

The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)  
cordially invites you to a Mental Health Symposium on

## The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use

**Date:** 10 March 2023  
**Time:** 10:00 to 16:00  
**RSVP:** [Click here to RSVP](#)  
**Venue:** CSIR, Pretoria, Gauteng

### BACKGROUND

The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) is hosting a Mental Health Symposium aimed at obtaining the perspectives of early career researchers.

The theme of the symposium on 'The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use' seeks to increase knowledge and build capacity in mental health research amongst early career researchers. The main aim of convening this symposium stems from the realisation that the COVID-19 pandemic has had both short- and long-term implications for mental health and substance use, especially for groups at risk of new or exacerbated mental health disorders, those facing barriers to accessing care and the need for realisation of a collective sense of responsibility towards a proactive public health regime.

### KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

#### Prof Puleng Segalo

Prof Puleng Segalo is a National Research Foundation (NRF) rated Fulbright scholar and a Professor of Psychology at the University of South Africa. She is the incumbent of the Chief Albert Luthuli Research Chair which is housed in the College of Human Sciences.

She was the 2013 recipient of the Unisa Principal's Prize for Excellence in Research, the 2014 winner of the National Science and Technology Young Women in Science Award, and the 2021/2022 regional winner of The World Academy of Science award for her role in popularizing science. She was the 2019 SARIMA STORM fellowship grant recipient. Her research focuses on historical trauma, Public Health and gendered experiences of various forms of gender-based violence. Prof Segalo is the 2023 Research Affiliate of the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana and the African Affiliate Fellow at the African Studies Center of the University of Kansas. Prof Segalo is passionate about mental-health and community well-being.



#### Prof Tholene Sodi

Prof Tholene Sodi is a Registered Clinical Psychologist, currently employed as Professor of Psychology at the University of Limpopo. He holds a Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of the Witwatersrand, and a PhD (Psychology) from the University of Cape Town. Prof Sodi has just completed a two-year term as a Member of the Board of the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC).



He has also previously served as Vice-President of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). He has published widely and has presented papers at national and international conferences. His key areas of research interest include youth mental health; culture and mental health; mental health policy; behavioural medicine; and, implementation science. As from January 2023, Prof Sodi has taken up a position at the University of Limpopo as Research Chair in Mental Health and Society.



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