

Letter to the Editor

Lessons learnt from Tirisano training programme

Sir,

Tirisano means “working together” in Setswana.^{1,2} The Tirisano training programme (TTP) is a collaborative training programme between University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and the South African Research Consortium, comprised of faculty from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), North-West University (NWU) and the University of Cape Town (UCT). The goal of TTP is to increase the number of researchers in South Africa (SA) by training scholars who are at different points in their academic career paths such as post-baccalaureate, masters, and pre-doctoral-level scholars.³

I attended the TTP from the 23rd – 24th June 2016 at the Hyatt Regency Johannesburg, South Africa. The programme was attended by the registered nurses, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, Honours, Masters and Doctoral candidates, academics and researchers. The programme featured wide range of experts’ speakers in mental disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and substance abuse including Prof Mashudu Davhana-Maselesele, Prof Sharon Kleintjies, Prof Tifany Patterson, Prof Norwetta Milburn, Prof Gail Wyatt, Prof Hector Myers and Prof Bronwyn Myers.

The following topics in mental disorders, PTSD, depression and substance abuse were addressed at the training programme:

- Effects of stress on health across the lifespan: Biological dysregulation and chronic mental disorders
- Guidelines for improving the quality and effectiveness of clinical work with patients
- Social and economic aspects of trauma
- Trauma in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa: a comparative analysis with violence in Jim Crow America
- Research methods for investigating PTSD, depression and substance use in community-based settings
- Introduction to human subjects research and ethics in the conduct of human research in community and clinical settings

- Developing a culturally congruent interventions: a panel discussion

Benefits of attending the programme

As a mental health nurse specialist conducting research in substance use among adolescents, the programme allowed me to network and get updated information on mental health, PTSD, depression and substance abuse from different mental health care practitioners such as psychiatrist, registered nurses and clinical psychologists. The programme allowed all of us as students at different points in their academic career paths to exchange experiences, ideas and practices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my gratitude to the Rector of the Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University, Prof Mashudu Davhana-Maselesele and the Tirisano Project Leaders for giving me the opportunity to attend the programme on mental disorders, PTSD, depression and substance abuse.

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Cite this article as: Sehularo LA. Lessons learnt from Tirisano training programme. *Int J Sci Rep* 2016;2(8):211.