



Association for Supportive Counsellors
& Holistic Practitioners NPC
Reg no: 2012/221416/08
SAQA recognized professional body (ID 984)
with NQF registered designations

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10/04/2024

Dear esteemed ASCHP member,

As communicated on 9 April 2024 in the special circular, kindly see the ASCHP's formal response to The Mail and Guardian article dated 5th of April 2024 below.

Link to the article published by The Mail and Guardian:

<https://mg.co.za/thought-leader/opinion/2024-04-05-charlatans-and-the-wellness-business/>

Your positive frame of mind is much appreciated, as the ASCHP stays committed to protecting the wellness industry.

LETTER FROM THE ASCHP TO MAIL & GUARDIAN

The Editor,

Mail & Guardian Newspaper

Dear Sir, Madam,

Re. ASCHP response to recent article as indicated below

The article refers: Charlatans in the Wellness Business, by Dr. Benjamin Smart (5th April, 2024). The management of the ASCHP, a professional body for wellness counsellors, object to this false and rather slanderous way of presenting wellness counsellors. We take note of the concerns raised, but must point out that Smart bluntly generalises, without consultation with the ASCHP, in his portrayal of wellness counsellors at the peril of those counsellors who really render much needed services in communities that often do not have access to formal healthcare support.

The following salient facts that the public ought to know is that:

- The ASCHP is a SAQA recognised professional body with listed designations in terms of NQF Act 67 of 2008. It is subject to regular audits and its members participate in annual Continuous Professional Development.
- The ASCHP was required to submit a scope of practice for approval to the HPCSA prior to its establishment in 2014.

Applicants are required to have academically accredited and relevant qualifications as well as a minimum practical training. The few lay counsellors that work in supportive capacity are required to work under supervision. This ensures proper structuring of the lay counsellor movement under the auspices of an ethical code and rules of professional conduct.

Directors: Dr L Herholdt, LD Herholdt, Dr J Schoeman



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- Wellness is a recognised holistic approach to counselling that is, inter alia, incorporated in the policies of the World Health Organisation. As salutogenic method its objective is not to diagnose or treat, but to practice care-giving as facilitated self-care of the client. As such, counsellors are obliged to properly refer possible pathology and mental healthcare issues to a registered HPCSA professional.
- In terms of the understanding that wellness is the complete integration of body, mind, and spirit - the realisation that everything we do, think, feel, and believe has an effect on our state of well-being, wellness counsellors render a much-needed and eagerly welcomed service to communities. This is not at all in opposition to the biomedical model, but complementary to it.

We at the ASCHP believe that there is an existential space for community based counsellors to practice with love and compassion in a world that is rife with personal challenges, conflicts, fears, uncertainties and gloom. It would be truly a sad day when the medicalisation of society would attempt to restrict the public not to make use of peer counselling services of a concerned and responsible person to a fellow person in need.

Marius Herholdt (PhD; D.Phil)
(President, ASCHP)