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TRANSFORMATION FROM MSDS TO CIVILIAN

We all know that it is every MSD's wish to get their contract renewed as regular force members, but unfortunately the department has limited slots per intake. Even though the MSDS were told from the first day of their contract at basic training that the MSD contract is just for two years, it is not easy for them to accept when the contract .

Brig Gen Buks Potgieter GOC of Mobile Military Health Support Formation consulted with Maj Els, in her capacity as a Social Work Officer, with regards to the MSD's in her unit that struggle to accept the reality that after two years in the SANDF that they need to look for alternative employment outside the organisation .

Both Maj Liezel Els and Brig Gen Potgieter realised that MSDS members need to be empowered with life skills in order to prepare them to survive within and outside the military environment.

A programme was implemented during April 2013 for all the MSDs from Support Formation HQ, Area Military Health Formation AMHF HQ, (Mobile Military Health Formation) MMHF HQ and (Tertiary Military Health Formation) TMHF HQ. The programme has been marketed at the Military Community Wellbeing Committee MCWC for all the formations.

The main purpose of these to sessions are to empower MSD's with life skills, thus ensuring resilience in the DOD, after their two year contract and to give them moral support, guidance and a way forward.

Maj Els facilitated the first contact session where the MSD members identified relevant topics for themselves. The reason why they made MSD's to choose their own topics was to get the buy in from them and also to ensure that the topics are applicable to the relevant group of MSD's.

The MSD's programme focuses on the following topics

- *Getting to know myself my personality.*
- *Compiling a CV.*
- *Job Interviews, "how do I prepare myself, How do I sell myself?"*
- *Interpersonal relationship skills.... building healthy relationship.*
- *Stress management and anger management*
- *Conflict management.*
- *Substance abuse.*
- *Domestic violence.*
- *Sexual harassment.*
- *Financial management.*

This training programme has a positive feedback, because all the MSD's that are attending are very positive about life and what they can be able to do with the skills that they acquired during their two years MSDs contracts.

Pte James Komape from mobile military health formation say “even if I do not get a contract at least I can do something with the skills that I acquired in the DOD, for example with the money that I have been saving together with my eighteen thousand I can upgrade my First AID or upgrade my protection skill then be a security guard for big companies”, these are the exact words from a positive troop. It is very clear that he has learned a lot from the training program provided in their unit.