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Headline: [WATCH] How to get mental health support – for half the price of a psychologist session

Blurb: Registered counsellors can provide short-term talk therapy including trauma and grief counselling. Here's where you can find these health workers.

Bullets:

- The health department created a new category of mental health worker in 2003 called a registered counsellor.
- There are around 2 500 of these specialists registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa.
- Registered counsellors can provide short term talk therapy such as trauma and grief counselling. They can also screen people for mental health conditions and then refer them to psychiatrists and psychologists. At schools, they can also give career guidance or screen learners' learning abilities.

Byline: Zano Kunene, Yolanda Mdzeke

Do you know what a registered counsellor is?

South Africa has more than 2 500 of these entry-level mental health workers.

Registered counsellors have an honours or equivalent degree in psychology.

They must also have six months of practical experience before they can join the Health Professions Council of South Africa.

How can registered counsellors help?

Registered counsellors are the paramedics of mental health.

Their job falls in between a lay counsellor and a psychologist.

Registered counsellors can give short-term psychological support for people who are traumatised or grieving.

For example, if someone has been in a car accident, a registered counsellor can provide counselling which can reduce the risk of developing a severe mental illness.

Registered counsellors can also screen people for mental health conditions to figure out what kind of help they'll need in the long term.

They will decide whether the person must be sent to a psychologist or a psychiatrist.

Registered counsellors can help in schools as well.

They can:

- Assess school children's learning abilities
- Give learners career advice

Registered counsellors can also help to teach people about the importance of taking HIV medication in the right way.

What does it cost to see a registered counsellor?

An hour-long appointment with a registered counsellor can cost around R560.

That's about half of what it costs to see a psychologist (which costs roughly R1 200).

Where can you find a registered counsellor?

Go to the www.medicalnetwork.co.za website

Select "registered counsellor" from the drop down menu.

Type in where you live to see the counsellors nearest to you.

Do you need urgent support?

Call the [South African Depression and Anxiety Group](#)

011 234 4837

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