SADAG KZN NEWSLETTER
MARCH 2020

Welcome to our monthly newsletter. Please read and share widely. Mental Health is everybody's business!

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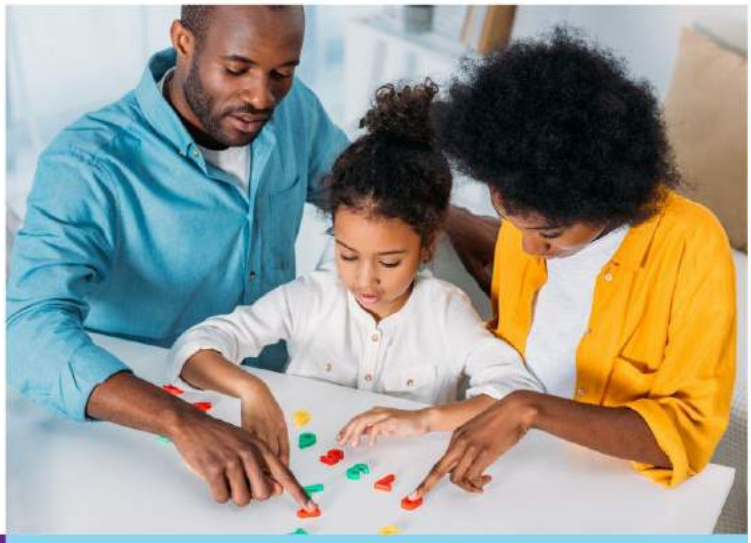


SUPPORTING PARENTS DURING LOCKDOWN AND ISOLATION

In the past few months, parents have been tasked with newfound roles of educators, remote workers, and caretakers during lockdown and isolation. Understandably, this can leave parents feeling overwhelmed, exhausted and helpless.

Joel Nigg Ph.D. writes "Right now, many families are in a difficult situation with children at home and parents still having to work. Some don't have health insurance or have a family member working in the field. Some readers may feel they are competing for "worst parent" due to extensive dependence on screen time, more arguments, and difficulty attending to their children right now. Aside from the stressors of everyone being cooped up and children at home, the rapidly developing news about the pandemic can be troubling and stressful for parents and for kids alike." He shares some coping strategies for parents during these challenging times. Read more:

https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/helping-kids-through-adhd/202004/simple-strategies-parents-during-covid-19

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS IN KZN

- Free public talks & forums
- Community support groups
- CPD-accredited specialist workshops
- Youth outreach at schools and universities
- Engaging mental health events and training
- AND More...

CLICK HERE to CONTRIBUTE to our impactful programmes

Read more: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/helping-kids-through-adhd/202004/simple-strategies-parents-during-covid-19

#StayHome
Supporting Children
Some helpful tips for parents

Being a parent has never been as challenging as it is now. It can be especially difficult in crowded houses and communities. Keeping your family safe and healthy can feel much harder. We've compiled a few guidelines that may help you during uncertain times.

- **Talk** openly
- Be **honest** without causing unnecessary fear
- **Listen** to their concerns
- Be **supportive** & check-in often
- Make important **safety measures** fun, like social distancing & hand washing
- **Share chores** with everyone in the family
- **Ask for help** when you need it
- Take a **pause** and a few deep breaths when you need to
- **Stay connected** to other parents and support each other
- Make use of all the **useful information** that people and organisations are sharing!
- World Health Organisation (WHO) developed **supportive resources** available to all
- Visit https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-parenting

Tel: 0800 21 22 23 or 0800 456 789
24-hour Suicide Tel: 0800 567 567
Sms: 32312 or Whatsapp: 076 882 2775
Support Groups: 087 278 7047

Click on posters above to download and share.
Link to WHO Children's Book: https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/09-04-2020-children-s-story-book-released-to-help-children-and-young-people-cope-with-covid-19
Link to KZN Mums Support Webpage: http://www.mumsupport.co.za/

SADAG KZN 2020

March + April Activities

12 March 2020

Empathy & Hope Project Opening
Exhibition opening at Durban Art Gallery

For more information on this project please visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/empathyhopeproject

3 April 2020

Webinar: Mental Health First Aid Presented by Suntosh Pillay, Clinical Psychologist

We had close to 60 attendees from around the country on this webinar which consisted of students, academics, practitioners and general members of the public.

We received some encouraging comments:

"I found it be very interesting especially to find out that you don't have to be a professional to administer mental health first aid."

"Being encouraged to consider the potential constituent parts of a mental health first aid kit was particularly interesting."

Anyone interested in MHFA training please email kznsadag@anxiety.org.za.

26 April 2020

COVID-19: Tumaini Centre Support Drive Assisted by SADAG KZN Volunteers

SADAG KZN partnered with Tumanini ("Hope") Community Project to collect goods urgently needed by members of the refugee community in Durban to help during lock down. There is an ongoing need for donations, food, hygiene and sanitising products during this extended lock down period. If anyone would like to assist or for more information on this project, please whatsapp Lynn on 083 787 1477.

SADAG KZN 2020

What's coming up in this month

Some key mental health events, projects, engagements and supportive resources to look forward to this year - look out for them all over KZN!

MAY

17 International Day against Homophobia & Transphobia
24 World Schizophrenia Day
26 Bipolar Awareness Day (SADAG)
26 Child Protection Week (Begins)
28 International Day for Women's Health

SADAG KZN 2020

Latest news

C.A.R.E

CONNECTING THE AGED IN RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS

C.A.R.E
Connecting the Aged in Residential Environments

This project was started by a group of SADAG KZN volunteers who have the interests of our older citizens at heart during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The aim of the project is to facilitate support for the aged in residential homes to help decrease some of the negative effects of lockdown and social distancing, including connecting with and supporting them to deal with the isolation, fear, loneliness, anxiety and depression that can result from extended periods of isolation, as well as providing relevant information about COVID-19 and its impact on their lives.

For more info on this project and to find out about volunteering opportunities, **WhatsApp Lynn 0782787047 or email kznsadag@anxiety.org.za.**

We frontline health workers

Support Group

Mental Health Support for Front Line Health Workers

This is a Whatsapp support group for our Frontline Health Workers launched recently following requests to start a group for the people that put their lives on the line for all of us everyday.

This group will enable Health Workers to unburden in a safe non-judgemental space. They will also be afforded counselling by psychologists if needed. This group is facilitated by experienced SADAG support group leaders with experience in the medical field.

For more info or to join this group please **WhatsApp Lynn on 078 278 7047 or email Lori at suicideprevent@gmail.com.**

SADAG KZN 2020

Special notice

GBV Services open during national lockdown

WESTERN CAPE

Athlone House of Strength
telephonic counseling
021 862 9983

Badisa
telephonic counseling
021 957 7130

Mosaic
counselling, legal aid
021 761 7585

National Shelter Movement
Bernadine 082 903 8739
Joy 071 906 3949

Sex Workers Education & Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT)
telephonic counseling
021-448 7875

GAUTENG

Gauteng Province
food support
0800 428 8364

Lifeline Vaal Triangle
telephonic counseling
016 428 1640

National Shelter Movement
Rudo 083 684 7737
Zubeda 083 289 9818

Teddy Bear Clinic
crisis support for children
011 660 3077

MPUMALANGA

National Shelter Movement
Fisani 079 310 9633

KWAZULU-NATAL

National Shelter Movement
Sabera 072 446 3337

FREE STATE

National Shelter Movement
Sarah Lekale 072 144 7171

EASTERN CAPE

National Shelter Movement
081 247 6056

NORTH WEST

National Shelter Movement
Rina 072 348 6526

NORTHERN CAPE

National Shelter Movement
Rose Clair 080 021 2321
Rosaline 073 888 8738

NATIONAL

Childline
24 hr Crisis line & counselling
080 055 5555

Women Abuse Helpline
Toll-Free Helpline
0800 150 150

Gender Based Violence Helpline Command Centre
24 hour helpline
0800 428 428
*120*7867# *for call-back*

Lifeline Crisis
24-hour crisis service
0861 322 322

Lifeline Counselling
WhatsApp call counselling
065 989 9238

MobieG
Live chat counseling for teens
www.mobieg.co.za
*Sun from 18h00
*Mon-Thu from 19h00

NISAA
telephonic counseling
Batsi 083 303 1291
Yvonne 063 083 6061
Nokwethu 011 850 0637

South African Depression & Anxiety Group (SADAG)
24 hour helpline
0800 456789
SMS: 31393

SADAG Suicide crisis line
24 hour helpline
0800 567567

TEARS GBV SMS help line
*134*7355#

"During the Covid-19 lockdown, we cannot ignore the increased risks for victims of domestic violence and abuse. Victims and survivors can be assured that there are resources available to assist during this high-risk period."
– National Shelter Movement

You can help someone during the Lockdown:

Call or text them. Checking in means you care about their safety and wellbeing. Let them bring up the violence, only if they want to. Help them think about ways to get to a safe place – and for kids to find safety – if violence erupts.

Help them find a place to stay in your own home or a shelter. Shelters are working in all provinces, even during the Covid crisis. Remember that moving out can be more dangerous - so let them decide what is best.

Phone the police 10111 if you hear a cry or scream. Emergency staffing at police stations will stay the same during the lockdown and social workers will be available.

DPPG

DURBAN PRACTISING PSYCHOLOGISTS' GROUP

Private psychologists offer free support

Your mental health matters during the national lockdown and Covid-19 outbreak. If you are suffering from unmanageable anxiety, depression, loneliness, isolation, grief or trauma – make contact with us and we will find someone to assist you. This will not replace an in-depth, diagnostic consultation; and is only a brief intervention for immediate support and/or education.

Email: exec@dppg.org.za

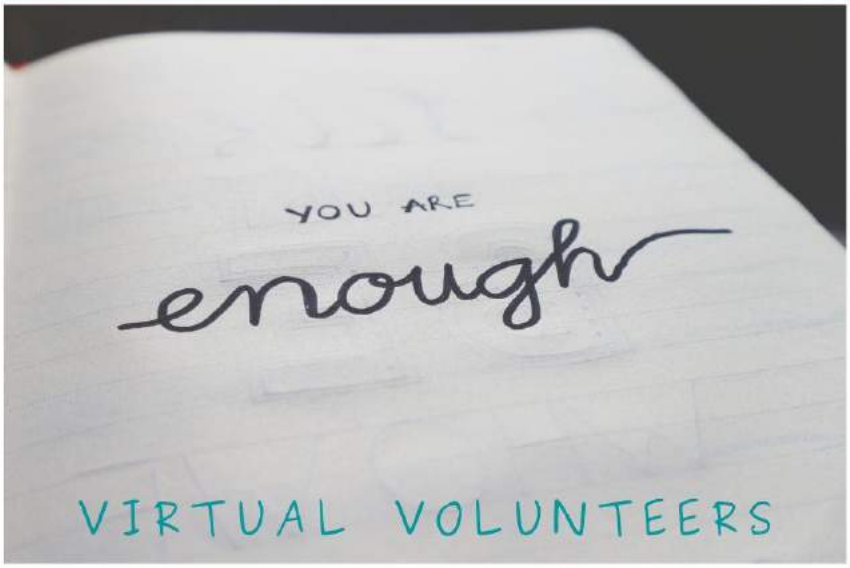
If you can afford to pay for a consultation, a list of psychologists can be found on our website: **www.dppg.org.za**

PsySSA
Psychological Society of South Africa

For a national list of psychologists, email Fatima@psyssa.com

SADAG KZN 2020

Special notice



VIRTUAL VOLUNTEERS

We're still working together during lock down. Thank you to all the volunteers on our virtual volunteers group supporting us!

If you are interested in joining this group of volunteers kindly WhatsApp Lynn on 0782787047 or email kznsadag@anxiety.org.za

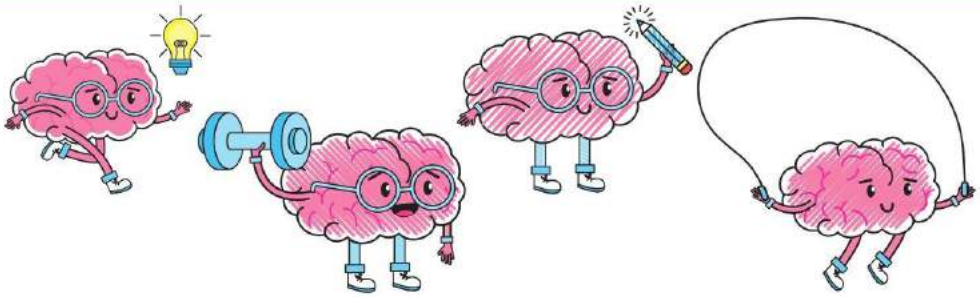
VIDEO: FEAR AND ANXIETY DURING COVID-19

A video that deals with fear and anxiety during Covid-19 and can be viewed on YouTube is the product of a collaboration between UKZN's Department of Psychology, an adult education specialist, and the Centre for Rural Health. Please click to watch.

SADAG KZN 2020

SADAG KZN Services

Make 2020 a GOOD mental health year for you, your school, college, work place or community. Contact us for a quote on bespoke services and experience the transformative benefits!



Bespoke Services Available

SADAG KZN HAS A TEAM OF PROFESSIONALS THAT IS READY TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH **CUSTOMIZED WORKSHOPS, TALKS OR PROGRAMMES** TO BEST SUIT YOUR NEEDS. CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION AND PRICING.

#mentalhealthmatters
#SADAGKZN

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMMES

Custom designed programmes available ie Youth led activities, Peer Support clubs, Mental Health Literacy, Sustaining wellbeing

TRAINING SUPPORT GROUP LEADERS

Training Support Group Leaders and supporting them to run groups in their communities

SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGNS

This includes a once-off campaign on teen suicide, depression, anxiety, bullying, panic and substance abuse

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Includes Corporate talks, Presentations, Specialised Talks, Wellness packages for Employers & Employees

MENTAL HEALTH PSYCHOEDUCATION PROGRAMMES

This includes Community forums, Talks, Presentations, CPD-accredited Training, Awareness campaigns

YOUR SADAG KZN TEAM

Dr Suvira Ramlall
KZN Director, Specialist Psychiatrist
Suntosh Pillay
KZN Director, Clinical Psychologist
Dr Lynn Norton
KZN Coordinator, PHD Health Promotion

Chantelle Booysen
KZN Project Manager & Youth Ambassador
Lori Barausse
KZN Project Manager
Rivendri Govender
KZN Office Administrator

CORONAVIRUS AND MENTAL HEALTH: YOUR WELLBEING CAN BE SOMEONE ELSE'S SURVIVAL

by Chantelle Booysen

"You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending."
CS Lewis

When we are facing a crisis, the first thing that gets negatively affected is our mental wellbeing. This, ironically, is also the first thing that will help us endure and survive the same crisis. In crisis mode, our brains instinctively reduce higher functioning that allows us to do long term planning, and instead shift our thought process to a primal, more immediate threat response. If these symptoms recur and persist, it diminishes the brain's ability to self-sooth. In the midst of our current COVID19 crisis, self-soothing is the one thing that we need more than ever. Recognising crisis mode living is the first step to bringing balance to your thinking and your health. Being able to counter-stimulate this with soothing, calming and effective problem solving; doing everything you can to turn on higher brain functions in order to access the parts of the brain that will guide you through this time.

It is important to remember that there are things that you can control and things that are completely out of your control. Constantly worrying about those things will create an eruption of anxiety in your body, which directly affects your mental and physical health. Anxiety and stress can also affect your immune system, which can place you in a more vulnerable position when dealing with an infectious disease.

The impact of perpetual anxiety and stress severely affects one's ability to feel hopeful about the immediate but also long term future. From my own experiences, I've seen the devastation of hopelessness in the eyes of loved ones, friends and strangers and the inhumanity caused by the lack of empathy towards those struggling with mental illness and physical illness every day. I live with a diagnosed mental illness, and symptoms related to my mental illness drastically impacts my mood. Being in crisis mode makes it even more difficult to access the healthy parts of my brain. I take my daily medication religiously and have to actively do things to reduce my anxiety and stress and reach out to others to avoid complete isolation.While I would like to sit here and tell you there is a sure fire way to remove your mental agony entirely, there isn't.

But what I can tell you, is that there is hope in so many forms. Humanity has shown us hopefulness by reaching out to each other, we've shown hope in how we are trying to find creative ways to support each other and we've shown hope by engaging with each other in an empathic way. Cultivating and practising a teachable skill like empathy, will take us a long way in our ability to self-sooth. Dr. Anthony Scioli explains that HOPE is a part of a person's character or personality. You are not born with hope. Hope must be developed, like a set of muscles. There are some things you can practice daily to limit extreme symptoms that impact your mental health:

Read more on: www.voicesofyouth.org/blog/coronavirus-and-mental-health-your-wellbeing-can-be-someone-elses-survival

LIVING WITH AUTISM by Melissa Isabel Naude

"I was diagnosed with Autism when I was 8 years old, but only became fully aware of the impact of my diagnosis as I reached my teens. I also have epilepsy. As a young child, I do remember going to many therapists and seeing a psychologist and a neurologist - so I did feel different. I also played repetitive imaginary animal games and lost many friends because I was obsessed with specific interests such as dinosaurs and wolves and would not play any other games.

I was also extremely hyper-active and did many socially inappropriate things! I once got so into the game of pretending to be a wolf that I bit a friend! When I entered Grade 1 at a mainstream school and could not read properly, I would remember the books by pictures only. I used to cry and get overwhelmed when there was a noise in the classroom, or I couldn't perform a task. I would often run and hide behind the bookcase. This led to me being teased by the other kids. In Grade 2 I went to Livingston Remedial school which was most helpful. Autism is a socio-neuro developmental disorder. It affects every aspect of our lives. Our brains are wired differently. We view the world differently. The way our brain processes information and stimuli are overwhelming. In other words, internal and external information absorbed by our senses can be overwhelming and exhausting. Autistics often battle with fine and gross motor co-ordination. They do not readily understand social norms, read body language, interpret facial expressions and keep eye contact. Acceptable social interaction, that comes naturally to neuro-typicals, needs to be learnt and is often not satisfactorily acquired.

Autistic people need routine and intervention as early as possible. Visits to therapists where part of my childhood. These included consultations with psychologists, psychiatrists, neurologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. I have been on medication for as long as I can recall. The correct medication was not always prescribed, but through trial and error we found meds that help me function.

I did swimming - a repetitive action that helped calm me because of the water-pressure on my body. This also helped with proprioception – the awareness of where your body is and its movements. I was given the chance to try my wide range of interests - at least once! I took part in speech and drama to help build confidence and did art. Painting and drawing still calms me. I was part of a dance group and performed at the playhouse. I could try for soccer, but my lack of co-ordination and poor ball skills did not help! Youth groups and Church were a place to feel safe and accepted. I spent most years masking and continued to.

I would say that you keep thinking positively and remain calm, especially amongst all the Chaos of COVID-19 and amongst all the challenges of being Autistic or having someone who is Autistic in your family or community. We need to see the bigger picture and perspective. South Africans have an opportunity to show kindness and compassion for others and those with disabilities. We are a strong and resilient nation. Now is the time to be accepting of people who are different. We as Autistics have a valid place in Society and are capable of great things. We all need to be a little kinder to ourselves and take care of ourselves Autistic or not., Remember you have the opportunity to be part of an amazing supportive community which you can find online , through Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram or through Doctors, Therapists, NGOs and Magazines' over expose yourself to negative media. Social distancing and staying at home should not mean social isolation, use digital platforms for Interaction."

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