

## **Mrs Palesa Ramohlouoane**

Palesa Ramohlouoane is a Licensed Mental Health Counsellor (LMHC) with New York State, with nine years' experience as a Coach and Facilitator in Occupationally Directed Training and Development across South Africa. Currently, Palesa is working in the Behavior Support Department as a Behavior Specialist at Riselife Services, Long Island, New York and as a Psychotherapist in Private Practice. Palesa has seven years in the human services field. For the past three years Palesa has worked in both the Office of Mental Health (OMH) and Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) in a residential housing program and supportive housing and apartment program serving more than 50 clients.

Most of the treatment is provided in collaboration with a Clinical Team, such as psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, and social workers. Palesa oversees all behavior related incidents using Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT) and Trauma Informed Approach (TIA) to provide individual Behavior Support Plan (BSP) for managing symptom related behaviors in the program. Palesa provides individual counseling, group therapy and therapeutic interventions to clients struggling with schizophrenia, depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), autism, Intellectual Disabilities (ID), etc. In addition, Palesa provides Training to all the Support Staff in the OMH/OPWDD programs to help implement all the BSP in the programs.

Palesa is passionate about looking at human suffering collectively and helping people make sense of their experiences. Africans have endured some suffering for decades. Looking at Africans from a contextualized lens provides historical considerations which allows for understanding of current overt behaviors. Palesa is interested in working with Africans in looking at past trauma, identifying core values and moving towards acceptance of self. Palesa believes that information sharing is important to move things forward, the current mental health situations concerning African calls for clinicians to find creative ways to work together. Having previously worked in mentorship programs and experienced being a mentee, Palesa is passionate about human development.

Between 2004-2013, Palesa worked in Occupationally Directed Training and Development as a Coach and Facilitator, for adult learners whereby she worked for few companies including Pioneerfoods providing nationwide Skills based training programs. Training, Coaching and Assessing individuals that needed to complete qualifications or skills programs for compliance reasons, or based on organizational skills needs. These were large projects consisting of 40-100 learners per project. In 2010-2013, Palesa became less involved in Training and Development and took on the role of Human Resource Labor Relations and mostly handled: Employee Relations, Performance management, Wellness Training, Management Advisory, Employment Equity, Recruitment, HR Strategies and HR Audits to over 1,500 employees.