

# **Annual Report 2011**



## **Child and Family Centre**

**School of Psychology  
P/Bag X01 Scottsville  
PIETERMARITZBURG, 3209  
South Africa  
Phone: +27 33 2605166  
Fax: +27 33 2605809**



**UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL**  

---

**INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

**The Child & Family Centre  
School of Psychology, UKZN.**

2011 will go down as one of our most interesting and difficult years. We have worked with four intern psychologists for the entire year and acknowledge the important work that has also been taken on by the 12 Masters students. The Head of the Centre took sabbatical leave for the first six months, and her responsibilities were shared between several colleagues in the School of Psychology. The interns found this rather unsettling, nevertheless were able to maintain a consistently high level of work and community engagement.

This year has been marked by a number of areas of significant and consistent progress: .

- The workshop programme has been warmly and positively received by a large group of educators who consistently and loyally attended each of the workshops.
- The quality of child interventions has improved
- The School's programme has been extended and now fulfils a vital function in several schools.
- We have begun working at the Thuthuzela Care Centre, a government based multidisciplinary initiative that aims to decrease the secondary trauma to survivors of child sexual abuse. Although this was at times very difficult and intense, the interns made a significant contribution towards both the functioning of a centre as a whole as well as to individual clients and their families.

**1. The work of the Child and Family Centre**

The Child and Family centre offers professional services in the following areas:

- 1) Full assessment services that include psychometric tests, clinic interviews, school observations and full formulations to enhance a holistic understanding of the child, family and context, in which the child or adult is growing and developing. The Child and Family Centre adopts a systemic approach towards understanding their clients.
- 2) One-on-one psychotherapy for children, adults and families, many of whom are from the disadvantaged sectors of society, and who have experienced major life adversities or other forms of psychosocial stress which warrant professional intervention.
- 3) Training, supervision, debriefing, and mentoring of educators, social workers, community mental health workers, community volunteers, and related mental health professional on request.
- 4) Development and facilitation of community based interventions.

## **2. Clients**

The clients referred to the CFC, or those who request assistance from the CFC, present with a variety of different needs. The challenges faced by individuals and families in the South African context are many and varied, and wherever possible the CFC attempts to meet these needs in a sensitive and timely manner. Referrals to the CFC may include family and relational problems, academic difficulties and scholastic problems, emotional problems related to a wide variety of traumatic experiences, and behavioural problems associated with adjustment difficulties to name a few.

During the period of January to October 2011, over 200 referrals for psychological services were made to the Child and Family Centre. These clients are then placed on a waiting list and seen as soon as a therapist becomes available. Although the length of the waiting time varies due to the scarcity of resources, attempts are made to provide assistance in the shortest time possible. In an average week, the interns and masters students will generally see approximately 70 clients per week at the Centre. These clients will then receive assistance for varying lengths of time, depending on their specific needs.

In addition to the clients seen on site at the Centre, a number of clients are also seen at the community placements that both masters students and interns attend each week. The number of clients seen at these sites will vary according to both the type of placement and the current needs of each of the placement sites.

## **3. Community involvement**

### **3.1 Placements**

The majority of the community placement sites are within, and around, the greater Pietermaritzburg area. These placements involve working with schools, hospitals, and various non-governmental organisations. A brief description of each placement that the intern psychologist group of 2011 served in is provided below:

#### 3.1.1. Thuthuzela Care Centre (TCC)

The TCC is a community centre whose main goal is to reduce the secondary victimization of victims of gender-based violence. It's a multi-disciplinary service comprised of a victim assistance officer (VAO), nursing staff, a social worker, doctors, and a representative of the South African Police Services. The role of the intern at the centre is to assist those victims and/or perpetrators who are specifically referred to them by the other members of the team. Individual counselling and psycho-education has been provided as required.

#### 3.1.2. Student Counselling Centre (SCC)

The SCC is a service which caters for the emotional, educational and career needs of the students of UKZN Pietermaritzburg. This is done through workshops, assessments and counselling sessions. Intern psychologists as well as masters students are placed at the SCC once a week to see individual students for psychotherapy. Interns and masters students may also be requested to perform psycho-educational, career and/or neuro-developmental assessments on students. Student life can be extremely difficult and even traumatic for many students who in addition to coping with their tertiary education demands, also experience the death of family members, are victims of crime such as hijackings and rape, at times live in extreme poverty with little or no food security, or the pressure to take on 'sugar daddys' who may then meet basic material and food needs in return for transactional or coerced sexual favours, and so forth. In addition, various psychiatric disorders first manifest during this stage of development.

#### 3.1.3. Longmarket Girls' Primary School

This placement is a psycho-educational service to the pupils of Longmarket Girls' Primary School. Specific areas of intervention include bereavement, divorce, abuse, behavioural problems and academic difficulties. Intervention usually takes the form of weekly individual therapy sessions which take place at the school, in a venue provided by the school for this purpose. Art therapy is frequently used, and occasionally group therapy utilised depending on the presenting problem. For many of the girls who attend therapy at the school, it is their only opportunity to receive this assistance and they frequently use therapy as a place to collaborate with the therapist to initiate change in their home and school environments. The partnership with Longmarket School has been

an ongoing and very beneficial placement for both parties, and is therefore a model which has been used to guide implementation of similar programmes in other schools.



Photograph 1: Entrance to Longmarket Girls Schools

#### 3.1.4. Neuro-developmental clinic

Placement at this clinic, which operates from Edendale Hospital. involves observation and consultation in conjunction with a specialised paediatrician. The cases are primarily neurological or chromosomal in their aetiology, and may include various forms of physical disabilities. The consulting paediatrician in 2011 has been Dr Matilda Madekurozwa. Her contribution to the training of the 2011 interns is greatly appreciated.

#### 3.1.5. Community Care Project (CCP)

CCP is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), funded though UNAID and other international donors. The main aim of CCP is to meet the needs of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC's) in the greater Pietermaritzburg region. This goal is achieved through several different programmes: HIV/AIDS counselling and testing, establishing vegetable gardens, collaboration with schools to provide mentorship to learners, and individual interventions in families.

The interns have worked with two groups of staff at CCP. The first group consists of approximately 10 to 15 permanent staff members who essentially keep the work of CCP running and do much of the planning and take full responsibility for the work of the volunteers. The second group comprises approximately 20 to 30 volunteers or interns. The nature of the work done by CCP is such that it can create emotional trauma and stress for the staff working in affected communities.

For this reason, intern psychologists provide debriefing sessions on a weekly basis to support both permanent, as well as volunteer, staff at CCP.



#### 3.1.6. Greys Hospital

The Greys Hospital OPD receives referrals from many parts of the KwaZulu-Natal interior. In order to meet some of the more specific needs of these patients, an intern psychologist or masters student is stationed in one of the consulting rooms for one day each week. Their function in the clinic is to perform basic intellectual screening of patients who have been referred for this purpose. These screening tests allow for the identification of educational difficulties and where necessary, referral to the relevant government services is provided.

#### 3.2 Workshops

The CFC and the School of Psychology recognise the importance of psycho-education in communities, and for this reason the Child and Family Centre organised and hosted several workshops aimed at supporting and assisting both educators and parents. There were a total of 6 workshops held at the School of Psychology, with an attendance of between 20 and 60 people per workshop. The topic areas covered at the workshops were Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Discipline,

Divorce and Bereavement, Learning difficulties, Sexuality in the Classroom, and the Impact of Technology on Children and Adolescents. There was also an additional workshop provided on specific request by Thandanani, an organisation in Pietermaritzburg which specialises in serving orphaned and vulnerable children. The topic area that was covered was ethics and values, and the workshop was provided for the volunteers who work with and for the organisation.

### 3.3 Site visits

In order to maximise learning and facilitate community partnership, there were two site visits which took place. The first visit was to the Salvation Army-Joseph Baynes Children's Home, and the second visit was to H.S. Ebrahim, a school for children with intellectual disability. Both these site visits were productive and enlightening, and served to highlight areas of need that the Child and Family Centre may put additional effort into meeting into the future.

### 3.4 The Transnet Phelophepa Health Care Train

The Transnet Phelophepa Health Care Train is a health care service which aims to meet the healthcare needs of far-flung communities in South Africa, who are under-sourced and in need. The train runs each year and a number of academic institutions and health disciplines add their support to the initiative each year. The CFC is privileged to be one of these organisations. This year, the Child and Family Centre were able to send 2 interns and 2 masters students for a 2 week period on the train, during the July vacation. The locations that they served in during their time on the train were Lydenburg and Kinross respectively. During this time they offered individual consultations and ran a number of workshops for educators, school children and prisoners. All four of the participants received positive feedback from their supervisors regarding their professional conduct and development, and the overall experience was a very valuable one for the students/interns themselves.

### 3.5 General

In line with the priority of the CFC to be involved in the local community, over the course of the year, there have also been various other organisations that the Child and Family Centre has had the privilege of assisting or being affiliated with. Some of this work has been achieved through the workshops held by the centre or in other more specialised ways.

The Seth Mokitimi Methodist Seminary made a request to the centre for help regarding learning disorders. The topic for a planned workshop was changed to fit this request, and it became known as the Learning disorders workshop. The attendance at this workshop was very good, as was the feedback regarding the content and manner of presentation.

A request was also made by one of the educators from H.S. Ebrahim for the assessment of past learners from similar schools. The assessments were part of the procedure necessary for them to be eligible to participate in an international cricket tournament for people with intellectual disability. It was a privilege to be involved in this very necessary part of equal development and opportunity for all South Africans.

#### **4. Professional development**

In order to ensure the ongoing development of interns and students both professionally and academically, a number of opportunities are offered. These are made possible by the fact that the CFC is housed within the School of Psychology, and in many ways make the CFC an effective and appealing training site. The opportunities offered to students and interns will be briefly described below.

##### **4.1 Case conferences**

Case conferences provide opportunities for teaching and networking, and are held weekly within the School of Psychology. They are attended by masters students and interns, as well as by some of the teaching and supervisory staff. Students and interns are given the opportunity to present cases that involve their assessment or therapeutic work with individuals and families. The case conferences are also open to attendance by professionals within the mental health sector or other related professions. The discussions revolve around issues regarding formulation of cases, diagnosis, treatment and other areas of recommendation, and are a valuable means to ensure the high standard of care is maintained.

##### **4.2 Lecturing**

Being within an academic institution, the CFC also offers the interns the valuable opportunity to lecture within the School of Psychology. They assist with lectures for Honours students, and the

first and third year undergraduates. This is an extremely useful means for the interns to enhance their expertise, as well as improve/solidify their theoretical knowledge.

#### 4.3 African Centre for Childhood marking (ACC)

The African Centre for Childhood is a community based service for children and youth in sub-Saharan Africa. It works in co-operation with REPSSI and with the School of Psychology, and is involved in equipping home-based carers with the knowledge and skills necessary to look after orphaned and vulnerable children within the SADC region of Africa. As part of their long distance education with ACC, the students submit work to be marked here in Pietermaritzburg. Several times during 2011, the masters students and the interns were offered the opportunity to participate in the marking of assignments and exams for the ACC. This process is very enlightening and challenging and again is an important opportunity for self-development for interns and students.

#### 4.4 Therapy and case management supervision

Although the day to day work of the CFC is done by the masters students and the interns, in order to comply with the regulations stipulated by the HPCSA (Health Professions Council of South Africa), both groups are under the personal supervision of qualified psychologists. This process includes the supervision of issues involving the specific management of cases with regards to legal and ethical implications, as well as important therapeutic issues. This process is ongoing for the entire year, and is an area of significant personal and professional development for both masters students and interns.

#### 4.5 Academic conferences

During the year, opportunities are also available for masters students and interns to attend and participate in academic conferences. There is an annual Postgraduate conference in which students/interns may present the findings of their research projects, and there is also the PSYSSA conference. The PSYSSA conference involves a larger group of professionals, which can be attended for personal growth and development, and/or used as a platform for the presentation of research.

#### **4.6 Professional training**

During 2011, other significant opportunities were provided for further professional training and development. The ADOS, a new and important assessment for diagnosing Autistic Spectrum Disorders, was taught at the School of Psychology. Along with this, there were exposure opportunities for therapeutic techniques such as Narrative therapy, and the Dialogical self. Masters students and interns are encouraged to attend professional development opportunities such as these when they arise within, and outside of the CFC and School of Psychology. Attendance at these events is also an important part of beginning the process of Continuous Professional Development required by law for Psychologists and other health care professionals.

### **5 Financial status**

The Child and Family Centre is a non-governmental organisation (NGO), and is therefore dependant on external donor funding to supplement its own income generating activities. The income generating activities of the Centre include the workshops mentioned above and the client fees. As far as possible, the client's fees are negotiated bearing in mind the economic constraints of individuals and families, and where necessary reduced in order to ensure equitable service provision. At this point in the year, the CFC has generated the following finances, amounting in total to R203 870.01:

- Workshops: R18 649.01
- Client fees: R85 221.00
- Donors: R200 000.00

### **6 Potential new directions**

In order for the CFC to remain an organisation of excellence, priority is given to ongoing development and the expansion of influence in the community. This year, a number of the schools and organisations that the CFC has been involved with have expressed a desire for increased cooperation with the centre, in order to help them meet the needs of their own learners/clients/staff. Some of this work may involve the academic assessment of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and assisting overwhelmed educators by offering debriefing for them as a group. However, this process will be ongoing and dynamic as time progresses and needs evolve.