

# Tackling substance abuse in workplace

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The department of public works (DoPW) joined forces with Katalambano Wellness Holdings and Old Mutual last week to raise awareness about the link between substance abuse and financial stress in the workplace.

Nomathamsanqa Matwa of the DoPW regional office said financial stress often led employees to a dark hole of substance abuse which was an undesirable behaviour in the workplace as it affected how the employee interacted with colleagues and, most importantly, it affected how one performed their duties.

"We always try to tackle substance abuse in the workplace head-on and strive to find the root cause that leads employees to abusing substances.

"As the wellness unit, we have identified financial problems to be one of the dominating factors that leads employees down this path of substance abuse and our responsibility is not to discriminate but rather to educate and offer help as soon as possible," she said.

Katalambano CEO Annelisa Mlakalaka also weighed in, saying their organisational mandate was to create awareness around substance abuse in the workplace, provide employees with help in the form of rehabilitation centres and offer support to affected families.

"As Katalambano, we assist the employer in the fight against substance abuse at work, stress-related illnesses that could



**HEAD-ON APPROACH: Katalambano Wellness Holdings CEO Annelisa Mlakalaka, right, shares points with employees about the dangers of substance abuse**

Picture: SUPPLIED

lead to absenteeism, dismissal and premature death," said Mlakalaka.

"However, addiction does not only affect the abuser, but his or her family as well. You will often find that money meant for household items is used on alcohol or drugs and that causes

tension within the family."

Mlakalaka explained that, as an organisation, they offered counselling to families on how to deal with the emotional stress caused by the ordeal and they also suggested rehabilitation for the addict as well.