

# e-Forum

AN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND ISSUES OF REGISTERED COUNSELLORS AND PSYCHOMETRISTS

## EXCITING TIMES AHEAD FOR COUNSELLORS AND PSYCHOMETRISTS by Sharon Johnson

As PsySSA submits proposed amendments to Scope of Practice of psychologists, counsellors and psychometrists to the Board of the HPCSA and we begin to examine our role in the planned National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme, our rights and responsibilities are being affected by what is being discussed and debated.

As chair of this division I was influenced by the fact that no objections have been received about the proposed Scope of Practice for Registered Counsellors and Psychometrists at our AGM or in our last electronic newsletter which went out to members. However, the process did afford us all the opportunity to critically appraise what we should or should not be doing professionally.

While some psychologists question our rights to supervise and train other registered counsellors and psychometrists, others believe we should not participate in policy formulation on various aspects of theory and research or participate in the design, management and evaluation of psychologically-based programmes.

Members of the executive committee of our division pointed out that while we are aware of the limits of our training and do not wish to venture beyond ethical boundaries, we do feel responsible and accountable enough to make decisions regarding our profession. We also feel capable, after internship and several years of practical experience, to take part in the training and supervision of newcomers.

The only amendment put forward by our division to the Scope of Practice is clause (g) concerning providing expert evidence and/or opinion. A spokesperson from the HPCSA pointed out that this was an oversight by the Dept of Health, as registered counsellors and psychometrists can only give evidence as 'a fact witness or as a witness under protest.' They may not appear as an expert witness.

A BPsych Task Team at the HPCSA has finalized its duties, aligning the BPsych core competencies to the needs of the Dept of Health and the new NHI scheme, which is based on multi-tiered/multi-systemic partnerships. In the words of Prof Juan Nel, from UNISA's Psychology Department, in email correspondence: "I firmly believe in the important contribution, in general, to be made by BPsych Counsellors, in particular. We need to strengthen related training and the qualification, more generally, if we wish for psychology to increase its relevance".

Indeed, let us acknowledge the leading role we have to play in psychology in the provision of mental health services in communities and organisations seeking psychosocial counselling and psychometric evaluation.

I would like to wish you all the best for the end of year celebrations, with time for rest and reflection. Let's hope 2012 brings us manageable challenges in these exciting times!



SHARON JOHNSON



## TRAINING AND SUPERVISION OF PSYCHOMETRISTS AND COUNSELLORS

One of the most controversial clauses in the HPCSA Scope of Practice for Psychometrists is the training and supervision of registered counsellors and psychometrists in supervised practice in psychological measurement. Vice-chair of the division, who is a registered Counsellor and Psychometrist, Carinna Krantz, puts forward the case for the retention of this clause.

"Registered Psychometrists (private practice) are fully equipped, trained and qualified to support registered Counsellors and Psychometrists (supervised practice) with training and supervision, based on our specialist professional hands-on knowledge and expertise in the world of assessments (psychometric assessments as well as assessment centres, which fall in the category of non-psychometric assessments).

"The context is clear: Psychometrists should not be held responsible at any time for covering the training of counselling modules to Counsellors, unless the focus remains on the transfer of skills related to psychometric instruments and any concurrent counselling components that may be required for formal feedback interviews.

"As professional health practitioners we concern ourselves with the scope of our own practice. It appears that it's possible that not all fellow health practitioners from other disciplines in psychology are always up to date with the nature and standards of our training, as well as the complexity standards of our Board Examinations."

The above statement is derived from first-hand experience in industry, as well as from the following situation:

Scenario: Round Table Discussion

Date: Friday 14 August 2009, 15th PsySSA Congress, Cape Town, International Convention Centre

Topic: Clinical psychology in the 21st century - a South African perspective on training, developments and scope of practice

Chair: Makwe, E.R.

Co-Chair: Magwaza, A.S.

During the inter-active discussion, a member of the audience contextually referred to the practice of psychometry by Psychometrists in SA as a non-essential by-product within the field of psychology. Although mainly muted, the majority of attendees reacted with suppressed laughter and appeared amused by this remark. Prof Magwaza reacted sternly to the somewhat loaded atmosphere, and I wish to quote her direct words:

"The world of psychology does not revolve around the work of Clinical Psychologists; I wish to bring under the audience's attention that the training standards of Psychometrists in SA are extremely high. I know that, because I'm responsible for the moderation of the papers from the Independent Practice Board Exams. You will be pleasantly surprised by the high quality of their knowledge, skills and expertise, reflected in the results from the Board Exam. Do yourselves a favour and engage with those registered Psychometrists, you might even learn from them."

Prof Magwaza's speciality is in clinical psychology. She has published in international journals and written book chapters. She has also worked as a consultant for the Dept of Science and Technology, evaluating research proposals and monitoring research projects for various organisations including the Medical Research Council. Professionally, she has served as the vice-chairperson of the Professional Board of Psychology as well as a representative and member of the Health Professional Council of South Africa.



CARINNA KRANTZ

A DIVISION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA (PsySSA)

## Book Review

### EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: Tipping Point in Workplace Excellence

by Annette Prins, Eugene van Niekerk & Annette Weyers.

This book is intended to equip individuals to function more effectively, both in their personal lives and in organisations, by enhancing their development and practice of emotional intelligence.

There appears to be an exponential growth nowadays in the stress that individuals experience, and a corresponding increase in health risks such as hypertension, secondary diabetes, and other ailments linked to high levels of stress. It appears that individuals and organisations are increasingly unwell. Emotional intelligence is an important tool to enhance overall individual and organisational wellness and resilience.

The model proposed in this book contains a broad spectrum of human skills that act together in a coherent fashion to attain this goal. Readers will learn to develop the following components of emotional intelligence: Emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualisation, independence, empathy, interpersonal relationships, social responsibility, problem solving, reality testing, flexibility, stress tolerance, impulse control, happiness, optimism.

#### ANNETTE PRINS

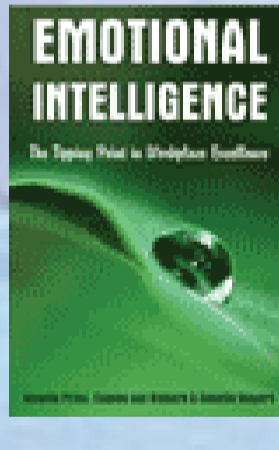
As a senior counselling psychologist, Annette is passionate about developing human capital. She obtained her Master's degree in Counseling Psychology cum laude. She completed her PhD in 2007 with a thesis entitled 'Emotional intelligence and leadership in corporate management: A fortigenic approach.'

#### EUGENE VAN NIEKERK

Eugene van Niekerk obtained his BA degree at the University of South Africa, and BA (Honours) and MSc at the University of Cape Town. He read for his doctorate at Forte Hare, while a member of staff of the university.

#### ANNETTE WEYERS

Annette Weyers is a consultant social worker, and has been involved in the wellness business for the past ten years. She co-owns the company Talent and Wellness Management, and as part of a professional team presents workshops and does in-house training at companies.



**Q:** Please help, I am very confused. The HSPCA brochure for psychometrics states that one must complete the internship within two years of completion of your honours to sit for board exam. University of Jhb's intern programme brochure states that you must apply within eight years of completion of your honours. How does this work?

**A:** UNISA clarified with the HSPCA that your internship must START within two years following the Hons degree. From completion of your degree you have five years to register as a psychometrist.

*"Liberty means responsibility: That is why most men dread it."*  
George Bernard Shaw



Farewell and thanks  
Tina Koyounoglou has resigned as secretary of the division. Thanks Tina for all your hard work. Vice-chair Carinna Krantz has offered to take over the distribution of e-Forum, which can also be accessed via the PsySSA website.



**Wishing all our members a happy and safe holiday season!**  
From the e-Forum team

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