

# Cool combi clinic offers counselling in Khayelitsha

Like every other South African township, the minibus is ubiquitous on the streets of Khayelitsha. But instead of transporting fare-carrying passengers, Banetsi Mphunga uses his as a mobile psychological counselling facility.

As one of just a handful of registered counsellors available to the almost 400,000-strong population of Khayelitsha, Mphunga is so committed to providing mental health support to his community that he bought a combi and transformed it into clinic.

## Communities under strain

Khayelitsha, like many communities in South Africa is under severe strain. Alcohol and drug abuse, gangsterism and crime, domestic and sexual violence are rife. To address some of these issues, Banetsi established the Township Parents and Children's Counselling Centre (TPCCC) as a community resource to provide individuals and families with support to alleviate emotional distress and combat the insidious and debilitating effects of the social challenges they face daily.



Banetsi Mphunga

In an environment fraught with trauma and abuse, seeking clinical help during emotional life struggles is often impossible due to the scarcity of mental health resources and the cost attached, particularly if you are young. Mphunga's cool, mobile psychology clinic aims to break down these barriers to treatment and normalise seeking professional psychological help.

"As a resident of Khayelitsha, his work is raising important awareness that mental health is critical to the overall well-being of the individual, the family, the community and society as a whole," says Lance Katz, CEO of SACAP (South African College of Applied Psychology) which has partnered with TPCCC to get the mobile counselling clinic on the road.

## Springboard for learning

"Mental well-being is the springboard for learning, thinking and communication skills; as well as for emotional growth, resilience and self-esteem," he says.

According to the World Health Organisation, mental health is critical to enabling people to reach their potential, as well as cope with stress, work productively and be contributing members of society. We believe this partnership will make an important contribution in bringing mental health to the community.

## Focus on youth

SACAP's vision and mission is rooted in the broadest context of South African society. The educational institution has a vision of an empowered society knitted together by integrated, self-aware individuals in healthy relationship with one another, their families, communities and society at large and is actively engaged in educating for social impact.

The relevance and contribution of Banetsi's mobile counselling clinic, and its goal to take psychology into communities so it can positively affecting social change and bring about transformation has been the driving force of the year-long partnership.

Mphunga focuses on youth and their families and believes that the mobile counselling clinic is an innovative response to the scarcity of mental health resources within his community.

His combi is open to anyone in the community who cannot access or afford mental health services to receive counselling and support as well as education around mental health challenges. Together with SACAP, Mphunga's vision is to see a fleet of healing minibuses traversing the land and making a difference.

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