ELEMENTS

### THE CARERS WORLDWIDE MODEL

We have developed a model comprising of five core elements which together transform the holistic wellbeing of carers:

We want as many family carers to be helped as possible, so please feel free to use our model to help support family carers, but if you do so please credit Carers Worldwide.



#### **Carers Support Groups**

To reduce loneliness and isolation, create social networks and support emotional wellbeing.



#### **Health Services**

To provide access to physical and mental health services including locally available counselling.



#### **Employment, Training and Education**

To facilitate access to employment, training or education, tailored as appropriate to co-exist with caring responsibilities.

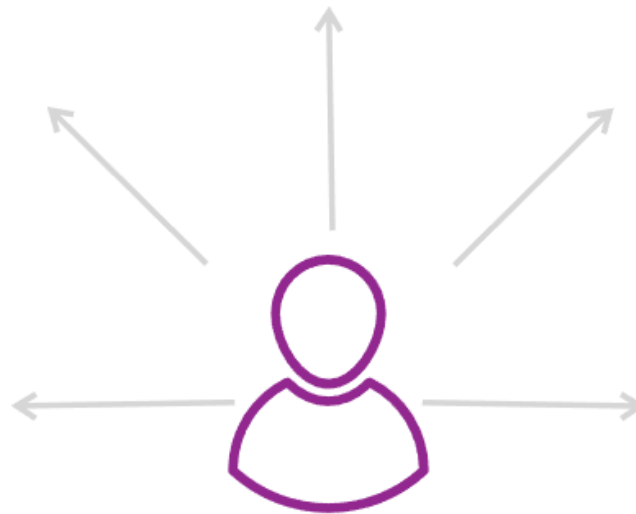
# THE CARERS WORLDWIDE MODEL

08.



## Advocacy

To strengthen the collective voice of carers to advocate for their needs and the provision they require at community, regional and national level, leading to changes in policy and practice.



## Respite and Short Breaks

To offer a break from caring responsibilities along with the development of alternative high quality care options such as day care centres.

<https://carersworldwide.org>

/

# FRIENDSHIP BENCH

The Friendship Bench is a community-based mental health program, originating in Zimbabwe, that uses trained lay health workers (often older women or "grandmothers") to provide accessible, stigma-free talk therapy (Problem-Solving Therapy) on park benches outside clinics, helping people with depression and anxiety by teaching them to solve their own problems and fostering connection, now expanding globally.



**09.**



# STORY TIME - LOCAL



**10.**

**City of Cape Town - Management Supervision programme**

**Quarterly 1-on-1 meetings with a Psychologist - Facility Managers and Senior Professional Nurses**

**Option to do mentoring to an entire clinic team**

**Monthly Mentorship sessions with all facility managers**



# VALHALLA PARK CLINIC



11.

The wellness programme was initiated by the Clinic Manager, Sr Lizl Coetzee and a Clerk - Nathalie Fortuin in Feb 2024.



Besides the exercise, the manager assigned a small team consisting of different categories of staff to plan and execute events based on the health calendar and social calendar which included team building and Year End functions.



The outcomes:

- Improved communication between staff
- Improved health
- Team cohesion and collective wellbeing





# NATHALIE'S WELLNESS JOURNEY



12.



Before (late in 2024)

Starting Weight 139.3kg  
Struggling to tie shoes, out of breath  
when walking short distance.

Followed the Friends in Fitness  
Programme for 6-months with monthly  
weigh-in sessions and access clinicians.

Currently - lost 15kg - happier, healthier  
and able to do more. More positive and  
productive at work.



After (mid 2025)





UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE



University of the Western Cape  
School of Public Health



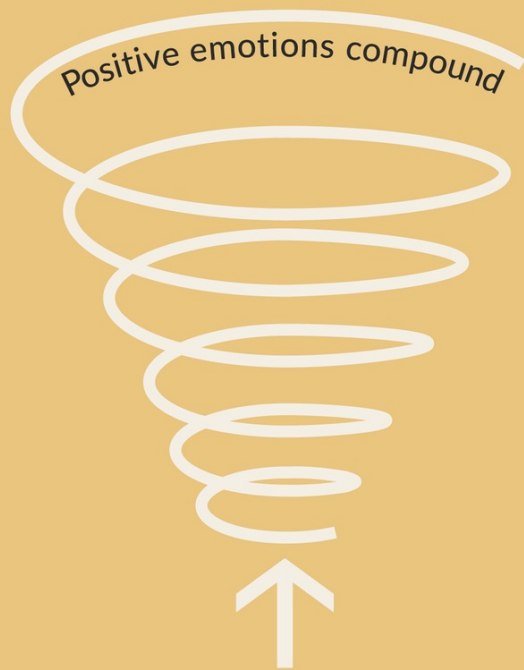
Start each webinar or consultation with music  
Once session starts, we offer meditation for 10 -  
15 mins

Do a check in via chatbox and by adding voice into  
the space.

Feedback from student evaluation over last 4  
years highlighted how beneficial this practise was  
as very often the students were overwhelmed

Attention broadens  
Promotes resilience  
in the face of adversity

### OUTCOME



**STRESSFUL EVENT:  
UPWARD SPIRAL**

PositivePsychology.com

# SPIRAL OF POSITIVITY

**14.**

This methodology allows you to look at the spiral, identify where you are on that spiral and intentionally raise your energy to shift the negative emotion.

For staff to engage with it, leaders had to give them the time to reflect, recalibrate and enter the workspace in a better mental space.

In all these activities, Management & Leadership are required to support the programme and provide the protected space and access to support where possible.

# A CALL FOR ETHICAL STEWARDSHIP

15.

- Care must be designed into systems
- Wellbeing is core infrastructure, not a luxury
- Taking time to tend to yourself is a revolutionary act
- What kind of care system are we handing to the next generation?
- What can we implement with what we have?
- Leaders need change management and innovation



# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

S

SAACHS Committee and event planner

TEKANO

Valhalla Park Clinic Management &  
Team

Carers Worldwide

RHAP & TBAC

Sarah Davids and SOPH, UWC

Dr Tlaleng Mofokeng



# THANK YOU DANKIE ENKOSI

**Presented By: René Sparks**

---

Rene@haccca.co.za



## **HACCSA**

Health Advocacy & Clinical Compliance South Africa

Est. 2018