

# e-Forum

AN EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND ISSUES OF REGISTERED COUNSELLORS AND PSYCHOMETRISTS



*This article is based on information from psychology students, psychometric interns, psychometrists starting up independently, as well as psychometrists who have been in private practice for more than a decade, with up to 30 years' experience in SA.*

## Key concerns of psychometrists in private practice

By Carinna Krantz, vice-chair of the Counsellor and Psychometry Division

It is important to highlight the operational differences that exist between psychometrists in private practice and those employed. Some of the key challenges facing psychometry in private practice range from institutional cost-saving measures to financial constraints, which force many practitioners to choose between priorities like buying essentials, developing their practice management and accumulating professional CPD points.

Cost-saving measures by psychology practices and corporate entities/industrial sector mean the services of unqualified and non-registered administrative staff are utilised for the processing of psychometric data. These include the scoring of raw data and generating generic reports. This decreases the likelihood of producing valid and reliable standardised data to be used by the registered practitioners that compile comprehensive end reports.

It has been extremely difficult to run a sustainable private practice since the 2008 economic downturn, since psychometric assessments are considered by many companies as "nice-to-have" recruitment and placement data rather than "need-to-have".

In many cases assessment contracts are lost and there is zero demand for assessments by those companies. In general, the majority of companies resort to competency-based interviews (without competency-based assessment centres in combination with psychometric data), and recruitment and placement decisions are then taken on qualitative and subjective data.

As it can take more than R200 000 to set up a private practice from scratch to a fully equipped and functional practice, lower demand for psychometric assessment services makes this unsustainable – without demand for a service, the best of service providers need to consider closing up shop.

There has already been a request put to the HPCSA via e-Forum to re-think CPD points that need to be accumulated at high cost. If a practice is running on the edge of solvency due to low demand for services, a practitioner needs to choose between buying food and petrol or attend CPD events that are mostly expensive because of the value added and the professional development that gets enhanced by attending those events. No practitioner complains about the value content of CPD courses, but putting food on the table receives priority above accumulating CPD's during financially difficult times.

National Department of Education policy to exclude educational psychometrists from job opportunities within the formal mainstream schooling system results in learners struggling with a range of problems. For example, they do not choose subjects that will eventually lead to obtaining a Senior Certificate that will open doors to higher educational studies or sustainable job opportunities that demand certain theoretical background that could enhance obtaining skills sets.

Many learners experience a serious lack of career orientation and career exploration during Gr 10 – Gr 12. The learners that can benefit from such career guidance cannot mostly afford the services of private practitioners, unless covered by medical aids/schemes. Therefore they end up opting for the most bizarre study courses because of access to grants and study money, but they are set up for failure from the start due to the lack of professional career and psychological guidance.

The University of South Africa at present does not provide for psychometric internships. Students do their post-graduate studies in Psychology and then have no route forward through a psychometric internship that would lead to HPCSA Board Exams and becoming a psychometrist in private practice.

During their studies they seem to lack sufficient exposure to psychometric assessment theory and practice, which results in being totally unprepared for work and mostly in a career cul-de-sac. It appears that these students do get absorbed by other universities for internships, but it is not easy to find alternative opportunities to advance professionally, pass the Board Exam and to become a registered private practitioner.

Important submissions to the HPCSA should include the consideration of changing private practice auditing processes, which allow 21 days for portfolio submission. This seems highly impractical during busy times of the year, taking into consideration other demands of running a private practice. These include marketing, sourcing work, networking, running assessment projects on a national basis, travelling, preparation of quotations, R&D on assessment projects and writing up of reports.

All practitioners should be notified by registered mail as well as e-mail and given at least three months to prepare and hand in the audit portfolio. It should not be necessary to apply for an exemption period, when the practitioner's name gets flagged by the HPCSA's electronic system. The current penalty procedures for non-compliance should apply only after a fair period of at least six months.

The 2012 tariff list for psychological assessments remains a "non-standardised-mystery", with every medical aid/scheme having its own interpretation and tariff structures. The nature of psychological assessments makes it impossible to really apply an hourly tariff, due to variables that impact on the assessment process.

For example, a career orientation assessment battery can take up to nine hours, including payment to the instrument developers for generic reports, plus time allocated to analysis, interpretation, verification, integration of data and compilation of a comprehensive report.

If a personal development plan forms part of the assessment, the hours spent on one candidate easily run from 15 – 30 professional hours. Then there is a feedback interview, which requires preparation and at least another hour with the candidate. In total, the best of 30 hours could be spent on one client, impacting on the candidate's future career and personal growth. However, not many individuals can afford the "running rates" if applied by the hour, therefore the practitioner quotes on a "per project cost" rather than quoting and invoicing on an hourly tariff. The downside is that the professional service is delivered at less than R100 per hour, which is on the remuneration level of unskilled work, as reflected by the 2012 industrial strikes.

A DIVISION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA (PsySSA)

## Training courses offered

### Group Psychotherapy

The Centre for Group Analytic Studies (CGAS) is inviting applications for the Group Psychotherapy Experience and Training Intermediate Programme in Cape Town that begins January 2013. This is a two year part-time programme that is suitable for mental health professionals who have a graduate qualification that enables them to run psychotherapeutic groups, (e.g. psychologists, counselors, occupational therapists, psychiatrists, social workers, psychiatric nurses), and would like further training in group psychotherapy. Graduates who have completed the CGAS Introductory Course and have a university qualification are also eligible to apply for the course. The programme is affiliated with the IGA (Institute of Group Analysis, London) and has CPD accreditation. For an outline of the programme, including costs, and an application form please contact Monica Spiro, mspiro@cgas.co.za, 021 7941577. The closing date for applications is Friday 23rd November 2012. For more information on CGAS please see their website: www.cgas.co.za



### Trauma and Recovery

Joanna Beazley Richards, MSc, Registered trauma specialist from the UK 9-10 Feb 2013 Cape Town (Venue to be confirmed) This workshop will introduce participants to the psychology of shock and trauma, the clinical difficulties that arise and the nature of effective treatment. Drawing on the work of Judith Lewis Herman, Babette Rothschild, Bessel van der Kolk and her own extensive experience, Joanna will outline the effect of childhood abuse, violence and serious accidents. She will look at the characteristics and stages of effective treatment - including the "don'ts" as well as the "dos" - and offer "first aid" measures for those working with traumatised people.

Joanna adopts an integrated approach in understanding and treating trauma, making use of Transactional Analysis, EMDR, Animal Assisted Therapy and the latest brain research – always allowing herself to be led by the needs of her client. Joanna is a Chartered Psychologist, a registered Clinical Psychologist, a Teaching and Supervising Transactional Analyst and an Accredited EMDR practitioner. She is the principal of the Wealden Psychology Institute, which she founded in 1986 in the UK, and which also has a branch in France. She has had a psychotherapy practice for more than 30 years and is an experienced trauma specialist. CPD points have been applied for. Contact: Diane Salters dsalters@iafrica.com or 021 7861910

### Matrix Reimprinting

Become accredited under the Association for the Advancement of Meridian Energy Techniques International as an Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) practitioner in one of the fastest growing meridian therapies in the world. Bookings are now open for both EFT and Matrix Reimprinting with UK-trainer Karl Dawson in Cape Town, March 3 -9, 2013.

Matrix Reimprinting applies EFT in a powerful new way to heal trauma and improve health including pain, serious diseases, fears and phobias. It draws from latest developments in quantum physics, epigenetics and what biologist Dr Bruce Lipton called the "biology of belief" in a simple yet powerful process and is being researched and applied by psychologists and counsellors worldwide.

Karl Dawson is one of only 29 EFT Masters, creator of Matrix Reimprinting using EFT and co-author of the book *Matrix Reimprinting Using EFT* (Hay House). Early-bird discounts available in 2012. Contact Caryl Westmore: 0781232309, eftmatrixsa@gmail.com Visit www.matrixreimprinting.com and/or efttrainingcourses.net



## News from our readers

Thanks so much for the e-Forum newsletter and I'm so delighted to see that MindMuzik is doing ASB training! It's the answer to our prayers and I am now putting plans in place for a member of staff to attend. Our seven scholarship children are doing very well at their school in Mthatha. We are not able to send more children at this stage but we hope to do so in the future and that's where the ASB tests will be very helpful. It was psychometric assessment, mentioning their potential to excel, that sparked our idea of a scholarship programme in the absence of a decent school here. It's also very necessary to test the effectiveness of our work and the ASB tests do that very adequately, I think, which also pleases our funders!

BI now has a new, full time Education programme manager and we are opening our third preschool on Wednesday, in one of the other villages where we work. This is all very exciting. Thanks again for keeping me in the loop with the newsletters.

Annette Champion  
Bulungula Incubator ( a Not-for-Profit organisation), Ngqileni Village, Mthatha District, Eastern Cape Province.

*Our vision is to be a catalyst in the creation of vibrant and sustainable rural communities.*

## News from the HPCSA

The new psychometry representative is Clement Petersen. His email address for those who want to contact him with queries is: clement@psytech.co.za. The new/revised scope and list of psychometric tests that fall within the scope of Registered Counsellors will be released this month. I will forward it as soon as possible.

Laraine Lane  
Registered Counsellor representative  
HPCSA

## Q & A

**Q** - My name is Lauren Schilder, I am a Registered Counsellor, from Cape Town. I got your contact details, on PsySSA's website from the e-Forum newsletters. I would like to know if you have any information regarding the tariffs that we are allowed to charge clients in private practice. I have heard that we can charge approximately R330 for a 1 hr session. Any other information you have in this regard, (e.g. opening one's own private practice) would be appreciated, as a colleague and I are looking into opening our own practice.

**A** - There is no set fee at present as the National Price Index was revoked a few years ago. I believe this matter is under discussion but I've received no definite conclusions regarding the potential outcome of these talks. Although I mainly work as an affiliate for EAP's, I charge R350/per hour if I see a private client in my home. If you are visiting clients at their place of work, your travel costs would obviously have to be factored into this. I've found it easier to ask the client to pay the professional fee upfront then to try to collect money from their medical insurance company. The client can then submit your invoice to their medical aid and receive payment. At present, your fee is negotiable between you and your client and payment responsibility, charges etc need to be reflected in your Informed Consent agreement that ought to be signed by your client in their first session.

Please revert if you have any further queries.  
Kind regards,  
Laraine Lane HPCSA

**LAST WORD**  
*"People say nothing's impossible, but I do nothing everyday!"*  
**Winnie the Pooh**



*Seasons greetings to all our readers. May you have a peaceful and enjoyable break and let's hope that 2013 brings joy and adventure. Thanks for all your support and keep reading!*  
From the editorial team

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