



**WEL**  
*Wellness for Effective Leadership*



**HEALTH  
SYSTEMS  
TRUST**

## What is the WEL programme?

The Wellness for Effective Leadership (WEL) Programme is a personal development course designed to assist managers in the public sector to improve their wellness, to develop their emotional intelligence and personal and interpersonal competencies, and to deal effectively with stress and the risks of burnout. The programme was developed in 2009 in response to a crisis in service delivery in a rural area, and now maintains a strong focus on improving wellness in order to improve service delivery.

In 2013, HST took over the programme, which is run for groups in 12 districts as part of our SA SURE (South Africa's Sustainable Response to HIV and AIDS) project. We offer the WEL programme for other groups on request.



## Why a programme on Wellness for Effective Leadership?

In rural areas, front-line workers and their immediate managers in health, education and social development all face similar problems. Communities are poor, infrastructure and transport are a challenge, resources are limited, and clients are numerous. Those working at district and sub-district levels often feel disconnected from the centre of power and lost in a multitude of bureaucratic processes. All of this can lead to people feeling alienated and demotivated. A syndrome known as "transformation fatigue" is also experienced, as new policies and directives are continuously implemented to improve the efficiency of the system.

Under such circumstances, it is a serious personal and professional challenge to remain enthusiastic and to provide high quality services.

The WEL Programme was developed to address these issues in a sustainable and developmental manner. It uses experiential training to help individuals and teams to improve their personal and interpersonal competencies, and so to improve service delivery.

*"As a leader you have to adapt your style to suit your situation."*

## What time commitments are required to attend a WEL workshop?

A WEL programme runs for a total period of seven days, and consists of four workshops spread over a period of six to eight months. Attendance is limited to a maximum of 14 participants – who are normally drawn from the same working environment – and the course is run by two facilitators.



*“Even my boss now knows that when I talk she must listen.”*

## What issues are covered during the workshops?

### A typical WEL programme consists of the following:

- Developing personal effectiveness through self-awareness, self-care and developing emotional intelligence
- Developing effective management techniques
- Addressing stress, burn-out and past trauma
- Using effective communication techniques
- Building and growing workplace teams
- Understanding team dynamics
- Dealing with conflict management and dispute resolution
- Respecting and managing diversity



### However, each WEL programme is different:

Whilst the structure for all groups is the same, the content of the programme is different for each group. In the first workshop, skilled facilitators help individuals and the group to identify their own specific needs to be addressed, which the facilitators use as a basis to design the rest of the programme.

## What the WEL programme does not address

The WEL programme is not an organisational development (OD) programme, nor does it set out to “fix the system”. Rather, it aims to help empower people with skills and techniques that enable them to be more effective within any system – whether it be efficiently and supportively run, or weakened by adverse conditions that undermine morale and service outcomes.

The WEL programme focuses on helping people to function optimally in a less-than-ideal world by increasing their own effectiveness and improving their role in any system.

*“I am more calm and understanding, and I am more organised in the office.”*

*“I am able to listen to other people’s frustrations and solve where I can.”*

*“Sometimes you need to compromise.”*

## Where have these programmes been held?

The WEL programme started in the Eastern Cape where seven groups were run from 2009 to 2012. In 2012, HST also commissioned groups in another three provinces and one group for its own senior staff. In the following year, HST took over the programme and ran another 18 groups in six provinces. Most groups have been run for managers in the public health sector in rural areas. Recognising that managers in other sectors also need to improve their wellness to be more effective, there are plans to roll out the WEL programme to other sectors in the public service during 2014.

### **The response from participants has been thoroughly positive, endorsing that:**

- the WEL programme is different from any course they have attended before;
- they have gained valuable new insights;
- they manage stress much more easily, and
- they are more effective both as individual managers and as a team.

*"Before the WEL programme, the HCT programme in my area was underperforming at 44% delivery. By the third session, the HCT delivery was on 72% and currently it is on 97%. Does it (WEL) work? Here's the evidence."*



### WHO WE ARE

Health Systems Trust is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1992 to support the transformation of the health system in South Africa.

### OUR VISION

Health systems supporting health for all in southern Africa

### OUR MISSION

To contribute to building comprehensive, effective, efficient and equitable national health systems by supporting the implementation of functional health districts in South Africa and the southern African region

### OUR APPROACH

- We embrace a public health perspective with a focus on the primary health care approach.
- We promote and support health systems development through research and information dissemination that influences both policy and practice.
- We improve quality of care in priority health programmes through facilitating supportive interventions and sharing 'good practice'.
- We advocate for equity, efficiency and effectiveness in health services and for the empowerment of the health service users.
- We operate efficiently and effectively through utilising HST's synergistic, multi-disciplinary approach.

**Tel:** 031 266 9090  
**Fax:** 031 266 9199  
**Email:** [hst@hst.org.za](mailto:hst@hst.org.za)

Durban (Head Office)  
34 Essex Terrace  
Westville 3630

[www.hst.org.za](http://www.hst.org.za)

 Health Systems Trust

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