

## **Staff Health and Wellbeing services at Stellenbosch University**

This document provides an outline of the current Staff Health and Wellbeing services available at Stellenbosch University.

### **1. The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)**

The EAP that was established in the Wellness Office within the Human Resources Division, plays a crucial role in guiding and advancing staff health and wellbeing. The EAP entails the following:

- It is a benefit programme that assists employees with personal and/or work-related challenges that may impact their health and wellbeing, as well as their job performance.
- The EAP is designed to assist employees in getting help for their work and personal challenges so that they remain productive on the job.
- The EAP assists employees to recognise, understand and find solutions to their problems.
- The EAP is accessible voluntarily.
- Confidentiality is ensured and maintained.
- The EAP is implemented in the context of cooperation with various roleplayers, namely the Wellbeing Office in Human Resources, the Equality Unit within the Division for Student Counselling and Development, Campus Health Services, Facilities Management, faculties and responsibility centres in the professional academic support services environments. External service providers are consistently used; e.g. an external counsellor is available on-site on Wednesdays and Fridays.

#### **The EAP provides the following services:**

- Emotional support and advisory services, which, among others, includes counselling on personal and/or work-related challenges;
- Face-to-face counselling sessions by internal and/or external professionals;
- Trauma counselling (both debriefing and crisis intervention);
- Support concerning the reintegration process in the workplace;
- Monitoring and evaluating the quality of services rendered;
- Awareness of health and wellbeing, and other health and wellbeing training programmes for line managers;

- Training programmes for staff regarding the health and wellbeing of staff; e.g. training of supervisors to deal with the mental health challenges of postgraduate students.

### **Guidelines for referral**

**The following referral guidelines are provided for accessing the services of the EAP, which functions in partnership with various roleplayers.**

#### **Voluntary or self-referral**

- The employee may arrange an appointment for him/herself.
- Line managers must be informed timeously of appointment times, and if possible, of the number of sessions the employee will be attending (if services are accessed during working hours).

#### **Informal referral**

- Any professional person, family member or friend/colleague may refer a staff member.

#### **Formal referral**

- A line manager can make a formal referral.
- An EAP referral form must be completed by line managers and is available on the HR webpage.
- Line managers are provided with progress reports without compromising confidentiality.

#### **Types of problems to be referred in the framework of the EAP**

- Dependency: Alcohol, drugs, gambling etc.
- Psychosocial: Stress, depression etc.
- Marriage, family and relationship problems
- Workplace problems
- Management of personal finances
- Bereavement support
- Chronic diseases

## **2.The EAP and the Equality Unit**

The Equality Unit (EqU) is responsible for the promotion of collective action towards social justice and discourse regarding social asymmetries at Stellenbosch University. The Unit coordinates, educates, teaches and raises awareness around sexualities, gender, sexual harassment, HIV/Aids, and anti-discrimination through the Unfair Discrimination Portfolio, the HIV and Sexualities Portfolio and the Gender Non-Violence Portfolio.

Any student or staff member who experiences a form of unfair discrimination, victimisation, sexual harassment or harassment within the university, may report their complaint to the **Unfair Discrimination Portfolio**, by either sending an email to [unfair@sun.ac.za](mailto:unfair@sun.ac.za) or visiting our offices at Simon Nkoli House, 39 Victoria Street, Stellenbosch. *Unfair discrimination may include but is not limited to racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, xenophobia or ableism. Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation or sexuality; it is unwanted and may be experienced as an expression of power, authority or control of a sexual nature; it creates a hostile environment that prevents those concerned to learn or work to capacity. All matters are handled in accordance with the SU Policy on Unfair Discrimination and Harassment. Any contact with EqU is strictly confidential and does not commit you to following a formal process. All line managers are urged to ensure that all persons who resort under their line management understand the policy and procedures set out herein.*

The **HIV and Sexualities Portfolio** oversees the implementation of the HIV/Aids Policy and drives the various components of a wide-ranging institutional response to HIV, including free HIV testing and counselling, condom distribution, and support services to the LGBTI community.

The **Gender Non-Violence Portfolio** coordinates and monitors matters related to gender-based violence by assisting in the development of a comprehensive institutional response to gender violence and rape culture.

The EqU also offers a variety of training and facilitation sessions as well as a mediation programme. Mediation is the creation of a voluntary opportunity where an impartial third party, helps two or more people in dispute to attempt to reach a mutually beneficial agreement

### **3.The EAP and Campus Health Services (CHS)**

The primary goal of CHS is to ensure longer lives free of preventable disease, injury, disability, or premature death through integrated healthcare programmes to staff and students of Stellenbosch University.

This implies that all aspects that sustain or improve the physical and mental health of individuals should be addressed through the existing primary medical care, occupational health and physiotherapy programmes. Mental health interventions are done mainly through external service providers. In-

house psychological counselling services for both academic and professional academic support services staff are currently being investigated.

The occupational health programme forms a crucial platform for the identification of risks for the health and wellbeing of staff. It furthermore ensures a healthy environment in which staff can perform their daily tasks. Close alignment with Human Resources (incapacity, absenteeism, etc.) and Facilities Management (radiation, noise management, etc.) ensures a more holistic engagement.

### **Current services at CHS to staff**

The following services are rendered to staff.

#### **Primary healthcare programmes:**

Adult immunisation programme:

- Annual flu and MMR (mumps, measles and rubella) vaccinations
- Immunisations: DPT Meningitis and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), important in the prevention of cervical cancer; Hepatitis A/B, essential for healthcare workers/handlers of human tissue ("Herd"). Immunisation in the case of outbreaks such as measles, H1N1 flu, etc. Usually, this service is provided in collaboration with local or provincial health departments.

#### **Reproductive and gender health programme:**

Free oral contraception and advice (Western Cape Department of Health Guidelines), free sexually transmitted disease treatment (Western Cape Department of Health Guidelines), HIV/Aids screening and counselling (including PEP and PrEP programmes), pregnancy testing and advice, clinical breast exams, cervical cancer screenings (PAP smears and Human Papilloma Virus HPV advice), and prostate screening tests for men. Programmes are based on the specific gender-based needs and focus mainly on screening for cancer and lifestyle diseases.

#### **Diabetic foot programme:**

This programme is mainly based on a comprehensive foot assessment for the prevention of foot and lower limb complications and to treat foot disease amongst diabetics.

#### **Chronic disease programme:**

This programme includes extensive medical screening for risk factors and early chronic disease (including mental and lifestyle disease). Therefore, the screening includes a comprehensive history, detailed physical examination, assessment of current medication, physical activity assessment (including musculoskeletal assessment), nutritional assessment, and baseline psychological assessment.

**Travel medicine programme:**

Services in this programme are aimed at protecting the health of travelling staff and students through necessary preventative interventions (appropriate medication or immunisations) and health education applicable to the destination.

**Occupational Health Programme**

An internal specialised team renders services in this programme and aims to ensure a healthy working environment for all staff as well as compliance to the Health and Safety Act of S.A. As an integral part of the medical offerings at CHS, valuable health data is generated through health surveillance programmes. This division also manages incapacity and disability in the workplace. It also conducts health risk assessments to ensure that the environment in which staff work does not impact negatively on their health and wellbeing. This division engages closely with Human Resources (HR) and Facilities Management to ensure statutory compliance

**Physiotherapy Programme**

Physiotherapy treatment aims to restore motion and to reduce pain. All services are closely aligned with the medical and occupational health divisions to support rehabilitation back to the same level as before an incident. Furthermore, this division, in conjunction with the occupational health team, renders a service that does an ergonomic assessment of the workplace.

**4. Way forward**

A process is currently underway to establish staff health and wellbeing as an embedded imperative in all environments. These environments would execute the imperative under the guidance of specific structures and functionaries, providing leadership in fulfilling the crucial institutional mandate of health and wellbeing. The strategic theme of the University to be the employer of choice guides this process taking into consideration the values of the University which are: (ECARE) Excellence, Compassion, Accountability, Respect and Equity.

**Document compiled by the Division of Human Resources**

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