

## CONCEPT DOCUMENT

**ADDICTION 2021 CONFERENCE***Together Igniting a Movement for Change***JOIN OUR MOVEMENT**

The ADDICTION 2021 CONFERENCE is the biggest centrally coordinated addiction treatment movement on the African continent. The movement is spearheaded by the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA), one of the largest Non-profit organisation dealing with the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders with 30 treatment centres in all 9 provinces.

This conference will ignite a movement incorporating the special skills and insights of like-minded people who are passionate about finding socially inclusive, responsive and individualized solutions to tackle addiction. Together, with contributions from academics, medical professionals, civil society, policy makers, law enforcement, activists, service users, and the wide array of public and community-based resources, we can march forward and achieve comprehensive solutions for addictive disorders.

**OUR CHALLENGE**

Substance use disorders have long been perceived as indicative of personal deficit. This has resulted in much self- and community-stigmatization for those affected. Some existing strategies for tackling substance dependence have been remarkably successful in achieving recovery for those affected.

The evidence is however clear that substance dependence is a medical disorder. In order that we may reach the remaining affected, the narrative needs to change to one that is less punitive and more socially inclusive. Affected individuals, along with their families must be empowered to regain their sense of self-worth and dignity, and become active collaborators in the design, implementation, and evaluation of treatment plans. The narrative needs to change. In managing addiction, which refers broadly to psychosocial effects, it is essential that substance dependence, which refers to the physiological dependence, is a key part of the conversation and at the forefront of comprehensive intervention strategies at the individual, community and societal level.

The ADDICTION 2021 CONFERENCE will be an independent international platform to ignite a transformative movement across sectors concerned with substance use and addiction in Africa. The World Drug Report, released in June 2019 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) stated that globally 35 million people are estimated to suffer from substance use disorders and only 1 out of 7 people are accessing treatment. The picture is no different for South Africa and the severity of the substance use disorder epidemic is not fully understood or defined.

**MEET THE TEAM**

The chairperson of the ADDICTION 2021 CONFERENCE is Dr Goodman Sibeko MBChB, PhD is the Director: International Technology Transfer Centre South Africa - HIV ATTC and head of the Division of Addiction Psychiatry at UCT.

Dr Lochan Naidoo is an internationally recognised Addiction Medical Professional and Family Medical Practitioner from Durban, South Africa and is the chairperson for the research into practice track.

Prof. Solomon Tshimong Rataemane is retired but still involved with the Department of Psychiatry at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University and serves on various structures and committees and spearheads the capacity building and advocacy track.

Prof Zuki Zingela is an Associate Professor at the Nelson Mandela Central Hospital and Head of Psychiatry at Walter Sisulu University. She will be the chairperson for the Legislation, policy and Enforcement track.



### **CONFERENCE PURPOSE**

The overall aim of the conference is to address stigma and discrimination towards people using substances. Substance use disorders have long been perceived as indicative of personal deficit. This has resulted in much self- and community-stigmatization for those affected. Some existing strategies for tackling substance dependence have been remarkably successful in achieving recovery for those affected.

The evidence is however clear that substance dependence is a medical disorder. In order that we may reach the remaining affected, the narrative needs to change to one that is less punitive and more socially inclusive. Affected individuals, along with their families must be empowered to regain their sense of self-worth and dignity, and become active collaborators in the design, implementation, and evaluation of treatment plans. The narrative needs to change.

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### **THE TRACKS OF THE CONFERENCE**

<b>Track 1: Research into Practice</b>	<p>This track is focused on demand and harm reduction strategies, aiming to explore current and best practice approaches and models in the prevention and management of SUD, including the recovery stage.</p> <p>The integration of addiction theory and research into practice has been a challenging task in the treatment of substance use disorders. The gap between the evidence-base and what transpires in practice has been addressed through the development of evidence-based practices. Evidence-based practice may be defined as the integration of best evidence with clinical expertise and patient perspectives.</p>
<b>Track 2: Capacity Building and Advocacy</b>	<p>This track is focused on training, teaching and advocacy activities geared towards demand and harm reduction strategies. It is essential for demand and harm reduction strategies to be successful, that relevant sectors are empowered with appropriate evidence- and outcomes -based teaching and training resources and curricula. Increased competency is key to the safe and ethical provision of SUD management. This includes programmes ranging from undergraduate level to ongoing professional development and postgraduate teaching and training, while providing adequate space for informal training, teaching, and mentorship. Prevention is increasingly seen as a Science whereas it is conversely also considered once-off talk by some. Some potential approaches for integration of more pervasive prevention strategies may take some inspiration from programmes such as the Colombo plan, which has resources like the Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC).</p>
<b>Track 3: Legislation, policy and Enforcement</b>	<p>Legislative requirements govern availability of resources and delivery of demand and harm reduction strategies, as well supply demand reduction. Legislative serves to protect not only the practitioner, but also the rights of service users. Professionals are in a unique position to influence the delivery of services by addressing the acute and chronic needs of service users with SUDs, including co-occurring disorders. Changes in legislation and policy can promote standardized and ethical practices, facilitating a reduction in discrimination against people who use substances. The enforcement of these policies remains a challenge and this has implications for practice; as borne out in the decriminalisation of cannabis; the prohibition of alcohol and nicotine sales in SA during the COVID-19 outbreak; public health vs individual rights; law enforcement and community engagement; funding models for treatment and prevention; NHI vs medical aid schemes; etc.</p>



## THE EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE CONFERENCE

*The ADDICTION 2021 CONFERENCE strives to achieve the following:*

- Create a movement that discusses and engages in topics of concern in the treatment of addiction.
- An appraisal of current strategies employed in management of addiction in South Africa and internationally (In-patient, outpatient, home-based).
- A review of policy frameworks governing the delivery of addiction treatment in South Africa.
- Review of South African and international evidence for patient-centred comprehensive care, and the extent to which these align with Batho Pele principles.
- Promotion of practical skills development through training of clinicians and addiction counsellors with the aim of bridging the gap between evidence and practice.
- The recognition of culture as a key consideration in the management of dependence.
- Engagement with civil society and advocacy groups around best strategies for client and community engagement on the back of the reviewed evidence base.
- Engagement with Departments of Health and Social Development around comprehensively responsive packages of care for various addictive disorders.

In taking the conversation forward towards the transformation of the treatment landscape and to break with stigma, the ADDICTION 2021 CONFERENCE is collaborating with local and international partners such as the Department of State, Clinical Governance Services, ISSUP - South African Chapter, UCT, SANCA and ITTC.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/291911212047976>

<http://www.addiction.org.za/>



CLINICAL GOVERNANCE  
services



South Africa

ITTC

International Technology Transfer Centre  
A program of the International Consortium of Universities  
for Drug Demand Reduction