



Centre for  
Public Mental Health

*Post Graduate Diploma in Public Mental Health*

The Centre for Public Mental Health (CPMH) is a joint initiative of the Department of Psychology at Stellenbosch University (SU) and The Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The vision of the CPMH is to be a collaborative inter-institutional multi-disciplinary Centre that conducts high quality research on public mental health, and uses evidence for teaching, consultancy and advocacy to promote mental health in Africa. This vision is in keeping with the transformational vision and social commitment of UCT and SU, and their endeavor to develop research and exchange networks in Africa.

The CPMH was established for the following reasons:

- Mental health needs to be recognized as an essential part of public health in low and middle-income countries.<sup>1</sup>
- There is an urgent need to build professional mental health capacity in Africa.<sup>2</sup>
- Many African countries need policy, service and legislative frameworks to deliver evidence-based interventions and address mental health systematically as a major public health and development issue.
- There are currently no Centres that offer training and research in this area on the African continent.

In an attempt to address this situation, and recognizing the numerous benefits of collaboration, the two Universities have established the CPMH as an independent inter-disciplinary academic research and teaching centre for public mental health promotion and service development in Africa.



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1 World Health Organisation, 2003, *Investing in Mental Health*, [http://www.who.int/mental\\_health/media/investing\\_mnh.pdf](http://www.who.int/mental_health/media/investing_mnh.pdf)

2 WHO, 2003, WHO, 2006. Project Atlas: Resources for Mental Health and Neurological Disorders, <http://www.who.int/globalatlas>

## POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH

A key gap in current mental health professional training in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa is an orientation to public mental health. This means an orientation to the mental health needs of populations, and the policies, laws and services that are required to meet those needs.

The training offered by the Centre provides clinicians, health service managers, policy makers and NGO workers with crucial skills to enable them to plan and evaluate the services that they deliver and manage; lobby effectively for mental health; and take on leadership roles in the strengthening of mental health systems. Mental health is frequently marginalised in decision-making for health service resources, partly because mental health professionals lack the skills and information to plan services and to advocate for appropriate resource allocation. The training offered by the Centre would enable them to take on these crucial responsibilities.

It is important to note that the training offered by the Centre would not provide a distinct professional training that can be



registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa. The intention of the training programme is to enhance the capacities of health professionals, policy makers and service managers to develop and implement mental health policy using an evidence-based approach and respect for human rights of people with mental health problems. This would therefore not clash with already established training, but address key gaps in current training, as outlined above.

## Course structure and contents

The course is designed to be relevant and accessible to full-time working health and development professionals, building on their professional knowledge and increasing their capacity in these roles.

This is a part-time diploma involving coursework and practical assignments. Students will attend face-to-face seminars in Cape Town for 2 weeks in January and 2 weeks in July. In between these seminars, teaching, support and supervision will take place via distance learning using internet and mobile resources such as internet-based tutorials and interactive training materials (e.g. CD-ROMs). The course will take a minimum of 2 years to complete.

The course will provide an inter-disciplinary approach, with inputs from staff with varied academic backgrounds, including public health, psychiatry, psychology and the social sciences. It is focused on the context of African public mental health and draws on the experience of the lecturers and the participants in the course. Students will benefit from the international academic reputations of the collaborating institutions, excellent facilities, rich human resources and well-established local, African and international collaborations.

The course will require the completion of four compulsory modules, each of which involves practical assignments related to the ongoing work conducted by participants in their respective countries. For example, provincial and district health officers participating in the module on Policy, Planning and Leadership, will use their own service organization, service plan and budget within their province or district, to apply the course material. This would serve the dual function of training and enabling trainees to apply the course materials to their own context, with ongoing support and supervision from the Centre.



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The four compulsory modules are:

### **1. Mental Health in Context**

This module aims to provide students with an understanding of mental health needs, resources, constructs and problems within developing contexts, the global burden of mental illness, social determinants of mental health and factors that affect global mental health care. Students will be introduced to various theoretical models that guide the mental health and development paradigm, such as the medical and social models of mental health and the public mental health approach.

### **2. Research Methods for Public Mental Health**

This module aims to provide students with basic knowledge and skills in quantitative and qualitative research methodology, statistics and epidemiology. The emphasis here is on developing the student's ability to effectively interpret and use research findings in the development of mental health policy and services.

### **3. Interventions for Mental Health**

This module aims to provide students with the knowledge and skills to develop, implement and evaluate mental health interventions. It will familiarise students with effective, evidence-based and locally developed approaches for mental health promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.



### **4. Policy, Planning and Leadership for Mental Health**

This module aims to provide students with knowledge and skills in policy and service development; monitoring and evaluation; public administration; and improved leadership and management.

## **Assessment**

All the modules will be assessed by means of practical and written assignments. A minimum of 50% is required as pass mark for the modules.

## Admission and selection requirements

Candidates for this course should have a health or development professional degree or diploma (e.g. occupational therapy, medicine, professional nurse, social work, psychology, health economics) on NQF level 7. In addition, candidates should:

1. have experience of working in a mental health, health or development related field; and
2. be employed within a managerial or leadership role, or have the capacity for such a role, and
3. show evidence of adequate English language and writing proficiency for postgraduate academic studies.

Applicants are required to:

1. Complete the university application forms,
2. Write a motivating letter indicating why they would like to enroll in the course and how it will contribute to their career development and potentially to mental health system development in Africa, and
3. Provide an example of their academic writing.

Applications must reach the Centre by 30 September and must have the following attached:

- A comprehensive CV
- Copies of Certificates/Diplomas/Degrees
- Awards for exceptional achievements
- An example of the applicant's writing skills e.g. best article.



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Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) is in place to facilitate access to candidates who do not meet the above academic criteria. Experience of working in mental health or development will be a strong recommendation. Rigorous attempts will be made to offer the course to students from previously disadvantaged communities.

Candidates wishing to gain Recognition for Prior Learning will need to submit a detailed application that includes the above attachments together with the following:

- A motivation/justification for admission to the course.
- Details of relevant work experience, highlighting skills that would be an advantage in the course.
- Leadership positions held or potential for this.
- Involvement in regional/national associations/forums/working groups.
- Evidence of writing skills or involvement with the offering of training.
- An analysis of his/her strengths and limitations, and how the applicant intends to address these in the course.
- Any other information (not mentioned above) that the applicant would like to offer in order to indicate that he/she should be considered for admission to this course.



**Please note:**

- For administrative purposes, candidates are required to register at either SU or UCT. Candidates should indicate their preference in their application, but as we require an equal number of students enrolled at each university, we cannot guarantee registration at the university of the student's choice. The course content and requirements will be the same for both universities. Degrees will be awarded by the registering university.
- The offering of this course will be subject to a minimum required number of students.
- **Application Deadline: 30 September.**



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### Enquiries

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