



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

Portion 58 of Farm JR 286  
Boekenhoutskloofdrift, Cullinan  
1000  
PostNet Suite 262 P/Bag X504  
Sinoville 0129  
Tel: 082 907 4327 / 012 111 9002  
Fax: 0866325232  
Email: info@aschp.net  
Web: www.aschp.net

12/04/2024

Dear Member

Herewith is the response sent to Prof Benjamin Smart. We will be consulting with our legal team on 17 April 2024.

Dear Sir,

What a terrible disappointment to learn about the biased content of your insulting Mail & Guardian article (5th April, 2024) on the so-called 'ASCHP wellness charlatans'. Very cleverly you disguise, what seems to us to be a personal vendetta, as a true concern. We do, however, hope that this is not true, for it will raise serious ethical concerns, but time will tell.

We at the ASCHP regret that you failed to consult with us beforehand, in order to properly verify your accusations, beliefs and suspicions. This rather unscientific approach is not expected from a man of your stature and position. We can confirm that, in terms of ASCHP policy, wellness counsellors do *not* diagnose or treat according to biomedical precepts. They can screen, counsel and are obliged to refer clients when and where required.

What you also may not be aware of, is that ASCHP directors met with the HPCSA psychology board prior to the establishment of the professional body in 2014. At this meeting the scope of practice, and objectives were thoroughly discussed and accepted. As salutogenic approach to primary healthcare, in line with WHO policies, the ASCHP is built on the following salient points.

- That the client is a bio-psychosocial person with many entangled dimensions, such as mental, emotional, social, physical and spiritual.
- That client centred counselling is preferable, where the virtues of warm compassion, kindness, love and empathy are vital virtues.
- That the core of wellness counselling is that of self-care, guided by the idea that to fix people, presupposes brokenness; helping people assumes that they are weak. Care- giving, as counsellor facilitation, acknowledges and serves people in becoming whole (Rachel Naomi Remen). This differs clearly largely from biomedical practice.
- That wellness requires a comprehensive counselling strategy based on the idea 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." (Greg Anderson).

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



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

Portion 58 of Farm JR 286  
Boekenhoutskloofdrift, Cullinan  
1000  
PostNet Suite 262 P/Bag X504  
Sinoville 0129  
**Tel:** 082 907 4327 / 012 111 9002  
**Fax:** 0866325232  
**Email:** [info@aschp.net](mailto:info@aschp.net)  
**Web:** [www.aschp.net](http://www.aschp.net)

Consequently, wellness counsellors do not pretend to be 'little psychologists' and neither do they work as biomedical practitioners. They definitely pose no threat, but deliver a much-needed service where many people may not have access to similar services. As designated members, they are duly qualified within scope of practice, a skills training certificate as minimum requirement, and many have degree and post graduate qualifications. Annual CPD compliance ensures a high standard of professional demeanor. The ASCHP works with a number of public university departments as preferred training partners in this regard.

One good thing that transpired from all of this, is that your article sparked a keen sense of strong loyalty, support and pride amongst our members. For this we thank you.

Regards  
Dr Liezl Herholdt  
ASCHP CEO