



HEALTH AND WELLNESS BOARD OF SOUTH AFRICA (HWBSA)

Scope of Practice Policy

Version 1.0 | Effective Date: Nov 1 2025

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to define the **Scope of Practice** for all categories of practitioners registered under the **Health and Wellness Board of South Africa (HWBSA)**. This scope outlines the permissible activities, professional boundaries, and ethical obligations that guide health and wellness professionals in South Africa who are not registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) or the Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners (ASCHP), but who operate within the complementary, preventive, and lifestyle health domains.

2. OBJECTIVES

- To ensure public protection through regulated, ethical, and evidence-informed practice.
- To establish standardized parameters of professional activity for each category of registration.
- To differentiate between medical, therapeutic, and wellness-based scopes.
- To promote interprofessional collaboration without scope infringement.
- To formalize recognition of alternative and complementary health modalities in South Africa.

3. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **Scope of Practice:** The range of responsibilities, procedures, and actions permitted by education, training, and certification under HWBSA.
- **Practitioner:** Any individual registered under HWBSA to offer professional wellness, health promotion, or complementary health services.
- **Client:** Any person receiving wellness, lifestyle, or educational support from a registered practitioner.
- **Supervision:** Oversight by a senior or certified practitioner or health professional in training or practice contexts.
- **Referral:** Directing a client to a qualified medical or mental health professional when the presenting issue falls outside the practitioner's competence.

4. PRINCIPLES GOVERNING PRACTICE

All HWBSA practitioners must:

1. Operate **within their level of training and competence.**
2. Refrain from diagnosing, prescribing, or treating medical or psychiatric conditions.
3. Focus on **education, prevention, lifestyle modification, and wellness promotion.**
4. Maintain client confidentiality and ethical boundaries.
5. Encourage collaboration with other regulated professionals.
6. Ensure all claims are **scientifically supported or traditionally contextualized** and clearly disclosed as such.

5. GENERAL SCOPE OF PRACTICE (Applies to All Registered Practitioners)

Registered practitioners may:

- Conduct **non-diagnostic client assessments** using questionnaires, observations, and client history.
- Provide **lifestyle guidance** in areas such as nutrition, sleep, stress management, physical activity, and emotional wellbeing.

- Deliver **educational and behavioral interventions** that promote health and prevent illness.
- Use **motivational, trauma-informed, or educational techniques** to support client change.
- Facilitate **workshops, group programs, and wellness education sessions**.
- Maintain professional records of client sessions, progress, and referrals.
- Refer clients appropriately for medical, psychological, or emergency care.

Registered practitioners **may not**:

- Diagnose or claim to cure any medical or psychiatric condition.
- Prescribe or alter medication.
- Interfere with ongoing medical or psychological treatment.
- Perform invasive procedures or physical examinations.
- Make unverified claims about outcomes or results.

6. CATEGORY-SPECIFIC SCOPE OF PRACTICE

6.1. Health & Wellness Coaches

- Facilitate self-awareness, goal-setting, and motivation for behavior change.
- Provide educational information on nutrition, movement, stress, and mindset.
- Support clients in implementing physician or therapist-approved care plans.
- Work with clients on lifestyle diseases (e.g., hypertension, diabetes, obesity) **through behavior modification**, not medical treatment.
- May operate independently or within wellness programs, corporate health settings, or public health initiatives.

Prohibited:

- Diagnosing illness, prescribing supplements or medications, or conducting therapy.

6.2. Lifestyle Medicine Practitioners

- Focus on prevention and reversal of chronic disease through evidence-based lifestyle interventions.
- Address nutrition, physical activity, sleep hygiene, stress reduction, and substance avoidance.
- Collaborate with healthcare providers for integrative care.
- Offer group and individual wellness plans grounded in scientific principles.

Prohibited:

- Diagnosing or treating medical conditions without appropriate licensure.

6.3. Trauma-Informed Wellness Practitioners

- Offer education, guidance, and structured programs based on trauma awareness and self-regulation.
- Facilitate emotional literacy, grounding, and nervous system education.
- May integrate somatic, mindfulness, or expressive methods for non-clinical trauma support.
- Operate within an educational and supportive, not therapeutic, capacity.

Prohibited:

- Trauma therapy, psychological counselling, or psychiatric assessment.

6.4. Complementary & Alternative Health Practitioners (e.g., Kinesiologists, Energy Medicine, Sound, Breathwork)

- Conduct holistic wellness sessions based on energy, movement, and sensory integration principles.
- Use non-invasive modalities (touch, sound, breath, vibration) for relaxation and balance.

- Work in alignment with cultural, traditional, or integrative health frameworks.
- Maintain informed consent, explaining that services are complementary and not replacements for medical care.

Prohibited:

- Making diagnostic or curative claims.
- Using unregistered medical devices or invasive procedures.

6.5. Functional Nutrition & Natural Health Practitioners

- Offer personalized nutrition guidance, food education, and supplementation advice within non-prescriptive limits.
- May recommend diet patterns or natural remedies that support wellness and disease prevention.
- Collaborate with dietitians, physicians, or lifestyle medicine specialists for medical cases.

Prohibited:

- Creating or altering medical diets for clinical conditions (e.g., renal, diabetic, or oncology diets).
- Selling or promoting products as cures.

6.6. Mental Wellness & Behavioural Practitioners

- Provide psychoeducation, emotional regulation tools, and mindset support.
- Utilize behavior change frameworks, positive psychology, or coaching models.
- Deliver group programs in schools, workplaces, and communities.

Prohibited:

- Conducting psychotherapy or psychiatric counselling.
- Using protected professional titles such as “psychologist,” “counsellor,” or “therapist.”

6.7. Student Practitioners

- May assist under supervision of a registered practitioner.
- Can conduct educational workshops and wellness outreach under institutional programs.
- Must clearly identify themselves as **students** in all communication.
- May not provide independent consultation or advice outside supervised practice.

SECTION 6.8 - SPECIALTY SCOPES OF PRACTICE

The following specialty scopes extend from the general and category-specific frameworks previously outlined. These categories exist to recognize advanced or emerging areas of health and wellness practice that integrate science, tradition, and innovation while remaining within non-medical, educational, and preventive boundaries.

6.8.1. Trauma & Neuroscience-Informed Practitioners

Core Competencies:

- Understand trauma, attachment, and nervous system regulation from a social neuroscience perspective.
- Offer education on trauma patterns, emotional regulation, and behavior change.
- Facilitate group programs, reparenting frameworks, and healing education based on evidence-informed neuroscience.
- Use non-clinical tools such as breathwork, journaling, visualization, or somatic awareness techniques.

Permitted Activities:

- Psychoeducational workshops and trauma literacy sessions.
- Emotional regulation coaching and resilience education.
- Community-based trauma recovery support programs.

Prohibited:

- Conducting trauma therapy or clinical intervention.
- Diagnosing PTSD or other mental health disorders.
- Using clinical terms such as “psychotherapy,” “clinical counselling,” or “trauma therapy” in professional titles.

6.8.2. Integrative & Holistic Nutrition Practitioners

Core Competencies:

- Understand functional nutrition principles, micronutrient balance, and food-based healing.
- Guide clients in preventive nutrition for inflammation, metabolism, gut health, and energy.
- Recommend dietary patterns aligned with cultural or lifestyle preferences.
- Provide meal planning support and product education within non-clinical boundaries.

Permitted Activities:

- Nutrition education for healthy individuals or general population groups.
- Advising on supplements and whole-food nutrition (without prescription).
- Collaboration with medical dietitians and healthcare providers.

Prohibited:

- Designing or prescribing therapeutic diets for specific diseases.
- Managing eating disorders, metabolic conditions, or allergies without referral.
- Claiming to diagnose or treat medical nutritional deficiencies.

6.8.3. Holistic & Mind-Body Practitioners

Core Competencies:

- Facilitate practices that connect body awareness, emotional health, and energy flow.
- Integrate somatic, mindfulness, yoga, or spiritual tools for holistic balance.
- Work within traditional or modern integrative frameworks to support wellbeing.

Permitted Activities:

- Conducting yoga therapy, breathwork, guided meditation, and energy balance sessions.
- Using culturally rooted methods such as Reiki, sound healing, or mindfulness facilitation.
- Educating clients on body awareness, grounding, and relaxation.

Prohibited:

- Making medical or curative claims related to diseases or trauma.
- Performing manipulative physical therapies requiring clinical licensure (e.g., physiotherapy, chiropractic).

6.8.4. Sexuality & Relationship Wellness Practitioners

Core Competencies:

- Promote healthy sexual and relational wellbeing from trauma-informed, psychological, and physiological perspectives.
- Educate on intimacy, consent, communication, and sexual health literacy.
- Work with individuals or couples to develop emotional safety and connection.

Permitted Activities:

- Conducting workshops and sessions on emotional intimacy, sexual education, and relationship health.
- Integrating somatic, mindfulness, and neurobiological frameworks for sexual wellness.

- Collaborating with healthcare professionals where sexual dysfunction is medically related.

Prohibited:

- Treating sexual dysfunctions medically or psychologically.
- Offering sex therapy, clinical relationship counselling, or psychosexual therapy.
- Physical contact beyond professional ethical boundaries.

6.8.5. Community Health & Preventive Wellness Facilitators

Core Competencies:

- Work within community, workplace, and school settings to promote public health and wellness.
- Deliver workshops and programs on mental health awareness, nutrition, and lifestyle education.
- Serve as liaisons between communities and professional health systems.

Permitted Activities:

- Organizing and facilitating wellness outreach campaigns.
- Delivering structured health promotion programs.
- Supporting early screening and referral initiatives.

Prohibited:

- Acting as public health officers or issuing official medical advice.
- Handling diagnostic data or treatment plans.

6.8.6. Spiritual & Energy Wellness Practitioners

Core Competencies:

- Provide wellness and emotional guidance rooted in faith, spirituality, or energy medicine.
- Integrate prayer, meditation, intuitive reflection, and cultural or ancestral modalities responsibly.
- Offer rituals or wellness ceremonies aligned with ethical and inclusive frameworks.

Permitted Activities:

- Offering spiritual guidance sessions.
- Facilitating meditative or energy-based wellness rituals.
- Collaborating with wellness practitioners to integrate holistic care.

Prohibited:

- Claiming divine healing or spiritual cures for medical conditions.
- Practicing exorcisms, mediumship, or psychic healing for remuneration under HWBSA recognition.
- Violating cultural, ethical, or religious respect in practice.

6.8.7. Corporate, Workplace & Occupational Wellness Specialists

Core Competencies:

- Design and implement employee wellbeing programs and stress management systems.
- Conduct assessments of workplace mental health, ergonomics, and organizational wellness.
- Offer educational interventions that improve productivity, culture, and resilience.

Permitted Activities:

- Employee wellness workshops, leadership resilience training, and burnout prevention.
- Collaboration with HR and occupational health divisions for systemic health planning.

Prohibited:

- Conducting occupational medical examinations.
- Issuing mental health fitness-for-work certifications.

6.8.8. Traditional & Indigenous Healing Practitioners

Core Competencies:

- Practice indigenous or ancestral wellness systems in alignment with cultural laws and respect for heritage.
- Offer herbal, spiritual, and cultural guidance within traditional frameworks.
- Promote recognition and integration of indigenous wellness knowledge.

Permitted Activities:

- Culturally informed ceremonies, herbal education, and traditional consultation.
- Collaboration with modern health systems in dual-referral models.

Prohibited:

- Using untested or unsafe herbal formulations without disclosure.
- Claiming exclusive authority over spiritual or ancestral outcomes.

6.8.9. Academic, Research & Training Practitioners

Core Competencies:

- Engage in teaching, curriculum development, and evidence-based research in health and wellness.
- Conduct independent or institutional studies to advance practice standards.
- Develop educational materials and CPD programs under HWBSA approval.

Permitted Activities:

- Academic supervision, publication, and peer-reviewed teaching.

- Conducting public health and wellness research initiatives.

Prohibited:

- Research involving human subjects without ethical clearance.
- Misuse of data or research misrepresentation.

7. INTERPROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

HWBSA practitioners must:

- Respect the roles and legal authority of HPCSA-registered professionals.
- Use referral pathways for conditions requiring diagnosis or medical intervention.
- Avoid overlap that could cause public confusion about professional roles.
- Collaborate ethically for client-centered, integrative care.

All specialty practitioners must:

- Stay within their defined educational and experiential limits.
- Collaborate respectfully with other modalities and health professionals.
- Obtain supervision or mentorship when working in complex client contexts.
- Use clear, transparent language about their role and scope in all materials.

8. ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Practitioners must comply with the **HWBSA Code of Conduct and Ethics**.
- Any practitioner found practicing outside their scope may face disciplinary action or deregistration.
- Ongoing education is required to ensure safe, competent, and evolving practice.

9. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

All practitioners must complete a minimum of **10 CPD hours per year** relevant to their field. Recognized activities include accredited short courses, workshops, conferences, or research contributions approved by HWBSA.

10. AMENDMENTS AND REVIEW

The HWBSA may amend this scope periodically to reflect evolving evidence, practices, and regulatory developments.

All changes are published in the official **Practitioner Portal** and communicated to members.

11. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Scope of Practice comes into effect upon approval by the **Founding Regulatory Committee** and applies to all registrants from that date forward.