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29 May 2023

UCT, Department of Social Development to launch ASSIST app

29 May 2023 | 13:00-16:00 | Groote Schuur Hospital

The University of Cape Town (UCT), in partnership with the Department of Social Development (DSD), will launch the pilot of a web app – the Alcohol, Smoking and Substance Involvement Tool (ASSIST) – at Groote Schuur Hospital on Monday, 29 May 2023.

This is as part of the launch of the Integrated Early Intervention and Prevention Programme to curb social crime, gender-based violence, and substance abuse among youth.

The app, developed by Professor Goodman Sibeko of UCT's Division of Addiction Psychiatry, represents an important tool in detecting and providing accessible intervention strategies for harmful substance use.

The app is a new version of the World Health Organisation tool. It will be demonstrated at the launch with the participation of its intended user group, students from higher education institutions across South Africa.

The ASSIST web app tool is a comprehensive risk assessment tool which provides a self-screening opportunity which helps with assessing whether a person is on low, moderate, or high risk of substance consumption.

The tool also provides a level of substance assessment and information and feedback about risks as well as harm associated with each substance. It then recommends best practice interventions in line with the risk calculated.

The launch will be a high-level event with ministers attending and with a welcome from the UCT Interim Vice-Chancellor, Emeritus Professor Daya Reddy.

Since 2015, the DSD has been working closely with institutions of higher learning to prevent Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF), substance abuse and social crime among students around the country.

Through these engagements, the department has reached public universities and private universities, TVET colleges and public colleges.

The integrated programme was prompted by the need to reduce, control and address alcohol and substance abuse which negatively affects the lives of young people in tertiary institutions.

Members of the media are invited to attend the launch as follows:

- Follow proceedings live via [MS Teams](#) or via the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences [YouTube channel](#).
- RSVP to attend [in-person](#).

ENDS

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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