

REECE CARSTENS

COO

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

A mental health and community development leader with a strong focus on improving emotional wellbeing within South Africa's education sector. As COO of Community Keepers, I oversee the delivery and growth of school-based psychosocial support programmes that serve learners, educators, and families in vulnerable communities. Proficiency includes operational management, partnership development, counselling support, and implementing trauma-responsive interventions that strengthen resilience and create safer, more supportive school environments.

EXPERIENCE

EDUCATION

Cornerstone Institute:
BPsych Equivalent (2019)

COO, Community Keepers — South Africa (Jan 2025–Present)

- Impact: Partnering with 60 schools, reaching ~ 51468 learners and 1672 educators annually.
- Leadership: Leads in operational management, community engagement and psychosocial support initiatives
- Program quality: Ensuring school-based mental health and psychosocial support initiatives are delivered consistently, ethically, and in line with organisational standards. This includes monitoring programme implementation across partner schools, supporting and supervising counsellors and field teams, reviewing impact and case management processes, strengthening safeguarding and referral systems, and using feedback and data to improve service delivery. Additionally, this entails working with school leadership, community stakeholders, and internal teams to ensure programmes remain responsive to learner needs, and aligned with the organisation's broader wellbeing and education outcomes.

Business Development Manager, Community Keepers (Jan 2024 - Dec 2024)

- Drove business growth and new revenue opportunities
- Managed stakeholder relationships and business strategy
- Implemented operational improvements and best practices
- Supported leadership decision-making and transformation initiatives

Area Manager, Community Keepers (Nov 2021- Dec 2023)

- Managed and mentored a school-based support services team in Cape Town
- Provided counselling, psycho-social support, and wellbeing education to children and adults
- Developed programmes, implemented treatment plans, and contributed to future-focused assessments
- Managed stakeholder relationships, reporting, and collaboration within school communities

Care Practitioner (Office Manager), Community Keepers (Jan 2020 - Oct 2021)

- Cared for the learners and staff at Buren High School

KEY SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

- Provided strategic leadership to strengthen organisational growth, team performance, and psycho social support services
- Led psychosocial and learner support programmes across schools and communities
- Oversaw operations, resource management, and service delivery processes
- Built and maintained partnerships with schools, donors, government, and community stakeholders

REFERENCES