



The South African Association for  
Social Workers in Private Practice

## WHAT IS OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK

Occupational social work, a specialised field of practice, addresses the individual and social needs of the work community through various methods that aim to foster harmony between individuals and the environment.

The occupational social workers role in the workplace is to develop and facilitate relevant intervention strategies and programmes to assist in meeting the service demands that have been identified.

### **Activities undertaken by the specialist social worker include:**

- To meet the social welfare needs of workers and work organisations on multiple levels of practice and to fulfil multiple roles, often in innovative but fairly small service delivery models.
- To effect change within the organisation in order to impact on performance of the organisation and improve employee's quality of life.
- To work together with other professions to deal with employee wellness in the workplace.
- To link people with resources and help them cope with life challenges that impact on work.
- Taking on roles such as: organiser, advocate, mediator, teacher, facilitator, negotiator, planner, developer, monitor and evaluator.
- Offering services such as counselling; administration; education and training; as well as community work; group work; supervision and to get involved in corporate social involvement and research.

### **Who we help:**

Occupational social work may look like other specialisations in social work designed to remedy gaps in human and social needs, however Occupational Social Work focuses on: people in the workplace as a functional community; including employees, job seekers, labour union members, and retirees.