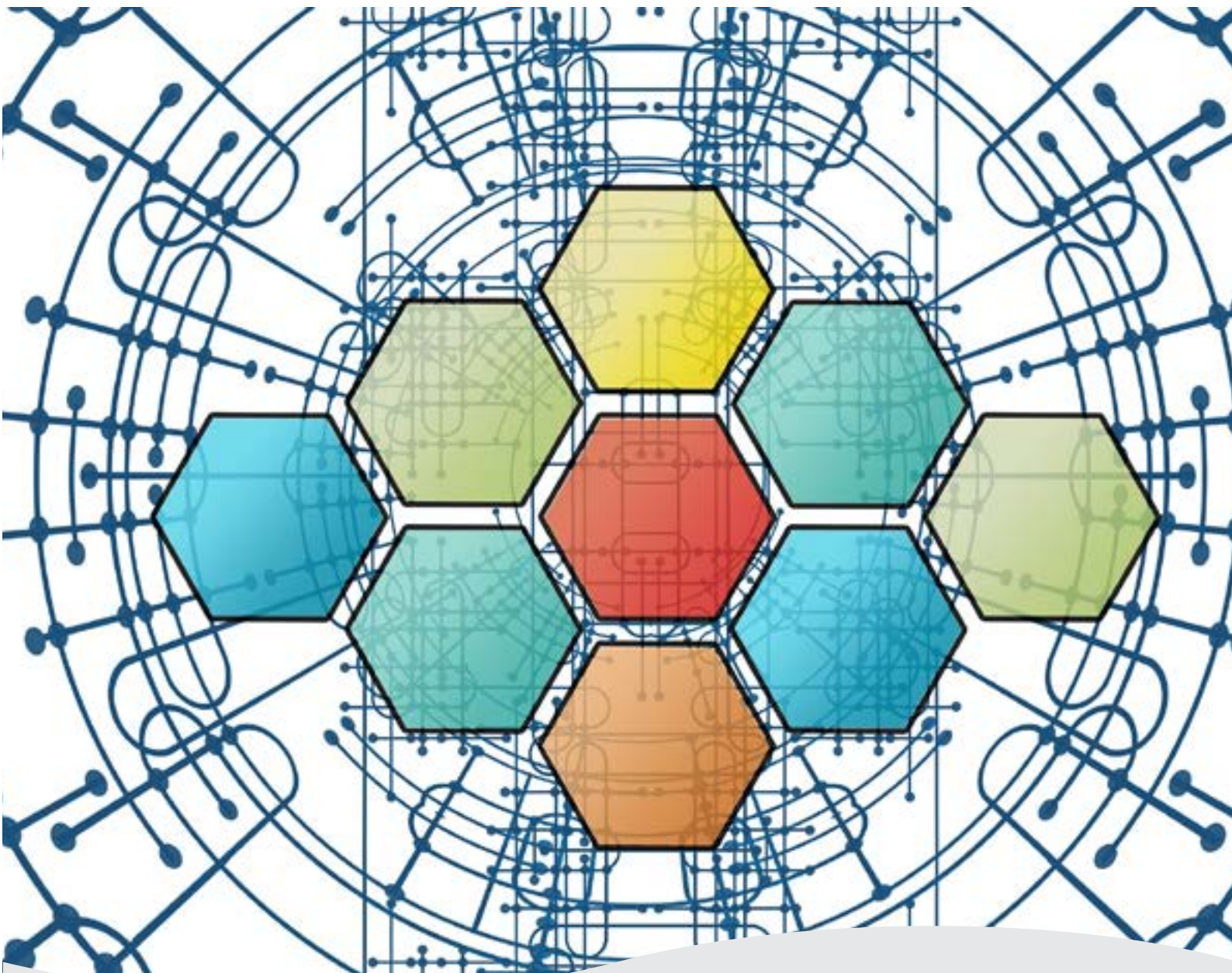


# Kwazulu-Natal Counselling & Career Development

# NEWS

Newsletter for Unisa students

February 2021



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# Meet Dr Shariefa Hendricks

Mr X. Dubazane (Deputy Director Academic and Technology Support) welcomes and introduces Dr Shariefa Hendricks, the new Head of Counselling and Career Development at Unisa in KwaZulu-Natal

Dr Shariefa Hendricks is a Clinical Psychologist by profession with many years of experience as a psychologist and has worked in both the public health and higher education context. Before joining Unisa, Dr Hendricks was a Senior Student Counsellor at UKZN. She completed her PhD in Psychology at the University of KwaZulu and was recognised as one of the top 15% of achievers in her PhD studies by the Golden Key International Honours Society. Dr Hendricks' research interest is in Clinical Supervision, specifically the training, development, mentoring, and supervision of intern clinical psychologists.

She joined the KZN CCD team on 1 April 2020. This coincided with the national lockdown, leading to working remotely, amidst much uncertainty, and global fear birthed by the novel Corona Virus/Covid 19 pandemic. Much to everyone's surprise, Dr Hendricks quickly adjusted to the ODeL context and despite various challenges, rose to the occasion and led her team for five months, without ever having met them in person! Gutsy and tenacious is a rare combination, yet she proved to be just the visionary leader the team needed.

Her leadership and strategic vision for the CCD Unit were put to the test during the lockdown and she excelled at leading her team in the new digital age, initiating and developing programmes for students. Dr Hendricks believes that some of the hallmarks of strong leadership are to lead by example, don't take credit for your team's hard work, validate people's efforts, be honest, transparent

and trust your team. She is very proud of her team whom she says inspire her every day, are diligent, hardworking and competent professionals. Her work ethic is based on upholding values of integrity, excellence and innovation, commitment, and being both staff and student-centered.

"I believe that leaders must be empathic and respectful, take time to get to know their team members, learn what they value and what they find challenging, and mostly be prepared to listen to their team", says Dr Hendricks. Her open-mindedness and willingness to engage her team in a consultative and collaborative process have contributed to developing a powerful collegial bond within a short period of time, a relationship she has come to value, and a team she believes is to be reckoned with. I wish her all the best in her new position. I am certain that she will contribute positively to the growth of the region, Unisa institution-wide, and to the student body she and her team serve. All the best to Dr Hendricks!



# Farewell to Dr Amy Reddy

Dr Amy Reddy is a Senior Student Counsellor and former Head of the CCD- KZN Unit in the KZN Region for 24 years. She relocated to the DCCD Unit in Unisa Pretoria soon after completing her Ph.D. Dr Reddy shares her inspiring PhD journey.

Embarking on a doctoral program is both exhilarating and anxiety provoking. It is like planning to climb a mountain - it is both a hopeful and daunting task. It calls for academic, emotional, social, and physical resilience. It is a long and winding adventure that requires preparation, training, the ability to access resources, and both the appreciation and development of satisfactory and positive relationships with a range of relevant stakeholders.

Personally, it also demanded bridging the gaps between a mainly counselling practice orientation and the research orientation. This involved engaging with research-orientated terminology and reflections from a mainly conceptual framework to theoretical-based frameworks.

The initial departure for the doctoral thesis is the confidence and commitment to the research topic. This should reflect personal/academic interests, passion, and concerns. As the doctoral programme requires an original contribution to the field, the topic should contribute to the existing body of knowledge in that field. Every reference accessed should extend both insight and curiosity to sustain the research process from three to five years. My topic was "The Collective Self of Indian and Zulu students in the Career Decision Making Process". This topic explored the cultural influences in career choice.

My interest in researching culture goes back to the 1970s when research in culture was referred to as cross-cultural research in psychology. Since then this dedicated field of research has been referred to as multicultural psychology, cultural psychology, and presently referred to as indigenous psychology. The topic explored the comparative influences of the individual and collective self in career-decision making. Culturally, the individual self is embedded in western culture, while the collective self is largely a reflection of African and Asian cultures. Research in career development theory and research has explored aspects of the influence of the individual self in the career choice process and limited reference has been made to the collective influences of family, friends, and significant others. This was the identified gap in the research that I was keen to explore and offer a contribution to this evolving field of psychology.

As this was my personal journey, I can draw parallels between the research process undertaken and the management process which I am familiar with. The core components of the managerial process are planning, organisation, leadership, and control. Each core process will be related to the research process. The planning process was divided into five core areas: the literature review, proposal submission, data capture, analysis, and the final write-up of the thesis. The planning process supported my need for structure and scheduling. This led to the planning and allocation of resources, monitoring progress, and attending timeously to challenges.

The second area is the organisation phase. Here skills and strategies are required to handle the vast and comprehensive literature review, data capture, transcripts, and drafts. The research process also includes administration requirements that pertain to the application of funding (MDSP -Masters and Doctoral Research Support Programme), tracking of expenses, application of Research & Development leave, and the timeous





submission of progress reports. The leadership function alludes to taking ownership of the research process. Internal motivation which is linked to confidence and belief in the topic will result in personal empowerment, when doubts arise and when the topic, methodology, data capture, or any other aspect of the research topic may have to be defended with a range of stakeholders.

The final control function refers to the monitoring and progress of the research process. This may include rescheduling of the aspects of the research as the need arises. This calls for flexibility and resilience. Control also includes compliance with the research ethics application requirements and the ethics of the institution. Also, compliance with the submission of annual progress reports will be requested by PARC (Professional and Administration Research Committee). The research process also leads to the reflective, personal journey of the researcher. In qualitative research, the researcher is regarded as the primary instrument in the research process. Journaling is recommended. Personal and cultural frameworks are constantly challenged by extended knowledge and insights. Resilience is stretched to accommodate distractions and adversities which inevitably arise as the research is undertaken over possibly three to five years. Socially a fine balancing act is demanded to include family and friends as weekends often become research-orientated time.

While it may appear that this is an individual journey and indeed it is, a core aspect of the research journey are the many stakeholders who have contributed to this journey. They are the academic, administrative and support personnel, supervisory support, participants, family, friends, and colleagues. I will always have a deep appreciation for the collective support throughout my doctoral research journey. The outcome of my research was the co-existence of the individual and the collective selves in the career decision-making process. Techniques and strategies in career counselling should be inclusive and reflect insight into the unique and deep-seated values inherent in the lived experience of the career aspirant.

In embarking on this journey, one of the significant aspects of guidance I was offered was to start writing as soon as possible. Many prospective researchers spend an enormous amount of time thinking through possible areas of research and are hesitant to write anything down. Keeping a little notebook to capture thoughts, ideas, references, and significant contacts was also recommended. Get started, as progress and tracking can only take place if there is evidence of research in progress.

The outcome of my research was the co-existence of the individual and the collective selves in the career decision-making process. Techniques and strategies in career counselling should be inclusive and reflect insight into the unique and deep-seated values inherent in the lived experience of the career aspirant.

# Meet the KZN student counsellors

## Candice Chetty



Mrs Candice Chetty is a Student Counsellor based in Durban. She joined Unisa KwaZulu-Natal Region in August 2019. She was formerly employed at the Nelson Mandela University for 13 years.

In 2004, she graduated with a B. Psych (Counselling) degree from the former University of Port Elizabeth (UPE). She completed a Diploma in Human Resource Management and Training from Varsity College in 2002. Subsequently, she obtained a BA Hons degree in Industrial and Organisational Psychology from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU). In 2014, she graduated with an MA in Psychology from the NMMU where her dissertation focused on “Storying the career development of Black South African female university students. In 2018, she completed a National Certificate: Occupationally Directed Education Training Development Practices.

Her work experience includes working with university students, learners in high school, and employees of organisations. She has always been passionate about Career Counselling and Assessment and Personal Growth and Development.

“I believe that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives. We are all uniquely designed, and it is important that we cultivate that which is within each of us. I adopt a strengths- based approach and I strive to empower, encourage, support and ignite passion and meaning in individuals’ career journeys. My hope is always that clients go into the world with more freedom to be themselves and to relate to others in an authentic and meaningful way.”

## Bongi Thusi

Mrs Bongi Thusi is a Registered Counsellor and Educational Psychologist registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa. She holds a B.Paed and B.Education Honours degrees from the University of Durban Westville (now UKZN). In 2007 she completed an Honours degree in Psychology at the University of South Africa (UNISA). Bongi has worked for the Department of Education as a high school teacher and school counsellor for several years. She has worked in Unisa previously as Intern Student Counsellor and as a face-to-face tutor for five years.

In 2018 she resigned from her job as a teacher to pursue her passion for psychology and enrolled for a Master’s degree in



Education, specialising in Educational Psychology at the University of Zululand. As part of her training as a Psychologist, during her internship, she worked with parents and teachers in supporting children and adolescents experiencing barriers to learning and those with emotional, behavioural, and other psychological problems. With the recent reading statistics suggesting that South Africa is experiencing a reading crisis amongst learners, her Master's degree dissertation focused on strategies that can be utilized to enhance reading comprehension among high school learners. In the future, she intends to have a psychological practice and offer much-needed but very scarce psychological services to underprivileged communities. She loves her job as a Student Counsellor in Unisa and hopes to provide quality professional service to students who need counselling with matters that affect their personal and academic lives. She subscribes to the notion that: "Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all love of what you are doing" (Pele).

## *Tumelo Mokoena*



Mr Tumelo Mokoena joined Unisa in 2005 whilst enrolled for a BA Health Science and Social Services degree, specializing in Psychological Counselling. He obtained his degree in 2008 and completed his BA Honours degree in 2010.

In 2009 he worked for Childline SA as an online counsellor. Being a counsellor at Childline provided him with the opportunity to be exposed to a wide variety of issues affecting children in South Africa. After completing his Honours degree, he left Childline to join Careworks HIV/AIDS management, as a lay counsellor.

He was fortunate enough to join Unisa KZN Counselling and Career Development as an intern in 2012. He enjoys working with students who have career indecision and uses career assessments to assess students' career interests, personality and values so that they can choose the right career path. In 2019 he was appointed as a student counsellor in the KZN CCD Unit working with students on the Pietermaritzburg campus and extends services to students at the Newcastle office. He is also involved in mentoring of Student Mentors and supervision of the Trainee Career Guidance Practitioners.

## *Ms Zuziwe Ndebele*

Ms Ndebele is a student counsellor who has been at the CCD unit for almost 4 years. She is currently on study leave, pursuing her Master's in Counselling Psychology at Rhodes University. Wishing her all the best in her studies.

# CCD Administrators for Durban and Pietermaritzburg Campus

*Mrs Simangaliso  
Ndwandwe  
(Durban)*



*Mr Sbonelo  
Gumede  
(Pietermaritzburg)*



Our very friendly and helpful administrators, Simangaliso and Sibonelo, are the first responders to student counselling related queries for the Counselling Unit. During the lockdown period, they were responsible for managing our e-counselling service, ensuring that students' queries are attended to. They also assist with the referrals to Student Counsellors, and with general administration and career-related information. Both the administrators ensure that students at Unisa are attended to professionally, whilst maintaining confidentiality. Their vast experience in and knowledge of the Counselling Unit and other Unisa departments ensures that they respond efficiently to students' counselling related queries. They are also involved in training and mentoring of our Student mentors and play a pivotal role in the Induction, orientation, and training of our Student Mentors and Trainee Career Guidance Practitioners.



# What do we do?

The Unisa CCD Unit (KZN Region) offers a range of FREE professional and confidential counselling and support services, geared towards meeting the needs of students at Unisa. We provide career, academic, and personal guidance and counselling to prospective, current, and exit level students. Students experience a range of challenges during the course of their studies. We are here to support our students by telephone, online and via printed publications, on the Unisa Facebook page and the Regional website.

## Career guidance, counselling and development

Our team provides guidance and support to prospective and registered students who are unsure about which career path to take or how to choose a career that best suits their interests and abilities.

## Challenges experienced by students

Students at higher education institutions often face several challenges that impact their emotional, social, and psychological well-being. This in turn can impact their academic performance. Our team offers personal counselling to students who may experience challenges that include:

- Career development including employability skills
- Personal challenges
- Academic challenges, study skills, developmental & psychosocial workshops

## Individual counselling & Workshops

Our team of HPCSA registered psychologists and counsellors is here to support students throughout their academic journey and beyond. In keeping with the ODeL Model, the CCD unit has adopted a blended approach to counselling and offers our services by telephone, email, and online.

### Career Development

To help you prepare for the world of work and employability skills:

Employability series (Cover letter/ application process, CV Writing and interviewing skills)

Developing your career portfolio

Planning and managing your career development through one-on-one sessions focusing on:

Career information and guidance

Choosing a qualification

Career options related to interests and abilities

Career options related to Unisa qualifications

### Academic skills

To help you manage your studies at Unisa (learning skills for ODeL):  
Orientation and adjustment to ODeL

Lack of concentration

Time management, Procrastination and Motivation

Exam preparation, Study skills and techniques

Growth mindset/ Fixed mindset

Kolb's learning styles

Multiple intelligence

True Colours

### Personal development

Dealing with challenges that may affect your study progress. We provide workshops and individual sessions related to:

Self-confidence

Loss and bereavement

Anxiety and depression

Relationship problems

Anger management

Poor Self-confidence and low self esteem

## Contact us

Email: [counsellingkzn@unisa.ac.za](mailto:counsellingkzn@unisa.ac.za) to request an appointment

Online bookings: Book an online appointment ( <https://bit.ly/DCCDOnline> )

Speak to a counsellor via telephone: 0313358119

# The First Step Towards Getting Somewhere Is to Decide That You Are Not Going to Stay Where You Are

**Tumelo Mokoena** reflects on his journey as a Unisa student and how his studies have contributed to his career development.

Accomplishing my dream of achieving a university qualification and having a professional career was a challenging, arduous journey. I recall vividly in 2004 when I first set foot at Unisa in Durban to enquire about career choices. I also remember the call I received informing me that I had received financial assistance from NSFAS. I wondered how I was going to cope with my studies while working. Although things were looking good, I wondered how I was going to cope with my studies while working. Honestly speaking, it was not easy, but I set goals from the beginning and used all the support that the university offered.

To make ends meet, I worked as a waiter and only worked late shifts, which enabled me to attend tutorial classes on Saturdays and to be part of study groups during the week. The journey was long, stressful, and tiring at times, but I never lost hope and had no intention of quitting. Throughout my journey, there were several challenges that made me feel despondent about reaching my goals. I remember one of my challenges was that I wanted to be a Psychologist but my study group was dominated by fellow Social Work students and some of my modules were different from theirs. I had to ensure I had time for those modules at night and do the assignments on time. I completed my degree in a record time of only 4 years and felt proud of myself knowing that with ODEL that was no mean feat!

Soon thereafter I registered for my Honours degree which I completed after 2 years. While doing my second year I was appointed a Peer Educator for Unisa which was a voluntary programme that was run by the Social Work department. I knew that I would not be paid as a Peer Educator, but I wanted to gain work experience which was very important for my future career prospects. While doing my second year I started to realise that getting experience in counselling is not easy. I decided to join a group of students who were Peer Educators for Unisa, a voluntary programme that was run by the Social Work department. The main aim of the programme was to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS among students on campus. Oftentimes we visited schools and communities for awareness campaigns.

As part of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) requirements for registration as a registered counsellor, I had to do voluntary work for six months with an organization that offered to develop skills in counselling. At that time, Childline SA had a pilot project for online counselling, and used an mobile app, MXIT to counsel children across the country for up to four hours a day. Having a passion to learn, I continued with

volunteering at Childline for almost 2 years. While I was continuing with being a voluntary online counsellor at Childline, I worked part-time as a Lay Counselor at Careworks HIV/ AIDS Management which gave me exposure to face-to-face counselling. I spent two years at Childline and immediately after completing my Honours degree I focused on getting an internship while working at CareWorks. CareWorks developed me from a lay counsellor to a facilitator until I became a team leader.

### **Internship programme**

In 2012 I was one of the successful candidates employed as an intern counsellor by Unisa KZN region. This position marked a further shift from wellness and online counselling to career counselling, which had ups and downs, especially when attending to issues that affect students, coupled with being an intern in training. I had to deal with issues that affected students' academic and personal lives, issues and challenges that I could relate to. I felt particularly privileged to work with students with disabilities as they inspired me and brought so much hope. Alongside this, I also had to ensure I was engaged in research and reading various journal articles, which I found enriched my understanding and knowledge of the field. Above all, the internship was an eye-opener in terms of issues such as career choices, career development, personal growth and self-esteem.

### **Changing career due to unemployment**

To broaden my chances of getting a job, I registered for a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) in the hope that I could get a teaching position in a school and work my way up to become a school counsellor. Even though I had completed a PGCE, I was unsuccessful in finding employment. I swallowed my pride and took on a job at a call centre to put food on the table and pay my accounts.

I realised that as we are in the fourth industrial revolution, it is very important for me and other graduates to register with online agencies to look for jobs and to ensure that emails are checked daily. I also ensured that I posted my CV online. Applying for jobs and then not being shortlisted is a bitter pill to swallow. Despite many setbacks in my career journey, I persevered and held on and remained hopeful and optimistic.

### **Life after being a registered counsellor**

After passing the Board of Psychology (HPCSA) National Board Examination, I had to face the unfortunate reality of unemployment. I had to do odd jobs to survive. I realised that although I had reached my goal and dream career of being a registered counsellor, I could not find a job. I continued working for CareWorks on a part-time basis and came back to Unisa as an Assistant Student Counsellor for a short period. I also tried my luck with a group of other registered counsellors and opened a private practice that only lasted for three months. It was tough knowing that I was unable to secure a permanent job despite having two qualifications. With determination and hope that things will get better, I persevered. Finally in 2019, I was appointed as a student counsellor at the Counselling and Career Development Unit at the Unisa Pietermaritzburg Campus, and as they say, "the rest is history".

*"When you least expect it, something great will come along. Something better than you ever planned for. Be patient, be smart and stay focused. Above all stay humble, pride does not take you anywhere." - T Mokoena*

# *Inspiring words regarding their training in the CCD Unit from our former TCGPs and Student Mentors...*

“I was privileged to be appointed Student Mentor in the Durban Regional Office. This programme enlightened me about the benefits of studying at Unisa which most students don’t realise and it also put me on a journey of self-discovery.” **Mpumie Songo**

“During the training programmes, I began to gain awareness, not just about the programme and my involvement therein, but also my purpose. The training helped me to understand the counselling environment and created a platform that enabled me to become more assertive and confident”.

**Nirmala Moodley**

“Through the training sessions and group meetings facilitated by the Unit, I acquired communicative skills and powerpoint presentation skills. I also became comfortable with doing presentations to a group of students. In a nutshell my experience at the Counselling department was overwhelming but very informative and amazing. I was given an opportunity to grow professionally and personally.”

**Nothando Mathe**

“The experience of being a TCGP was a life lesson. The experience overall has taught me so much and led to great personal development. This space was also a space where I adjusted from being just a student to believing I was ready for the world of work.”

**Andile B. Molemane**

# My journey as a Unisa student



**Fatima Nzulase** shares her career development story and persevering as an Unisa student.

After many difficult personal challenges, I decided it was time to pick up all the pieces of my life and start afresh. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would ever have a formal qualification, let alone an Honours degree.

My journey with Unisa started at the age of 34 with the Higher Certificate in ABET. I was very anxious because I was much older than most of my schoolmates. With perseverance and being goal-driven, today I hold three qualifications, namely Higher Certificate in ABET, BA Health Sciences & Social Services, and an Honours BA in Psychology. Even though the journey wasn't easy, Unisa has taught me independence, self-reliance, motivation, and passion.

I was one of the fortunate students to get an opportunity to be a peer helper and 18 months later I became a Trainee Career Development Practitioner within the Counselling & Career Development section. This was an amazing yet difficult journey, but I was in a position to support the students. I was able to incorporate three aspects of my life, my experience as an Unisa student, the intensive training I received from the CCD, and the ability and willingness to help people.

Later I was employed as an administration officer on a part-time basis. Unfortunately, I only worked for two weeks in the office and SA went into a national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was a frustrating time for me. Not all was lost because I got to learn and adapt to a new concept of "working from home". With limited resources, I managed to do just as well until my contract ended.

*"Don't be defined by your past, your past is the tutor of your present and is always preparing you for new experience. Forget about disappointment or any past mistakes that are keeping you from moving forward. It's never too late for a new beginning" - Unknown author*

# Self-compassion

**Dr Shariefa Hendricks** shares more about self-compassion, why it is important and how to cultivate self-compassion.

*“With self-compassion, we give ourselves the kindness and care we’d give to a good friend.”  
- Kristin Neff*

## What is self-compassion?

Self-compassion refers to the ability to offer the same kindness, understanding, and support to yourself, that you would offer to a friend. According to Kristin Neff, self-compassion has three basic components: Mindfulness, Self-Kindness, and Human connectedness. The driving force of self-compassion is love, not fear.

## Why is self-compassion important?

Self-compassion is important because it helps to foster resilience especially when we face adversity and hard times. Self-compassion is a great personal tool that helps us navigate through various obstacles and challenges. Let’s face it, adulthood is not easy. As adults, students face several different challenges such as grief, relational and family conflict, low self-esteem, loss of self-confidence, rejection, abuse, depression, abandonment, failure, crime, and violence, and so forth.

Many people go through life, seeped in self-judgment. As human beings, we need to be careful how we talk to ourselves because this ultimately becomes what we listen to. Negative self-talk erodes our sense of self-compassion. Self-compassion is not

about choosing to be positive all the time or choosing the easiest path, it simply means choosing the kindest. You can CHOOSE to treat yourself differently. You CAN choose to be kind and caring. When you don’t practice self-compassion, you tend to be hard on yourself. You tend to be judgmental and self-critical and are unable to see your own inner strength and unique qualities. Three important ingredients to developing self-compassion are: Mindfulness, Self-Kindness and Connectedness. When you practice self-compassion, you can visualise more self-acceptance, self-kindness, and a positive perspective despite life’s challenges when confronted with problems. Self-compassion is connected to higher levels of emotional intelligence (EQ) which is an important ingredient that helps us express, control, understand, and empathise with our own and others’ emotions.



Don't be hard on yourself, practice kindness, tame your inner critic, and remember there is more than one way to look at something. Remember that mistakes are part of life and learning and you should never compare yourself to others. Developing self-compassion doesn't develop overnight. Consistent and daily practice is key. Here are some exercises on how you can become a self-compassionate individual:

## **Cultivate and practice self-compassion EVERYDAY!**

Cultivating self-compassion and resiliency is not difficult, but it does take time, effort, and patience. This requires daily practice, but in the long term, it will help you lead a life that is more or less stress-free, which in turn will lead to more confidence in handling tricky situations, unforeseen crises or any new challenges. In this way you will continue to experience more self-kindness, and empathy, be less judgmental, and more willing to see things from a different perspective. For instance, if you have an argument with a loved one, instead of listening to your inner critic that you are selfish and unlovable, switch off the negative self-talk, try to see things from the other person's perspective, and do not engage in putting yourself down. At the same time, recognise that you are human, that you have needs and feelings that deserve validation and acknowledgement.

## **Changing your critical self-talk**

Become aware of your inner critic. This will take some time but you can learn to tune in to yourself over a couple of weeks. Start by keeping a journal and write down some of the negative things you tend to say to yourself. This will eventually form the blueprint for changing how you relate to yourself in the long-term. Others are more comfortable doing it via internal dialogues. If you are someone who likes to write things down and revisit them later, journaling can be an excellent tool for transformation. If you are someone who never manages to be consistent with a journal, then do whatever works for you. You can speak aloud to yourself or think silently.

## **Start a self-compassion journal**

An effective way to practice self-compassion is journaling. You can do so by thinking about and exploring prompts such as the following:

What am I feeling right now in this moment?

How are those feelings impacting me, those around me and my most important relationships?

What is working for me?

What boundaries do I need to put in place

Do I need to hold on to these feelings?

What is my inner critic telling me?

Is it true?

How does that make me feel?

One thing I can change is \_\_\_\_\_

One activity I can do to increase my self-compassion

What is not working for me right now?

What can I let go of?

One self-care activity I can do for myself is.....

Everybody doesn't like something about themselves; something that causes them to feel shame, insecure, or not "good enough." Write a letter to yourself about your feelings of failure. By writing a letter to yourself about this issue your thinking will change to acceptance and compassion. Bear in mind that being self-judgmental about it will lead to shame, being self-compassionate will lead to learning. Most importantly you need to take care of you, to ensure your mental, physical and psychological wellbeing. You can read more about self-care in the article below.

You can learn more about self-compassion here: <http://healthychaps.weebly.com/blog/self-compassion-an-essential-life-skill>

# Self-care

Ms Candice Chetty shares her thoughts on self-care.

Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Although it's a simple concept, in theory, it's something we often overlook. Good self-care is key to improved mood and reduced anxiety. It's also key to a good relationship with oneself and others.

Self-care isn't a selfish act. It is not only about considering our needs; it is rather about knowing what we need to do to take care of ourselves, being subsequently, able to take care of others as well. That is, if I don't take enough care of myself, I won't be in the place to give to my loved ones either. While you are supporting and helping someone, it is especially important for you to also take care of yourself. Practicing self-care does not mean you are choosing yourself over your loved one. It means that you are simply being mindful of your own needs, so you are better able to support the people you care about. When you take care of yourself and are not stressed, you are better able to meet the needs of others.

Self-care comes in a variety of forms. It does not require an elaborate plan; self-care can be as simple as taking a deep breath when you notice you are becoming stressed. By maintaining your physical and mental health, you will likely be better equipped to handle the stressors that come along with supporting someone you care about.

## Example of a self-care chart

Talk to yourself with kindness & respect	Get dressed	Catch up with a friend	Process feelings	Compliment yourself
Meditate or pray	Eat good food	Listen to your body	Have fun	Ask for help
Take a much-needed break	Drink water	YOUR CHOICE	Take a social media break	Treat yourself
Compliment someone	Get enough sleep	Take steps to tame negative emotions	Set realistic expectations	Try to drop a habit that is not for me
Forgive yourself	Spend time in nature	Declutter a space	Keep a journal	Practise self-compassion





## *Words of inspiration from a student mentor*

**Zola Cele** (Student Mentor 2020) shares her words of inspiration.

"I might only have one match  
But I can make an explosion....  
Cause I've still got a lot of fight left in me"

These lyrics from a song by Rachel Platten make any negative situation that happened in your past the reason to succeed in life. Give it your all. Believe in yourself. We're all destined to succeed. When you succeed, no matter how insignificant it is to other people, it is joy to you. Celebrate your success, even if it's a 50% out of a 100%. Even if your peers have more than you, be happy, content and work harder. No one but you has the power to stop your dreams from coming true. You might have had a traumatic experience or had made bad choices in the past, but with your hope, belief, dedication, perseverance, and passion to succeed, you can make an explosion. Miracles happen when we work hard and believe. Take back your life!!!

# Transitioning from being able-bodied to differently abled

**Ms Bongzi Thusi** shares her thoughts on adjusting from being able-bodied to differently-abled.

I'm certain most of us know these famous personalities; Stevie Wonder, Hellen Keller, Ray Charles, and Steve Kekana. But what is common among them? All are visually impaired, and except for Stevie Wonder, the other personalities were not born blind. The causes were mostly due to illness ranging from glaucoma to meningitis. Serious illnesses like these expose us to vulnerability and the possibility of visual impairment. A first-year, partially-blind student, whom I will name Menzi (for confidentiality reasons), came for counselling due to depression. Menzi was not born blind but started to gradually lose his sight a few years ago due to glaucoma. His visual impairment has affected his social, personal and academic life and he is understandably struggling to transition from being able-bodied to being differently-abled. Menzi's social support network, from family and friends, has weakened; his self-esteem has been shattered and his independence is now somewhat limited. Despite having these challenges, he has a positive attitude to soldier on with life and to fulfil his dreams.

The struggles he comes across on a daily life basis got me ruminating about the struggles of physically disabled students and how these affect their academic, social, and personal lives and how difficult it must be to adjust your life towards disability particularly more so if you were not born disabled. I thought of students who are involved in car accidents, and then lose the use of their limbs; and those who become disabled as a result of gunshot wounds for example. They must be finding it hard to adjust and adapt. Having difficulty adjusting is normal and is to be expected as their loss is immense and in most cases irreversible. While adjusting to the disability they go through the grief cycle and its associated feelings of shock, disbelief, anger, depression, bargaining, acceptance, and so on. But what can they do to cope with the disability? Menzi felt that the support he was getting from Unisa with regard to academic matters was sufficient. It is his adjustment to his outlook on life and social support that he needed assistance with. From my interaction with Menzi we devised some coping mechanisms (I'll share a few here) that he can use which I hope other people can use as well to cope with their disability.

- Acknowledge that it will take time for you to fully embrace the disability and to accept the reality. You have suffered a great loss and you are unique in how you deal with the loss and how it affects you emotionally and mentally. Be kind and gentle with yourself.
- Take one day at a time, one step at a time. Success is made of by many little steps and small wins. Celebrate your little steps and small wins.
- Focus on what you can control and what you can do well. You cannot control and you are not responsible for other people's reactions and feelings towards you. If friends leave you, create a new social support network, people who show interest and support regardless of your disability.
- Seek professional help if you feel you are overwhelmed. On some days you will feel like you are coping and on some, you will feel overwhelmed and depressed. Be constantly aware of your feelings so that you can be able to focus on the positives in your life when feelings of sadness and hopelessness come your way.
- Engage in daily affirmations such as 'I am important', 'I shall conquer', 'It may be hard, but I will push on'.

We should also bear in mind that some visual impairments are self-inflicted for example when we do not take good care of our eyes. Get your eyes tested regularly, follow a healthy diet, protect your eyes from the sun and wear protective goggles when working in hazardous environments. If you smoke, quit as smoking can cause macular degeneration of the eye. Also limit screen time (TV, Playstation games, cellphones) or invest in a computer screen protector when working for a long period on computers. Let us all take good care of ourselves and be supportive of people who are differently-abled.

PS: Glaucoma (also known as the silent thief of sight) is an eye disease that is caused by damage to the optic nerve due to increased pressure in the eye and it can gradually lead to blindness. Read more here: <https://www.netcarehospitals.co.za/News-Hub/News/glaucoma-the-silent-thief-of-sight>.



**Candice Chetty** shares the common symptoms of anxiety, the difference between anxiety and stress, and how to support others and get support for yourself.

Experiencing occasional anxiety is a normal part of life. However, people with anxiety disorders frequently have intense, excessive, and persistent worry and fear about everyday situations. Often, anxiety disorders involve repeated episodes of sudden feelings of intense anxiety and fear or terror that reach a peak within minutes (panic attacks). These feelings of anxiety and panic interfere with daily activities, are difficult to control, are out of proportion to the actual danger, and can last a long time. You may avoid places or situations to prevent these feelings. Symptoms may start during childhood or the teen years and continue into adulthood.

Common symptoms of a panic attack include:

- Feeling nervous, restless, on edge, or tense
- Having a sense of impending danger, panic, or doom
- Having an increased heart rate
- Heart palpitations
- Sweating
- Dizziness
- Feeling like you are going to die
- Trembling
- Feeling weak and tired

Other symptoms of a panic attack may include:

- Trouble concentrating or thinking about anything other than the present worry
- Having trouble sleeping
- Experiencing gastrointestinal (GI) problems
- Having difficulty controlling worry
- Having the urge to avoid things that trigger anxiety

### **Are your negative thought patterns contributing to your anxiety or stress?**

If so, you might be making errors in thinking called "Cognitive Distortions". Common cognitive distortions are thought to develop as a way of coping with adverse life events. The more prolonged and severe those adverse events are, the more likely it is that one or more cognitive distortions will form (Healthline, <https://www.healthline.com/health/cognitive-distortions>). These "thinking traps" or cognitive distortions play a very strong role in triggering and exacerbating your stress and anxiety. By recognising the errors in your thinking, you can decrease your anxiety by choosing to think about a situation differently. The following are examples of cognitive distortions that influence our thinking patterns:

<b>Polarised thinking</b>	<b>Mental filtering</b>	<b>Overgeneralisation</b>
When you have a “all or nothing” thinking pattern. You have to be perfect or you are a total failure	Focus on the negative of a situation and filter out the positive	Focus on a single event and make a conclusion based on this single piece of negative evidence - all events going forward will have the same negative outcome
<b>Magnification</b>	<b>Minimisation</b>	<b>Personalisation</b>
Over exaggeration which leads to worries and thinking about worst case scenarios	Minimising the importance of positive events	Takes things personally followed by a personal reaction to what others say or do and assuming that you are deliberately excluded or targeted
<b>Blaming</b>	<b>Mind reading</b>	<b>Discounting the positive</b>
Blaming others and playing the victim role - others are responsible for your pain. Blame is external rather than reflecting on one’s own contribution	You know what others are thinking and make assumptions about their intentions without any evidence.	Acknowledge positives but refuses to accept it and find excuses to turn it into a negative one

## Stress vs Anxiety

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/stress-vs-anxiety>

	<b>Stress</b>	<b>Anxiety</b>
Cause/Origin	Short-term and in response to a recognised threat	Can linger and not have an identifiable trigger
Symptoms	Faster heartbeat Faster breathing Diarrhea or constipation Anxious thoughts Moodiness, irritability or anger General unhappiness A feeling of being overwhelmed Loneliness Nausea Dizziness	Faster heartbeat Faster breathing Diarrhea or constipation A feeling of unease or dread Sweating Nervousness Tenseness Restlessness

- When to seek help:
- excessive anxiety that interferes with everyday life
  - misusing drugs or alcohol to deal with stress or anxiety
  - irrational fears
  - a significant change in sleeping habits
  - a significant change in eating habits
  - a significant change in personal hygiene habits
  - a prolonged low mood
  - self-harming or thinking about self-harming
  - suicidal thoughts
  - feeling out of control

## Supporting a loved one with anxiety

May be helpful	May be harmful
<p>Is there anything I can do to help? That sounds so tough. I'm proud of you for hanging in there I'm here to listen. Let me know what you need. I'm glad you're getting the support you deserve</p>	<p>It's not worth worrying about that. Why stress about it? Everyone has anxiety, you just have to deal. Have you tried yoga or meditation? Anxiety disorder? You just sound stressed..</p>

# Word Search

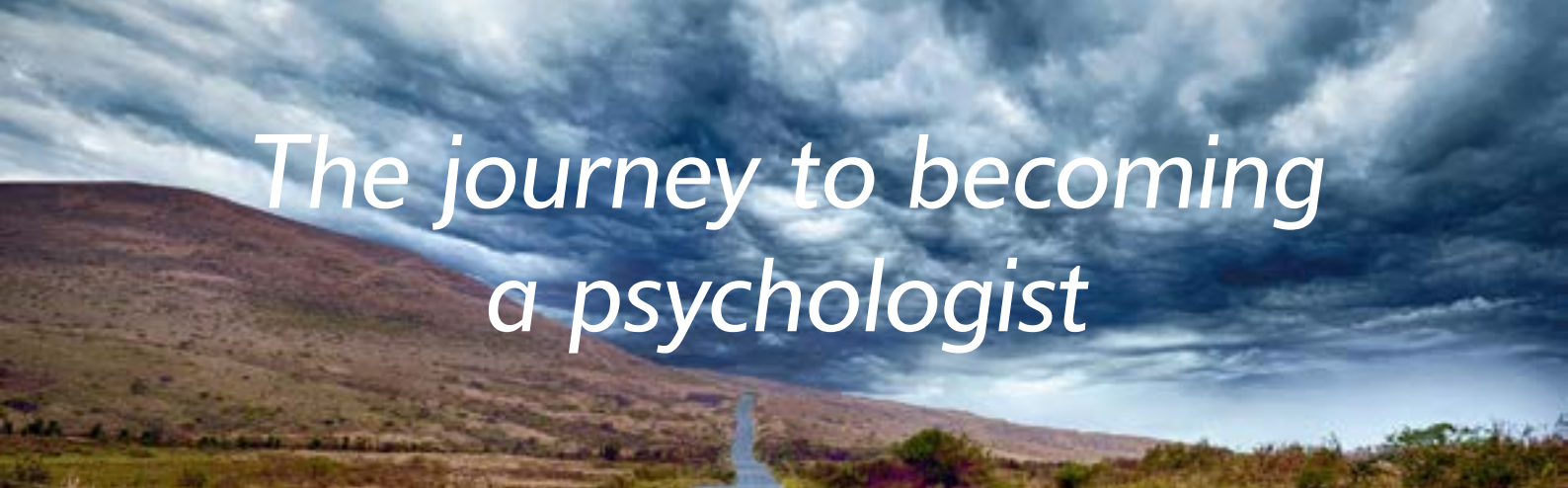
Compiled by: Sindiswa Mkize

A	G	N	I	L	L	E	S	N	U	O	C	O	T	S	W	K	M	S	H	E	A	Z	Q	O
G	R	E	R	S	O	A	M	D	J	L	I	J	H	L	R	P	U	A	X	D	S	E	N	H
Z	S	W	Z	L	B	L	B	X	E	D	Q	Y	A	B	D	O	N	V	C	M	G	L	M	E
Q	A	S	T	H	E	F	N	U	A	O	F	E	E	V	J	R	I	O	B	Z	I	S	A	Q
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A	V	Y	I	E	W	R	V	S	D	M	X	C	D	P	G	V	R	T	L	F	B	L	M	P

### Search for these words

Timetable	Mentor	Degree	Newsletter	Facebook	Believe
Unisa	Online	Proud	Counselling	Graduate	Successful
E Tutor	Module	Resource	Group	Code	Radio
Assignment	Distance learning		Certificate	Portfolio	Discussion
Library	Additional	Plan	Honours	Study	Masters

*Solution on last page.*



# The journey to becoming a psychologist

**Tumelo Mokoena** shares what he wished he knew before he started with his undergraduate degree.

It takes a minimum of 6-7 years to become a registered professional psychologist in South Africa. To be a psychologist you will need to complete the following; undergraduate Degree (3 years), Honours Degree (1 year), Masters Degree (1 or 2 years), Internship (1 year), and Community Service (1 year). An Honours Degree in Psychology is not the same as a BPsych. A BPsych or BPsych equivalence programme is a completely separate qualification focused on practical training that includes a supervised practicum consisting of 720 hours. This allows the graduate to register with the HPCSA as either a registered counsellor or a psychometrist, depending on the programme.

There are seven registration categories for psychologists in South Africa: clinical, counselling, educational, industrial, research, forensic, and neuro psychology. Take the time to research each of them carefully before you start studying psychology. Each is trained with a unique set of skills to fit their specific niche within the communities of South Africa. Similar to lawyers and chartered accountants, you will also need to write a Professional Board exam. To register with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), you will need to write and pass a national board exam after internship (before Community Service if you are taking the Clinical route). The professional board exam will test your ethical and therapeutic understanding and require a pass mark of 70% minimum.

There are no distance or online options at a Master's Level. You will be able to do your undergraduate and honours degrees as a full-time student or through open and distance learning (University of South Africa). All training at Master's level requires students to be on campus full time for 2 years. Your undergraduate and Honours studies in psychology will be theoretical. At Master's level you will be professionally trained and supervised to work with clients. It is during this time that you learn the practical application of the theories covered at an undergraduate and honours level. A Master's by dissertation and a professional Master's degree are very different. A Master's by Dissertation requires you to complete a research project and submit a dissertation. A professional Master's in a specific scope of practice (e.g. clinical psychology) will enable you to register with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), following the completion of your internship, a Professional Board Examination and community service of 12 months (for the clinical psychology scope of practice). However a Master's by Dissertation will not.

Being selected for a professional Master's degree (e.g. clinical or counselling psychology) is very competitive. Every year, hundreds of students apply for professional Master's programmes at universities in South Africa, and each university selects between 6 and 12 students per year, per category. This extreme competition leads to rigorous selection processes whereby most students will not be allocated a place in the following year's class. Rejection is normal, and it is important to get comfortable with it. With the intense competition at Masters level, being rejected by universities becomes commonplace. It's not personal; even though it feels like it. Many students apply for selection multiple times before being allocated a space. Completing a Masters degree outside of South Africa will not guarantee you an HPCSA registration. You will still need to meet the Psychology Board's registration requirements as well as write the national board exams. Remember that in other countries, you may need a Doctorate to become a Psychologist if they only do their professional practical training at the Doctorate level. Doing an online Master's degree with a university abroad will not qualify you as a psychologist in either country. Given this context, it is important that you explore other study and career options related to psychology. Download the Psychology @ Unisa brochure (<https://bit.ly/3jFfckG>) for a more in-depth discussion of the career and study options related to psychology.

I am me.

In all of the world, there is no one else exactly like me.

Therefore, everything that comes out of me is authentically mine because I alone choose it.

I own everything about me. My body, including everything it does; my mind, including all its thoughts and ideas; my eyes, including images of all they behold; my feelings, whatever they may be-anger, joy, frustration, love, disappointment, excitement; my mouth, and all the words that come out of it-polite, sweet or rough, correct or incorrect; my voice, loud or soft; and all my actions, whether they be to others or myself.

I own my fantasies, my dreams, my hopes and my fears. I own all my triumphs and successes, all my failures and mistakes. Because I own all of me, I can become intimately acquainted with me. By so doing, I can love me and be friendly with me in all my parts. I can then make it possible for all of me to work in my best interests.

I know there are aspects about myself that puzzle me, and other aspects that I do not know. But as long as I am friendly and loving to myself, I can courageously and hopefully look for the solutions to puzzles and for ways to find out more about me. This is authentic, it represents where I am at the moment in time, and it's me.

When I review later how I looked and sounded, what I said and did, and how I thought and felt, some parts may turn out to be unfitting. I can discard that which is unfitting and keep that which proved fitting and invent something new for that which I discarded.

I can see, hear, feel, think, say and do. I have the tools to survive, to be close to others, to be productive, and to make sense and order out of the world of people and things outside of me. I own me, and therefore I can engineer me,

I am me, and I am okay.

By Virginia Satir

## *By Sizwe Zondo (Student Mentor 2019)*

Ngisinga emuva, lide ibanga,

Ngibuka phambili kukude

Eyi nkosi yami kazi ngangenzani, Ngisohambeni olungapheli

Ngikundlelande umamangaza,

Undlela engapheli

Undlelende umaphilisa,

Mhlawumbe ukube, eyi... kodwa ....

Ngihamba indlela okungesiyona eyami,

Lena yindlela yobizo nothando

Uthando lobulungiswa, nokulingana, Uthando olumsulwa

Uthando olunokuzinikela,

Noma lilide lelibanga

Kodwa ukulihamba kuyanganelisa, Lenkambo igcwalisa mina ngobungcwele

Lendlela ngiyihamba ngikhala ezenelisa inhliziyo yami ngobumnene

Ngizinikele ukuthwala imithwalo yabanganakiwe

Angisona isifundiswa, ngiyisithunywa sikanembeza wobumnene.

Lona ngundlelande umamangaza.

To all Psychology students please don't forget that we are in a long walk

To serve the neglected and undermined

All the pains and confusions are there to prepare us for our....

Endless journey

Sikundlelande umaphilisa !!!!



## *Useful contact numbers*

Alcoholics Anonymous: 0861435722

Jess Ford Foundation: 086 133 3449

Lifeline: 031 3122323

Open Door Crises Care Centre: 031 7092679

Addington Hospital Psychiatric Clinic: 031 3272152

SADAG 24-hour helpline: 0800 456 789

Cipla Whatsapp Chat Line: 076 882 2775

Cipla 24hr Mental Health Helpline: 0800 456 789

Suicide Crisis Line: 0800 567 567

Lifeline Pietermaritzburg: 033 342 4447

Thuthuzela Care Centre (TCC RK Khan Hospital): 031 459 6000

Umlazi Thuthuzela Care Centre: 031 907 8496

Stanger TCC (MNdlovu@npa.gov.za): 032 551 6632

Phoenix-Mahatma Gandhi Thuthuzela Care Centre: 031 502 2338

Adcock Ingram Depression and Anxiety Helpline: 0800 70 80 90

**“If you plan on being anything less than you are capable of being, you will probably be unhappy all the days of your life.”**

***Abraham Maslow***





Our Student Mentors – Class of 2020



The CCD Unit Staff members during the Student Mentor Certification event – December 2020

CCD Unit Staff members (from L-R, Ms Candice Chetty, Mrs Bongekile Thusi, Mr Tumelo Mokoena, Mr Sibonelo Gumede, Dr Hendricks (Head of CCD-KZN) and Ms Simangaliso Ndwandwe



A Study Skills and Time Management Workshop facilitated by Student Counsellors and Andile, our former TCGP in February 2020



CCD Staff members with the sponsors from Sanlam – December 2020

## Word Search solution

A	G	N	I	L	L	E	S	N	U	O	C	O	T	S	W	K	M	S	H	E	A	Z	Q	O
G	R	E	R	S	O	A	M	D	J	L	I	J	H	L	R	P	U	A	X	D	S	E	N	H
Z	S	W	Z	L	B	L	B	X	E	D	Q	Y	A	B	D	O	N	V	C	M	G	L	M	E
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A	V	Y	I	E	W	R	V	S	D	M	X	C	D	P	G	V	R	T	L	F	B	L	M	P

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## Contact us

Email: [counsellingkzn@unisa.ac.za](mailto:counsellingkzn@unisa.ac.za) to request an appointment

Online bookings: Book an online appointment (<https://bit.ly/DCCDOnline>)

Speak to a counsellor via telephone: 0313358119

Visit our website: [www.unisa.ac.za/counselling](http://www.unisa.ac.za/counselling)