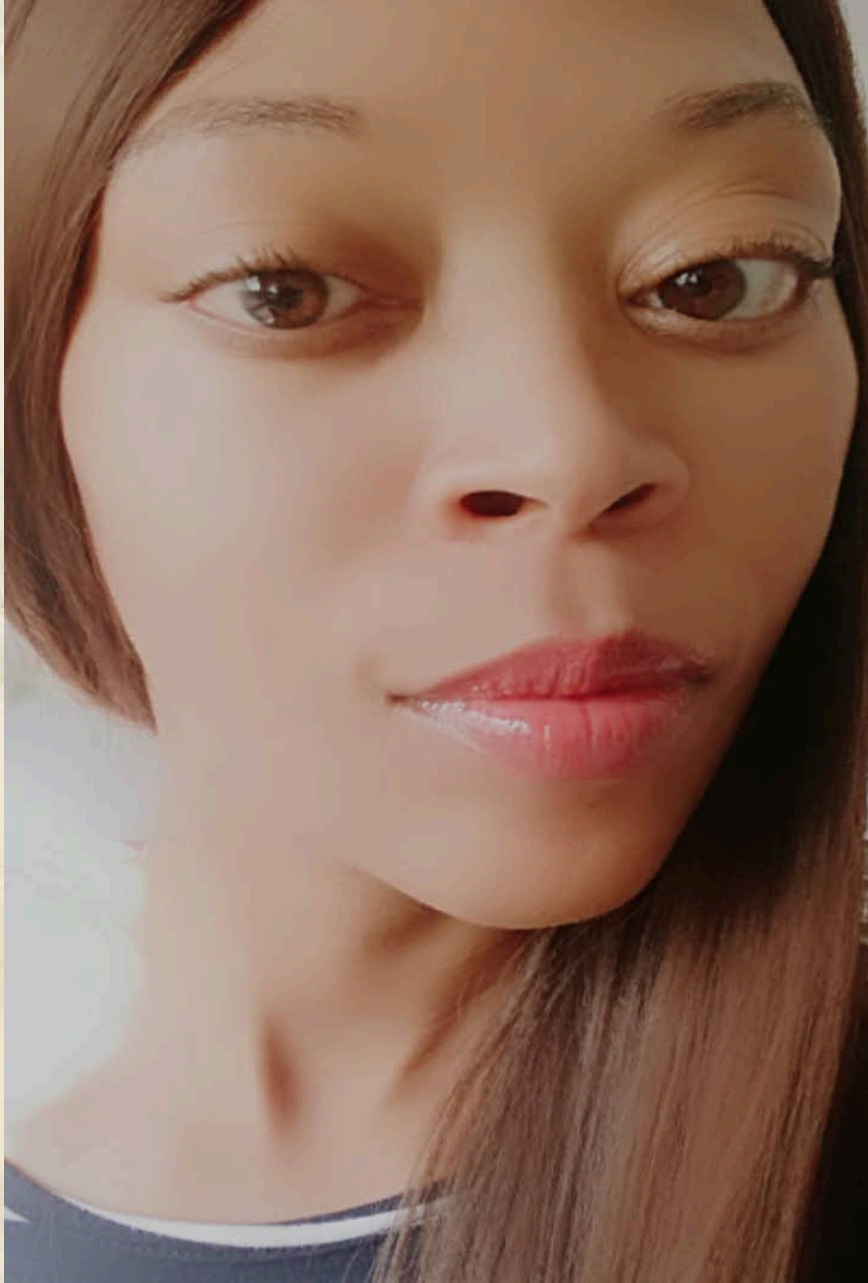


**A CASE STUDY OF A SOCIAL WORKER'S  
EXPERIENCES IN RENDERING SERVICES  
TO SUBSTANCE USERS AND ITS IMPACT  
ON HER PERSONAL WELLBEING AND  
PRACTICE PERFORMANCE.**

**REF:P11**



My name is **Sharon Best**. I work for the Free State Department of Social Development, based at the Welkom office in the Lejweleputswa district. I have been a Social Worker for five years, initially serving Children and Families. Currently, I render Restorative services: Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation. Today, I'm going to share my personal experiences in this regard

**WHO  
AM I?**



# **1. BACKGROUND**

**The use of substances has risen exponentially countrywide and across the globe. As a result, social workers rendering services to substance users have personally come to understand the negative effects of illicit drugs on individuals and families in their various districts alone.**

## 2. METHODS: STUDY DESIGNS, POPULATION & SETTING

### 2.1 Study Designs

This *qualitative study* applies both a *descriptive* as well as an *exploratory design* to examine the lived experiences of a professional social worker rendering services to substance users and is relevant for providing an accurate account of challenges.



## 2.2 Population

It is a common phenomenon for substance users to be found battling ***multiple addictions, substance induced psychosis*** as well as the onset of ***mental health problems.*** Subsequently, social workers are expected to implement various prevention strategies and treatment techniques designed to mitigate **Substance Use Disorders.**

## 2.3 Setting

- Countless *interviews, observations, focus and therapeutic group discussions as well as awareness methods* in natural environments are used to engage individuals, families, groups and communities affected by substance use.
- Interventions are all **aimed at significantly reducing the risks associated with initiating substance use and continue to help service users towards sustainable recovery.**



### 3. RESULTS

However, when entering the living world of the practitioner, ***despite the use of standard wellness efforts, supportive supervision, and self care strategies,*** social workers in this field continue to ***experience negative effects*** such as ***compassion fatigue, immense stress and burnout.*** The ***nature of cases*** reported to workers are also often ***demotivating*** due to the ***inherent characteristics of addiction, users' reluctance to change and the probability of relapses following treatment.*** Moreover, substance abuse in particular ***contains elements of danger exposing social workers to risks in practice*** as they maintain efforts to advocate for and support vulnerable individuals and families.



## 4. CONCLUSION



The prevention of and treatment for substance abuse is undoubtedly one of many strategies to build supportive communities that foster safe environments and promote healthy relationships. Thus, it is ***recommended that social workers in this field be empowered with permanent solutions and resources to address their mental health so that they can maintain a healthy personal well-being whilst prioritizing service delivery in practice.***



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GOODNESS,  
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