

GENDER EQUALITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY: OUR UNTAPPED TREASURE!

(Image: Pixabay Images)



At the Student Counselling Unit, we uphold and advocate for the rights of all our students. We strongly believe that nobody should be subjected to any form of discrimination based on race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, language, socio-economic status, mental health status, or disability. In particular, we would like to highlight two very important rights or agendas, namely gender equality and cultural diversity. We chose to focus on these two rights, as we have just come out of August (Women's month) and we are in September, approaching Heritage Day on the 24th September.

We would like to invite our students and the UP community to reflect on these two important agendas and ask ourselves a very significant question: "How can I promote greater awareness of gender equality and cultural diversity in the various areas of my life starting with my personal life (home, family relationships, romantic relationships, friendships), and moving outward to my academic, work and community life and contexts. We all have a very important part to play and together we can make a huge difference. For example, become aware of what you think and how you speak about or treat people from different gender identities and cultures than you. Notice any unconscious biases or prejudices and work towards changing your thinking and behaviour in small ways daily. Think about and treat the next person as you would like to be thought about and treated: in a fair, respectful, positive and dignified manner. Don't assume if you don't know: ask respectfully, listen attentively and non-judgementally, be open to learning, sharing and growing together. It's important that we don't agree on everything, it's important that we are respected for having different opinions, it's important that we are allowed to be different and that our difference is celebrated. In our differences lies our greatest untapped treasures!

Let's keep the spirit of Women's Month and Heritage Day alive throughout the year, as we relate with one person at a time, one moment at a time!

Announcement of the SCU Resilience Competition winners:

We would like to thank all students who participated in the SCU Resilience Competition. A hearty congratulations to the competition winners. In the Written category, Boitumelo Kokwe, Lucy Mamabolo and Lebohang Mahlasela were joint first prize winners, and won R2 500 each. Kefilwe Nungu and Mmamoruti Metswamere, who won R1 750 each, came second; and Nhlakanipho Makhubu received R1 000 as the third prize winner in this category. In the Visual category, Tamika Baker won third prize; she was awarded R1 000.

Resilience is not about overcoming challenges or adversity on our own. It's about tapping into or developing personal skills, but also accessing or accepting support and resources that are available from the various systems in our environment, so that we can experience positive outcomes in the face

of significant risk or adversity. Our mission at the SCU is to spread this message of resilience: you are not alone, and you are not expected to do it all alone. Connect with and accept the various resources available to you that can help you to experience positive outcomes. Let's shift our thinking about resilience to be inclusive of internal factors and skills, and external resources and support mechanisms.

SCU Resources for our students:

- 1) **Listen to the SCU's very own podcast series.**
Check out our latest episode on Gender Based Violence - Prevention and Support.
<https://anchor.fm/scumentalhealth>

- 2) **Check out our recent wellness posters on GBV, important facts about consent and self-compassion.**
<https://www.up.ac.za/student-counselling/article/2960452/scu-mental-health-awareness-series>

- 3) **Join a UP Peer Support Group today - your Community of Care!**
There are groups on various topics e.g. stress and anxiety, general mental health, grief and loss etc. To get more info or join, phone 0800 747 747 and request the latest peer support group info (times, topics, online link etc.). There are 2 groups running daily and one on Fridays. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to connect with your peers and contribute to this amazing community of care!

- 4) **Supportive Conversations with a Counsellor - UP Careline**
You can have a supportive conversation with a counsellor, any time, day or night. By phoning 0800 747 747, or sending an sms to 31393, you can enjoy the support and advice of a registered counsellor standing by to assist you immediately. This service is available through our mental health partner SADAG.

- 5) **Online workshops to help you succeed**
Upcoming workshop topics include Relationships and communication and Mental Health. Click below for more info! To register for a workshop, send an email to scuworkshops@up.ac.za.
https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/396/ZP_Resources/scu-workshops-2021-final-edited.zp201484.pdf

- 6) **"When your brain feels drained, get it trained!"**
Online Cognitive Training program offered at the SCU. For strong and weak learners. Find out more. It's free of charge!
https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/396/ZP_Resources/cognitive-training-flyer-pdf.zp201273.pdf

- 7) **Career Counselling or Career Testing**
If you are uncertain about your field of study or career path, we can assist with Career Counselling and/or Career assessment. Send an email to studentcounselling@up.ac.za to request this service.

- 8) **Your Chatbot SCU-B**
This chatbot does not replace formal counselling but provides information on important aspects of mental well-being. You can also build your own personalised toolkit comprised of tips/skills to manage your mental health via this chatbot. To access SCU-B, logon to your student portal, click on SCU-B and login with your student details.

