

**“Enhancing Interprofessional
Collaboration and Learning for
Strengthening Primary Health Care”**

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Title	THE ROLE OF CLINICAL PASTORAL CARE IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUPPORT NETWORKS FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS DURING A PANDEMIC
Type	Workshops <i>High-Quality Learning and Collaborations in the Health Workforce</i>
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Content	<p>The COVID-19 has impacted the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities worldwide. Health care workers have the added burden of the fear of exposing their families and loved ones to the disease, frustration about a lack of adequate protective gear, exhaustion due to long hours of work and deep grief for dying patients, which can lead to emotional exhaustion. Pastoral Care workers have a significant role to play in promoting mental well-being of health care workers as part of the health care team. The mental health and resilience should be supported by interventions which address daily needs, psychological and workplace needs. This paper explores the impact of COVID 19 on the mental health of health care workers in a hospital context and the role of clinical pastoral care in facilitating interventions to support the wellbeing of health care workers. The intervention was based on weekly debriefing and group counselling sessions for health care workers provided by a pastoral care worker. An open ended questionnaire and focus group was used to determine the influence of these sessions. Preliminary findings are that there was an improvement in personal wellbeing, professional relationships between staff improved and health care workers felt better equipped to deal with the challenges of their occupation. They also felt supported by the safe space created to share their experiences.</p>