



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

# PhD PROPOSAL PRESENTATION

## TITLE:

**The development of guidelines for substance use prevention programmes offered by occupational therapists within primary health care settings in Gauteng Province**

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE  
DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

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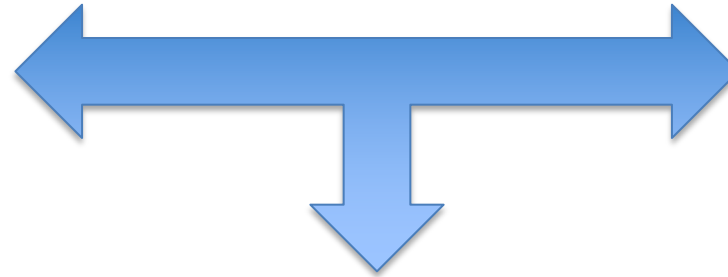
**WFOT CONGRESS 2026**



# Substance Use Disorders (SUD) in South Africa

## Key Issue:

Significant public health concern in South Africa of SUD.



## Challenge:

Despite harm reduction policies and frameworks, substance use remains prevalent.

## Context:

The South African Department of Health has prioritised community-based responses towards this challenge by strengthening mental health services at primary healthcare level. The responses includes community psychiatric teams of which Occupational therapists play a key role within these teams, focusing on prevention, community-based psychiatric care, and collaboration with non-governmental organisations.

# Research Objectives & Methodology



OBJECTIVE	PHASES
Review and describe occupational therapy programs promoting substance use prevention.	<b>Phase I:</b> Scoping review of evidence-based literature on occupational therapy programs.
Explore perceptions and experiences of occupational therapists and substance users.	<b>Phase II:</b> Semi-structured interviews with occupational therapists and substance users (18+ years).
Develop substance use prevention guidelines for occupational therapists in the community.	<b>Phase III:</b> Delphi method involving occupational therapists from phase 2 and experts in substance use prevention, to develop guidelines.

## METHODS:

**Research approach & design:** mixed method approach specifically the exploratory sequential mixed method design, leaning more to the qualitative phase of data collection and analysis as the perceptions of the participants will be of paramount importance in the development of substance use prevention guidelines.

# Preliminary findings & contribution to the field



## PHASE 1 RESULTS

**Theme 1:** Core approaches

**Theme 2:** Public Awareness & Prevention

**Theme 3:** Inclusivity & family involvement

**Theme 4:** Youth & Adolescent  
interventions

**Theme 5:** Occupational interventions

## PHASE 2 RESULTS

**Theme 1:** Substance use as an occupational and coping response.

**Theme 2:** Motivation for change.

**Theme 3:** The protective role of occupation in recovery.

**Theme 4:** Relapse prevention through continuity of care and  
everyday occupation.

**Theme 5:** Social, family and systemic contexts shaping recovery.

**Theme 6:** Hope and the need for structured support.

## IMPACT AND CONTRIBUTION TO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

These evidence-based guidelines would inspire change and innovation in OT by translating lived experience into practical strategies that strengthen substance use prevention, improve accessibility and enhance outcomes in primary health care.

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



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Acknowledgements

Crouch Bursary Fund

Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University

**60** YEARS  
*of hope, action  
& knowledge*

FROM HOPE TO ACTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE.