

CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRE
School of Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg

Annual report



1. Introduction:

The Child and Family centre is a non-governmental organisation. It is located within the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus. This centre is an established, well known and professional centre that promotes the psycho-social well-being of children, adolescents and families within the African continent. This centre is focused on providing training, research, service and community engagement. Furthermore the centre serves to benefit students, clients and the placements within the community. Over numerous years the Pietermaritzburg region has been provided with psychological services by the Child and Family Centre. A vast amount of children visit the therapists at the CFC at a lower cost due to their socio-economic background. The centre is an accredited site for Educational, Counselling and Clinical psychology training. The Child and Family centre's focal points are mainly on two aspects namely:

- i. A training site for Master students as well as an internship site for intern psychologists
- ii. A community engagement programme and service centre

The CFC provides assessments and one on one psychotherapy to children, adults and families who are from marginalised backgrounds and who have experienced numerous life challenges such as abuse, educational difficulties, autism etcetera that have led them to seek professional assistance. Additionally the CFC trains, supervises and mentors educators, social workers, and community volunteers if requested. The CFC receives numerous referrals due to its good reputation and the reasons for these referrals include, academic problems, family and marriage related problems, behavioural problems and emotional problems related to traumatic experiences.

The CFC has been accredited by the professional Board as an internship site for Counselling Psychology, Educational Psychology, and Clinical Psychology (six months only). We currently have an intern research psychologist registered with the board under a tailor made programme.

2. Work done at CFC

2.1. Child and Family Centre: Individual clients or families are seen at the Centre. The reasons for referral include: family and marriage relationship difficulties, scholastic and academic problems, emotional problems related to a variety of traumatic experiences, behavioural problems, and adjustment problems. We provide assessment and psychological services to children, adolescents, families and adults. The number of adult clients has increased significantly and this year our interns and Masters students have provided ongoing therapy for a number of our clients with psychiatric disorders, thereby facilitating their reintegration into society.

2.2. Hospital Clinic at Greys hospital: The Interns offer a service at Greys Hospital, for a morning a week for approximately ten months of the year. They were each accompanied by a Masters student. Children are referred by the paediatricians or social workers for educational/cognitive assessment. Almost all the referrals are around poor school performance and intellectual difficulties. During the year 2014, 50 clients were seen.

2.3. Khazimula

Khazimula is a temporary children's shelter where the interns provide therapy and carry out debriefing sessions for Khazimula staff members. The Master students have further begun to form support groups for the children. As a consequence of the master student's engagement with Khazimula, the schools which the children attend requested the master students to provide them with their services of conducting assessments and therapy.

2.4. Northern Park

Northern Park Primary School is a placement whereby the interns provide similar services as that of Khazimula but are more focused on assessments and one on one psychotherapy with learners in order to enhance the emotional and social well-being as well as to enhance the learning climate for learners and educators. This Placement has been terminated due to them hiring a permanent psychologist.

2.5. Long Market Girls High/ Grange Primary

Long Market Girls High School is a placement whereby the interns provide similar services as that of Khazimula but are more focused on assessments and one on one psychotherapy with learners in order to enhance the emotional and social well-being as well as to enhance the learning climate for learners and educators.

2.6. Swayimane

Has recently been added as a placement for the interns/ M1's. Referred from Dlalanathi for trauma counselling.

2.7. Community Care project (CCP)

CCP is an NPO that is church-based and provides services especially in the sector of HIV/AIDS to the city of Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal as well as to its surrounding communities. The fundamental purpose of CCP is to train community members via churches and schools with the aim of assisting HIV/AIDS infected families and communities. Due to the challenging nature of their work, CFC interns and counselling masters' students provide debriefing services. The debriefing services are provided to two teams namely; the support team and the management team. The objective of these

debriefing sessions is to create a safe environment for the team to explore and express the challenges that they face when carrying out their duties. These sessions also provide the staff with the psychological skills they need to cope better in their work environment.

2.8. Workshops

The CFC accommodates for occasional requests for workshops required by a range of audiences. The audience includes learners from schools, university students, parents and educators. Workshops are developed to meet the specific requirements of the audience and may include an array of topics such as Leadership, Bullying, and Behavioural Modification, Healthy relationships with self and other, getting to know yourself, Caring for the care givers and parents of children with cerebral palsy etc. Our audience is ultimately equipped with the skills required to overcome their specified challenges and function more confidently in their daily roles.

2.9. Weekly Case Conference: This regular case conference is attended by Master's students and Intern Psychologists. It is also open to attendance by mental health professionals. Work with individuals, families or a community is presented, and discussion revolves round issues to do with psychological diagnosis, treatment, ethics, recommendations and other issues. The members of related professions, who are in attendance from time to time, offer valuable insights. The CFC is currently working on getting the program accredited for CPD points.

2.10. Transnet Phelophepa Health Train:

The Phelophepa health train offers mobile health services to a vast amount of patients in disadvantaged communities. The train consists of multidisciplinary professionals. During 2014 we were able to send staff for two two-week stints on the train. This was facilitated through the CFC. The group comprised 4 interns and 3 M1 students. The areas visited this past year were: Polokwane, Mokopane and Mookgophong. Besides individuals from the communities being counselled on the Train, workshops were run in the community and local schools. The CFC has organised in the past and is currently organising for the interns and master students to be given the opportunity to participate in this health train for 2015 and provide their services as part of the training and experience gained at the CFC.

4. General:

The presence of the Child and Family Centre is essential in terms of providing practical training experiences for Masters Students. Without such experience, their training would be severely compromised. The Centre acts as a channel for referrals and this means that a wide range of referrals is received. Because of the excellent reputation the CFC enjoys, and which has been built up over many years, there is rarely a space on the waiting list. Because the Masters students are not available to take on practical work all through the year, Intern psychologists fill an extremely important role. Inevitably, referrals accumulate at the end of each year, and the Interns start work in January, and are able to make an immediate impact on the waiting list. The Interns are also a source of informal mentoring to the Masters student at the start of their course.

The Child and Family Centre and the Student Counselling Centre have a reciprocal relationship, whereby the Interns from the different sites "cross over" for one day a week. This enriches the Internship experience for all concerned.

The continued funding of this project is appreciated.

