

**Kuthetha Nathi / Talk to Us Manifesto**

**What is the Problem?**

South Africa faces a significant gap in mental health care due to a shortage of mental health professionals. Task sharing, where trained non-specialist health workers provide basic mental health services, is a promising strategy to increase accessibility, particularly for underserved communities.

**Challenges of Task Sharing:**

* **Training and Support**: Non-specialists require comprehensive training and continuous supervision to provide effective care.
* **Quality of Care**: Maintaining high standards across non-specialist providers is challenging.
* **Stigma**: Fear of judgment prevents many from seeking help, even when services are available.
* **Limited Resources**: Funding and infrastructure constraints hinder the sustainability of task-sharing programs.

Despite these challenges, task sharing presents a viable path to improving mental health access in South Africa.

**Why Does This Problem Exist?**

Several factors contribute to the mental health treatment gap:

* **Shortage of Mental Health Professionals**: South Africa has only 0.31 psychiatrists and 0.28 psychologists per 100,000 people, serving a population of 62 million.
* **High Prevalence of Mental Health Issues**: Approximately 27% of South Africans experience mood disorders, with certain provinces exhibiting higher rates.
* **Barriers to Access**:
	+ **Geographical**: Townships lack adequate mental health services.
	+ **Economic**: Private care is unaffordable for many, while public services are overstretched.
	+ **Stigma and Cultural Beliefs**: Societal attitudes discourage individuals from seeking help.
* **Impact of COVID-19**: The pandemic intensified mental health concerns, exacerbating anxiety and depression.
* **Economic Consequences**: Mental health-related absenteeism costs South Africa approximately R161 billion annually.

These issues underscore the urgent need for improved mental health infrastructure, increased funding, and greater awareness.

**What is the Solution?**

As a clinical psychologist, I recognized the limitations of reaching only a small number of clients individually. To expand my impact, I explored the task-sharing model, training and supervising lay counsellors to provide mental health support. By delegating skills, a single registered therapist can extend their reach, significantly increasing access to mental health services. Thus, **Kuthetha Nathi / Talk to Us** was established.

**Task-Sharing Model & Its Challenges:**

* **Training & Support**: Kuthetha Nathi provides structured training and ongoing supervision for lay counsellors to ensure high-quality care.
* **Quality Control**: Weekly supervision sessions uphold professional standards.
* **Reducing Stigma**: The organisation offers accessible, affordable services while ensuring counsellors receive prior psychological training.
* **Addressing Resource Constraints**: The initiative relies on volunteer lay counsellors and seeks funding to support registered therapists for supervision.

By leveraging existing workforce capacity, task sharing enhances mental health accessibility for disadvantaged populations. However, ensuring proper training, quality control, stigma reduction, and sustainable funding remains crucial.

**Business Strategy (Until 2025)**

**Phase 1: Needs Assessment (2019)**

A clinical psychologist conducted a literature review in preparation for a PhD thesis examining task-sharing for individuals with alcohol-related disorders. Research highlighted South Africa’s stark disparity in mental health care resources and the effectiveness of task-sharing as a solution.

**Phase 2: Foundations (2020-2025)**

Founded in 2020, Kuthetha Nathi faced delays due to COVID-19. By 2023, the initiative successfully piloted its model with two psychological supervisors and three lay counsellors. Cape Town Psychologists supported the effort with pro bono supervision and financial assistance for operational costs. The pilot phase confirmed the model’s feasibility and effectiveness.

**Phase 3: Formalisation (2025)**

With an operational manager in place, Kuthetha Nathi is formalising its services, including:

* Supervision groups in Sea Point
* Quarterly training for lay counsellors
* Community outreach By 2026, expansion to additional underserved areas is planned, supported by targeted fundraising efforts.

**Phase 4: Expansion (2026-2027)**

Future goals include:

* Extending online and in-person counselling services nationwide
* Strengthening community outreach
* Scaling up the task-sharing model under professional supervision

**Who Are We Building This For?**

Our clients are individuals facing financial and social barriers to mental health care. Once established in Cape Town, we plan to expand into remote and under-resourced areas. Lay counsellors are central to our success, and we invest in their development through dedicated supervision and quarterly training.

**Vision & Objectives**

**Our Vision**

To foster a society where emotionally healthy individuals, families, and communities collaborate for the common good.

To improve mental health within communities by the redistribution of responsibilities to non-specialist health workers

**Objectives**

* Develop a national network of affordable, non-psychological counselling services
* Improve access to mental health support
* Provide structured supervision for lay counsellors
* Collaborate with mental health professionals to alleviate pressure on public services

**Organisational Structure & Growth Plans**

**Management & Staffing**

The organisation comprises a board of directors, an operational and marketing team, supervisors, and volunteers. Growth plans include:

* Recruiting more supervisors and volunteers
* Expanding partnerships to increase outreach and client intake
* Securing sustainable funding through fundraising efforts

**Marketing & Outreach Strategy**

**Client Acquisition**

* Raising awareness via social media and pamphlets
* Collaborating with the Western Cape Department of Health
* Expanding online presence through a dedicated website

**Engagement with Mental Health Professionals**

* Launching targeted email campaigns to build referral networks

**Donor & Fundraising Initiatives**

* Organising fundraising campaigns and corporate partnerships to sustain services

**Impact Measurement & Evaluation**

The effectiveness of counselling is assessed using psychometric tools and qualitative feedback. Future plans include:

* Conducting community focus groups
* Establishing clear financial benchmarks to track progress

**Financial Plan & Sustainability**

**Monthly Budget for 2024**

* Initial Income: R5,000
* Expenses: R4,000
* Surplus: R1,000 (reinvested into the organisation)

**Projected Monthly Budget for 2025**

* Income: R17,000
* Expenses: R4,000
* Surplus: R13,000 (reinvested into the organisation)

**Growth Timeline**

* **Phase 1 (2020-2023)**: Initial trials and in-kind support
* **Phase 2 (2023-2025)**: Formalising the task-sharing model, increasing income to R17,000/month
* **Phase 3 (2025-2027)**: Expanding outreach, aiming for R25,000/month revenue

**Long-Term Sustainability**

By 2027-2030, Kuthetha Nathi aims to:

* Diversify revenue streams
* Strengthen key partnerships
* Maintain financial oversight using the SAGE accounting package

**Funding Sources & Partnerships**

* **Grants**: Targeting SACAP Foundation and Aimee Howard Foundation
* **Donations**: Community and corporate contributions
* **Partnerships**: Collaborating with Nechama, Counselling Hub, SACAP, and Humanitas for shared resources and funding opportunities

**Risk Management Plan**

Challenges such as funding shortages, stigma, and inconsistent care quality are mitigated through:

* Comprehensive training and supervision
* Regular evaluations and community engagement
* Strategic fundraising to ensure program sustainability

**Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG)**

By 2027, Kuthetha Nathi aims to generate over R500,000 in annual revenue, securing sustainable funding for at least one full-time employee.

**By strategically leveraging partnerships, diversifying funding sources, and carefully managing resources, Kuthetha Nathi / Talk to Us is positioned for expanded impact and financial stability by 2027.**