

Wellness scope of practice

Preamble

Wellness orientated counsellors provide support services, counseling services, and/or rehabilitation services within diverse community settings.

Due to the fact that wellness is a holistic approach to healthcare and counselling, wellness counsellors provide services over a large domain by making use of various related modalities. The objective of the wellness counsellor is to enhance total wellbeing and improve lifestyle related health. As such wellness orientated counsellors do not diagnose, treat or fix, neither do they practice psychotherapies, but practice professional caregiving and facilitated self-care.

The wellness orientated counsellor (WC) may screen, compile health profiles and support



both mental and physical wellbeing simultaneously as both aspects are related within the context of the *bodymind* perspective. In wellness, the client is not regarded as a *patient*, but as an '*actient*' (i.e. a client that is actively engaged in self-care). More specifically, the client is seen as a biopsychosocial system with reference to client centered counselling over many dimensions as integrative function. (see infographic). These dimensions are deemed to be related and integrated and therefore the counsellor cannot focus on one aspect with the

exclusion of others. Furthermore, in the light of this holistic wellness perspective it is more expedient to direct counsellors to practice caregiving in alignment with the wellness philosophy and outlook than to define a scope in terms of a list of items.

Wellness theory

It is imperative for wellness counsellors to have a clear understanding of the principles, philosophy, and practice of wellness in order to apply it in daily service. In summary wellness is characterised as:

In method *salutogenic*, i.e. aims not at treatment, but at improving and enhancing wellbeing. This means that Wellness counsellors do not fix what is wrong and does not follow a pathogenic approach. An example of this is the PERMA model employed in positive psychology. The PERMA Model, designed by Dr. Martin Seligman represents the five core elements of happiness and well-being. PERMA basically stands for Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishments. The WC facilitates for clients what makes them happy, regardless of their age, orientation, and status in life. The underlying idea is that when these elements are improved, clients more easily succeed in solving their life challenges.

Dr. Anton Antonovsky developed the concept of salutogenesis based on a Sense of Coherence (SOC) and its correlation with quality of life (QoL). QoL has been

defined as personal well-being or satisfaction with life, as well as physical and material well-being, relations with other people, social, communal, civic activities, personal development and fulfilment, positive mental health, a degree of goodness, and is related to health (HRQOL). (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/>)

SOC is understood as a mixture of optimism combined with a sense of control. Comprehensibility, a cognitive aspect, refers to the extent to which you might perceive both internal and external stimuli as being understandable in some kind of rational way. (<https://www.bing.com/search?q=sense+of+coherence>)

Sense of coherence (SOC) is a global construct expressing the degree to which a person has a pervasive and dynamic, but lasting, feeling that the internal and external stimuli and stressors in his/her environment are (a) comprehensible, i.e., predictable, structured, and explicable, (b) manageable, i.e., there are resources available to meet the demands of these stimuli, and (c) meaningful, i.e., the demands are challenges worthy of engagement and coping. (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/>). The idea of SOC is to have a tool that can help to mediate and ameliorate stresses by influencing coping efforts. A scale is available to test the SOC of an individual for improvement

In scope wellness healthcare is multidimensional, i.e. covering emotional, intellectual, psychological, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing, etc.

Emotional wellness has to do with stress management, emotional intelligence, mindfulness and meditation.

Intellectual wellness has to do with open mindedness, empowerment, positive thinking, personal development and growth and creativity.

Spiritual wellness is not the same as having religion. In the ambit of wellness it has to do with the development of meaning, purpose and connectivity and illumination.

Physical wellness is simply about being able to function optimally and take good care of our bodies. It incorporates activity, nutrition and adequate sleep and stress management. Many WC's also make use of herbal support in the form of tonics which is an area of specialization.

Social wellness is based on the ability to relate and connect with other people at work at home and in social settings. It includes conflict management, and building positive relationships. This contributes to sense of belonging and provides room for self-expression, productivity and self-development.

Environmental wellness and occupational wellness are also aspects to which attention can be given.

In practice wellness counselling is non-invasive and complementary because it supports self-care and preventative healthcare. Many WC's make use of the principles and regimes of natural medicine as modality.

In value wellness is beneficial for its objective is preventative healthcare,

- In marketing perspective popular and trending,
- In clinical setting scientific founded as it is based on trustworthy research.
- In professional setting a recognised occupation. Members carry designations that are listed in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF Act 67 of 2008). Note that only designated counsellors may legally use these designations as use without being duly recognised will constitute a misleading of the public. The designations and their numbers and levels are as follows.

Scope of practice

Designation	NQF Reg. No.	NQF Level
Candidate for membership	Candidates awaiting a designation	NA
Supportive Counsellor	645	4
Holistic Counsellor	646	5
Specialist Holistic Counsellor	-Not designated yet	6
Wellness Counsellor	895	7
Specialist wellness counsellor	896	8 and higher

The table listed in addendum A provides a list of functions permitted on each level, providing the counsellor is competently trained and/or have adequate experience.

Peer counsellors have the following generic skills

- Communication – listening to the client
- Client centered empathy – an attitude of caregiving
- Unconditional, nonjudgmental regard for the client
- Self-awareness of professionalism and sense of ethical integrity

Counselling is not...

- Telling people what to do
- Psychotherapists
- Teaching or preaching
- Interfering
- Imposing one way giving advice formally
- Social work
- Spoon-feeding

- Only done by professionals biased
 - Judging
 - For the counsellor's benefit
- Ref. <https://shivdevedu.org/>

Supportive counsellors work under supervision and practice limited talk therapies with the aim to

- Encourage and inspire
- Guide clients in self-understanding
- Coach clients in developing self-esteem
- Increasing self-understanding
- Help clients find solutions to everyday challenges
- Serve as sounding board for those in need of venting
- Identification of feelings
- Support mental wellbeing
- Support basic physical wellbeing via lifestyle decisions
- Improve social relationships
- Manage mild stress
- Reducing tensions
- Increasing understanding
- Exploring problem solving options
- Lead to resolving conflicts

Notes. Supportive counsellors ideally work under supervision of a more senior counsellor that can guide and support them and lend help. *See under supervision what it entails.

Supportive counsellors are obliged to refer clients to wellness counsellors or psychologists in cases that may need specialized counselling such as a thread of suicide or severe depression.

Holistic Counsellors work on their own as traditional herbalists but ideally seek supervision of a senior counsellor/coach for professional support. Their field is that of ethnomedicine and they are allowed to run small health shops stocked with traditional herbs.

Wellness Counsellors work independently as wellness consultants in counselling practices and apply wellness concepts in support of all the dimensions of wellbeing as set out above. This spectrum may range from emotional and mental wellness to that of occupational and social wellness making use of applicable modalities such as the following:

- Talk therapies such as narrative therapy, play therapy or Logotherapy and NLP, etc.
- Ethnomedicine based on traditional herbalism or folk medicine
- Lifestyle coaching
- Energy medicine with reference to state of the art screening devices.
- Body or somatic therapies such as tapping or EFT.

Specialist Wellness Counsellors work independently in wellness context with the added qualification or experience of being able to specialize in one or more areas of counselling as set out below:

AREA OF COUNSELLING	AREA OF COUNSELLING
1. Marriage counselling	10. Counselling the bereaved
2. Sex counselling	11. Personal problems
3. Drug abuse counselling	12. Stress and burnout
4. Counselling children	13. Wellness enhancement
5. Counselling parents	14. Occult counselling
6. Trauma counselling	15. Development and growth
7. Relationship counselling	16. Spiritual awareness
8. Victims of abuse	17. Health and healing
9. Life skills	18. Sickness & death
19. Group counselling	20. Lifestyle coaching

Supervision

Supervision is important in the gaining of experience for counsellors and also serve as safeguard for inexperienced counsellors. Supervision involves the overseeing of a junior counsellor by a reputed senior and experienced counsellor with the purpose of providing guidance and ensuring that practitioners sustain good practice throughout their working careers. It involves a complex blend of professional, education and therapeutic aspects". (Geldard, & Geldard, 2001, p.377). Supervisors need not be directly present, but should be accessible for questions and available to monitor, check and be consulted. The junior counsellor should have regular discussions with their supervisors and gain necessary feedback and constructive comments. Supervision provides an excellent basis for continuous professional development and ongoing personal growth. Supervisors ideally provide reports of work successfully completed under their supervision. The onus is on senior counsellors to make themselves available as potential supervisors and junior counsellors have the responsibility to negotiate their own supervision.

Continuous Professional development (CPD)

In terms of statutory stipulations all professionals are obliged complete annual CPD training as prescribed by their professional bodies. This is an important prerequisite for maintaining membership. CPD is training apart from academic programmes and is the ongoing intentional maintenance and development of the knowledge and skills needed to perform in a professional context. This could mean honing current skills, it could mean developing them to a new level, or it could mean learning new ones that will allow

an employee's job role to expand or prepare them for potential promotion.

<https://www.cpdstandards.com/what-is-cpd/> The number of CPD's is according to level of expertise.

Board examinations

The ASCHP as professional body provides board examinations to contribute to credentialing. It is aimed at improving professionalism and exploration of the wellness theory as counselling domain.

In a competitive world driven by service excellence, we cannot hope to succeed as counsellors unless we comply with the minimum standards of professionalism. This standard of excellence is known as the process of credentialing and this is the objective of a board examination. The key concepts of credentialing are professionalism within scope of practice, practice ethics, client rights and service competence.

During the past decade we have seen a strong movement towards the professionalization of the 'peer counselling' sector on primary healthcare level for the purpose of job creation. We do believe that, it is only through the manifestation of true professionalism in counselling that we can establish its integrity as an occupation that is worthwhile. This brings us to the hallmarks of professionalism.

Professional counsellors not only create a good impression with the public, but ensure that they are competent and accountable care givers. Accountability means that a counsellor is able to demonstrate the ability to take full responsibility for his or her work, decision-making and use of resources, and limited accountability for the decisions and actions of others in varied or ill-defined contexts. Professional counsellors behave ethically by conserving the privacy and rights of their clients. One of the cross critical skills on higher levels of training include "problem solving, in respect of which a learner is able to demonstrate the ability to identify, analyse, evaluate, critically reflect on and address complex problems, applying evidence-based solutions and theory-driven arguments."

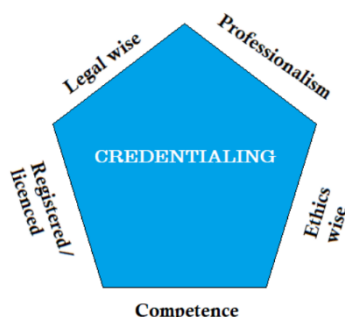
This enables counsellors to manage and control their own affairs ethically responsibly, based on the acquired knowledge and professional skills and this includes ethical decision making, problem solving, the accessing, processing and management of information and the ability to produce and communicate information. The public demands professionalism in counselling and being credentialed will help the counsellor to achieve that outcome.

Credentialing

Credentialing describes the standard against which someone is licenced to practice and occupation and pertains to qualifications, level of expertise, professional conduct and ethical character. The root meaning of credentialing is the concept credo which stands 'to believe in' and refers to authenticity.

The public will be encouraged to put their trust in a credentialed professional as they know it guarantees a high standard when it comes to training, experience, or demonstrated

Meaning of being
credentialed



ability, and practice history. This is what is meant in the popular vernacular when someone refers to a practitioner as 'having a good name' in the industry. Such a prestigious accolade is the best marketing tool in the long run as people will advertise such a practitioner by word of mouth.

Most disciplinary cases that the professional body for counsellors have to attend to speaks of lack of credentialing where counsellors fail to attain a high standard in counselling. It is therefore imperative to ensure that counsellors are thoroughly credentialed with reference to the following aspects:

- **Competency:** Being able to do the job in terms of experience and skills as per training. This requires the background of an accredited qualification and being academically trained in underlying theories. It also entails the ability to work within the domain of counselling as set out by the professional body. In the instance of the ASCHP it is the domain of wellness in distinction from that of conventional psychotherapy.
- **Professionalism:** Being legal wise: Having a good knowledge of ethical codes, applicable legislation and social work elements. These aspects contribute to 'Good Practice'.
- **Ethics.** Observing ethical conduct and understanding jurisprudence ensures working according to ethical code and clear and strict moral guidelines
- **Registration.** Proof of registration as counsellor: Working within a particular listed designation and scope of practice and its professional limitations. This includes the obligation to do CPD training.

Registering as member of a professional body

The ASCHP (Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners) is an NPC that was established in 2015 as SAQA recognised body (ID 984) to provide for peer or community counsellors a professional platform and negotiate a learning pathway for upgrading of qualifications. As such it is the only professional body in South Africa for counsellors who are not psychologists or social workers.

Various levels for membership are available starting with NQF 4 with Supportive counsellors and migrating to more senior levels such as specialist wellness counsellors.

ASCHP counsellors work in the domain of wellness aligned to the WHO policies which defines health as a positive state of mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing.

This is a systems approach which requires a comprehensive approach to health as a state of wellbeing in which the individual's body, mind, emotions and spirit are in

harmony with and guided by an awareness of society, nature and the universe (Arthur Stanley).

The term “Wellness Counsellor” is an umbrella term for counsellors that employ insights from psychology, sociology, natural health care and spirituality in a systems approach to counselling.

The benefit of registration is spelled out by Mr. Joe Samuels (former CEO, SAQA) that said: “The recognition of PB will contribute to strengthening social responsiveness and accountability within the professions and promoting pride in association for all profession.”

As such a PB offers inter alia the following benefits and advantages:

- Professional status
- Provision for legal protection
- Practice guidelines
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD's)
- Scope of practice
- Ethical code
- Network links
- Learning pathway
- Income opportunity
- Career possibility

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