

MEDIA STATEMENT

THE PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR PSYCHOLOGY RAISING AWARENESS ON MENTAL HEALTH

4 October 2019

For immediate release

The Professional Board for Psychology under the ambit of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) is commemorating World Mental Health Awareness month, specifically on 10 October, which is Mental Health Day. The World Health Organisation (WHO) Mental Health Day theme this year is “**Working together to prevent suicide – A day for 40 seconds of action**”. The WHO states that “every suicide is a tragedy with long-lasting effects on the people left behind”. During this month the Board will focus on the prevention and treatment of depression as this is one of the factors which may lead to suicide.

Mental health refers to a person’s cognitive, behavioural and emotional well-being – it is all about how a people feel, think and behave. An estimated 400 million people worldwide suffer from mental or neurological disorders or from psycho-social problems, which vary in severity, and may be transient (like an Acute Stress Disorder), periodic (like Bipolar Disorder, characterised by periods of exaggerated elation followed by periods of depression) or long lasting and progressive (like Alzheimer’s Disease).

The Professional Board for Psychology is mandated to guide the profession in ensuring that registered practitioners with Council practise within their scope. The Board also regulates and advocates for quality psychological healthcare. During this Mental Health Awareness month, the Board seeks to educate and create awareness on the impact that suicide has in the South African communities, highlighting the importance of early warning signs, available treatment and prevention.

Mental healthcare facilities are not easily accessible to disadvantaged communities, which has led to poor public health outcomes and stigmatisation about mental health . The Board hopes that through this awareness month we will promote a positive approach to understanding mental health issues, increase awareness of the types of interventions available and inform our communities where to seek help.

The Board will continue to strive for improved access to quality mental health care, the promotion of mental well-being amongst the communities and improved care of people affected by mental disorders.

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About the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) is a statutory body established under the Health Professions Act, 56 of 1974. The HPCSA is committed to protecting the public and guiding the professions. The mission of the HPCSA is quality and equitable healthcare for all.

Further, the HPCSA is mandated to regulate the health professions in the country in aspects pertaining to education, training and registration, professional conduct and ethical behaviour, ensuring Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and fostering compliance with healthcare standards.

In order to safeguard the public and guiding the professions, registration in terms of the Act is a prerequisite for practising any of the health professions registrable with Council.

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