

NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY



Community-based substance abuse: The Hope Revolution Vision Model in Higher Education- Case study of Nelson Mandela University

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Higher Education Landscape

2022 USAF study –by SAMRC

29 000 students from 19 Public universities participated in the SELF-REPORT survey on exp 30days prior to survey –

- * Major depressive disorders 15.4%,
- * generalized anxiety disorder 10.9%,
- * panic disorder 7.2% and bipolar disorder 1.8%.
- * About 21% of students experienced attention difficulties,
- * 5.1% abused drugs and 2.5% were dependent on alcohol.
- * Suicidal behaviour was high: 8.6% - suicide plan and 2.3% attempted suicide.

USAF Strategic framework 2020- 2026

- * Alarming sectoral growth in GBV, suicide, substance abuse, generalised student violence
- * Role of universities – to reduce the incidence and trends
- * Partnership btwn SAMRC & USAF to make sense of mental health challenges faced by students and types of interventions
- * Multi-sectoral approach required

Higher Health 2022/2023 Report

- * 65% of GBV incidences preceded by
- * Research-one in three young South Africans consumes alcohol before attaining the legal age of 18 years
- * Alcohol use among students entering PSET institutions -quite pervasive
- * In South Africa, the more serious concern is the high rate of heavy episodic drinking - binge drinking – among men of all ages who consume alcohol.
- * This carries an increased risk of harm

Nelson Mandela Univ Context

In Service of Society –
CIVIC University

Our students – our first
community

Most of our students from
outside Gqeberha

Rapid increase in Mental
health concerns

Intersection between GBV
& Substance abuse

Binge drinking increasing –
effect on students and staff

Universities Transformation
office & Emthonjeni student
Wellness lead departments
Multi-sectoral response
required

How did we use what we have in our hands?

Odds:

Sparsely resourced Metro
Student profile – low
access to medical aid and
private treatment
programmes

Search for sustainable programmes

THR V (The Hope Revolution
Vision) FAITH BASED

Engagement office; SDP =
MoU 2022

Our Universities Vision 2023 and specifically our Engagement mandate

Our Professional Degree training programmes

Student-Work integrated learning

By students for students approach

3rd yr Social work students Community Development placements (2023 and 2024)

Media and Comm Honours students (Design thinking project 2024)

Consultations Student services (staff & students)

Eastern Cape Liquor Board

Who is THRV

**The Hope Revolution Community Based Substance
abuse Prevention, Early Intervention and
Awareness Education**

Residential programme - Teen challenge (past 27 years)

THRV community-based programme – 12 years

Components of THRV model



Our Strategic objective

- Establish comprehensive,
 - multi-sectoral
 - community-centered strategies
- addressing supply, demand and harm reduction for substance use within Nelson Mandela University, fostering a supportive, inclusive, and hope-igniting university environment aligned with The Hope Revolution Vision.

Harm reduction

Awareness and Education Campaigns:

- Launch Health Promoting Initiatives that encourage debate about benefit and harm of substance use
- Workshops highlighting connections between mental health and substance abuse
- Facilitate peer education and training programs in partnership with the Eastern Cape Liquor Board (ECLB).

Support and Counseling:

- Enhance access and responsiveness of Emthonjeni Student Counseling and Campus Health services.
- Develop and sustain support groups facilitated by trained social work students and staff.

Creation of "Spaces of Hope":

- Establish "Hope Sites" in residences as positive, alcohol-free spaces, fostering community through inclusive, cultural, and recreational activities.
- Implement "I Am Into" and "Choose Your Cap" programs promoting healthier choices and positive peer interactions.
- Promote community resilience and hope rather than deficit-centered perspectives, fostering a supportive environment for healing and wellness.

Demand Reduction

Community-led Engagement and Development:

- Conduct comprehensive, continuous situational analyses involving students to inform relevant, culturally sensitive interventions.
- Organize engaging, non-stigmatizing events including talent shows, sports, arts, storytelling, and cultural expressions to foster community solidarity and hope.

Youth-driven Consciousness Raising:

- Empower students through creative "Consciousness Raising" activities promoting positive social identities, cultural pride, and holistic well-being.
- Advance the "Leader2Leader" program to build resilience, leadership skills, and peer mentoring networks.

Capacity Building and Empowerment:

- Offer accredited Short Learning Programs (SLPs) providing students with skills in advocacy, resilience-building, and social activism.
- Facilitate regular training in mental health management, coping mechanisms, and strength-based community narratives.

Supply reduction

- **Student & staff indaba about collaborative supply reduction principles and strategies**
- **Policy Enforcement and Enhancement**
 - Strengthen enforcement of "Glass Free Policy" and "Residence Tuck-shop Policy" to curb unauthorized alcohol sales.
 - Student and University security/Protection staff regulation of access and use of substances
 - Conduct regular compliance checks by the Central Disciplinary Committee.
- **Strategic Partnerships**
 - Deepen collaboration with the Eastern Cape Liquor Board for robust event monitoring and regulatory oversight.
 - Regularly train residence managers in compliance and responsible event management practices.

Implementation and collaboration framework

Community-Centric Multistakeholder Collaboration:

- STUDENT HUBS OF CONVERGENCE (SHOC)
- regular, structured meetings involving Student Wellness, Campus Health, Social Work Department, Residence Management, Student Governance, and community stakeholders.
 - Quarterly strategic reviews with The Hope Revolution and Mandela University's Engagement Office
 - Leverage insights from THRV's 25+ years of experience in community mobilization and social change, emphasizing collaborative and reciprocal community engagement.

Student Empowerment and Leadership:

- Proactively recruit student ambassadors, leaders, and volunteers, emphasizing their roles as change agents.
- Continuous mentorship, recognition, and development opportunities to build future community and university leaders.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Sustainable Impact:

- Clearly defined metrics for tracking intervention effectiveness, community impact, and overall student well-being.
- Annual reporting and reflective practices embedded within community narratives and lived experiences.
- Seek diverse, sustainable funding sources through active partnership building and grants.

References

- Higher Health <https://higherhealth.ac.za/>
- Nelson Mandela University Engagement office, Hubs of Convergence <https://hoc.mandela.ac.za>
- Dept of Social Development Professions <https://socialdev.mandela.ac.za/>
- THRV <https://thehoperevolution.org/>
- USAF Strategic Framework /<https://usaf.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Universities-South-Africa-Stratigic-Framework.pdf>
- <https://engagementoffice.mandela.ac.za/Institutional-Engagement-Mapping/Health/The-Hope-Revolution-Vision>

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