

# CMH helps integrate the mentally disabled into society

Cape Mental Health (CMH), through the FNB Fund, provides and facilitates mental health services to both adults and children in the Western Cape.

The various CMH programmes focus on the integration of people with mental disabilities back into mainstream society. "By promoting integration into the community, we are addressing the stigma associated with disabilities and reducing the isolation and rejection that consumers face. We are committed to providing the very best mental health care by helping people to adjust to community life and, at the same time, call for greater inclusion of persons with disability in mainstream schooling, employment, socialising and family life," said Ingrid Daniels CMH director.

The inequality and segregation between people and communities remains a big concern, especially with respect to persons with mental disability who are routinely discriminated against and marginalised. CMH continues its advocacy- and awareness-raising campaigns in order to change people's attitudes and to remove some of the barriers that stand in the way of the integration and rehabilitation of people back into communities. CMH has 32 qualified social workers who assist consumers with early intervention programmes, statutory work and a range of reintegration programmes to people with mental disabilities in families.

"FNB places a strong emphasis on mainstreaming disability. We believe that there should be no physical, social and communicational barriers that can prevent inclusion of persons with disabilities into society. CMH has assisted both adults and children to integrate back into society. It's great to see such dedication and commitment from CMH," said Pearl Mphuthi, FNB fund manager.

## Intervention programmes for schoolchildren

CMH runs intervention programmes for schoolchildren as well. The Early Intervention Schools programme reached approximately 500 learners in eight schools last year with the main focus on bullying, coping with stress, time management, mental health, wellbeing and sexual abuse. "CMH's approach is clearly defined by the belief 'in the dignity and rights of persons with disabilities'. We are driven by a mission to reach consumers where services do not readily exist, particularly in rural communities, to challenge discriminatory practices and make mental health a reality for all," said Daniels.

In line with the international disability rights movement: "nothing about us without us," CMH provides a range of specialised services such as the Sexual Abuse Victim Empowerment programme for persons with intellectual disability, and an active self-advocacy movement for people with mental disabilities is entrenched across various services and programmes.

"We celebrate our centenary this year, which is no mean feat in our sector, and are hopeful that we will be able to leverage the support needed to expand on our footprint in the Western Cape, and reach even more people with our community-

based mental health services," concluded Daniels.

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