



## **SADAG's December Newsletter 2021**

### **Mental Health over the Festive Season**

The last 24 months have been incredibly difficult for everyone, everywhere, without exception. The pandemic and the crisis it brought has really tested the resilience of many individuals and organizations.

The South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) was not spared from this test. We have had to adjust our working styles and formulas, created satellite call centers and increase our human resource capacity. Most importantly, SADAG have responded to the hugely increased number of calls from South Africans to help, support and hold their hands during these tragic months.

SADAG responded through hard work, committed leadership and compassion! The leadership team grew, and our call center increased capacity on our telephone lines. SADAG responded and facilitated countless media requests, initiated a stronger training program, and did it all with unwavering commitment to the mental well-being of all South African's. SADAG leads a formidable team of volunteer counselors, who are the backbone of the organization.

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### **Surviving the Holidays – Looking after your Mental Health this Festive Season**

The holiday season is often described as "the most wonderful time of the year," but for many, it can be a very difficult time. The movies and

popular advertising portray the holidays as full of cheer, but often many struggle to cope with grief, stress, end-of-year burnout, financial strain, family problems and loneliness. These stressors can make it even more difficult for people living with a mental health issue.

SADAG are gearing up for the festive season to help thousands of people who will be reaching out for support

and help. There are still so many people who don't know where to go to get help for mental health issues, and many are too afraid to speak out about their issues due to stigma. But there is support available – even over the holidays.

To better help and support countless South Africans who struggle with their mental health during the festive season, SADAG are sharing daily mental health related tips via our website and social media pages. Follow SADAG on our various online platforms - Facebook ([The South African Depression and Anxiety Group](#)), Twitter [@TheSADAG](#), Instagram [@sadag\\_official](#) and our Website [www.sadag.org](http://www.sadag.org) to get your daily Mental Health Tip for the Holiday Season.

If you, or someone you know, is struggling to cope over the festive season, it is important that you get help. SADAG is open throughout the holidays – including Christmas Day and New Year's Day - and are able to provide free telephone counselling, support and nationwide referrals. SADAG are open 7 days a week, 365 days a year, 24 hours a day - We do not close, We are here for you.

**SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS**

1. BUILD A SUPPORT SYSTEM
2. MAKE A PLAN
3. SET A BUDGET
4. HAVE A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE HOLIDAYS WITH CHILDREN, FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO MANAGE EXPECTATIONS
5. BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH OVER THE HOLIDAYS
6. YOU CAN (AND SHOULD) SAY "NO" MORE OFTEN
7. THINK ABOUT YOUR STRESS TRIGGERS & HOW TO MANAGE THEM
8. THINK OF WAYS TO FILL YOUR CUP & DO THINGS YOU ENJOY
9. STICK TO BASICS - SLEEP, FOOD, FRESH AIR, EXERCISE, ETC.

If you or a loved one need help, please contact:  
0800 456 789 or  
visit [www.sadag.org](http://www.sadag.org)

## TIPS TO FINDING THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT

- ### LEAN ON YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM

If you've been depressed, you need a network of close friends and family to turn to when things get tough. Take time to get together with your support team or connecting remotely through online chats or whatsapp groups where you share funny or inspirational messages to check in with each other.
- ### ASK FOR HELP AND BE SPECIFIC

Don't feel like you have to do it all – give yourself permission to ask others for help. Ask your sister to help you cook, invite a friend along on shopping trips. People are usually happy to help if you tell them what you need.
- ### DON'T STAY LONGER THAN YOU WANT

Going to a party doesn't obligate you to stay until the bitter end. Instead, just drop by for a few minutes, say hello, and explain you have other engagements. Knowing you have a plan to leave can really ease your anxiety.
- ### FORGET ABOUT THE PERFECT GIFT

Don't stress about finding the absolute best gift ever – sometimes doing something for someone or giving of your time is more meaningful.
- ### STAY ON SCHEDULE

As much as you possibly can, try to stick with your normal routine during the holidays. Don't stay too late at parties. Don't pull an all-nighter wrapping presents. Disrupting your schedule and losing out on sleep can make your mood deteriorate.
- ### STICK TO A BUDGET

The cost of holiday shopping mounts quickly and can make people feel out of control and anxious. Draw up a realistic budget before you start shopping and stick to it.
- ### DON'T RELY ON SUBSTANCES

Remember that alcohol is a depressant and abusing it will leave you feeling worse. **Be particularly careful if you are taking medication.**
- ### IF YOU TAKE MEDICATION, DON'T MISS DOSES

In the hustle of the holidays, it's easy to slack off and miss medication. Make reminders to take your medication and make sure you have enough stock for the whole holiday period – refill your script before you go away and don't wait till you run out to get your meds.


 Helpline 0800 567 567 or 0800 21 22 23 or 0800 456 789 or 0800 12 13 14  
 SMS 31393 | [www.sadag.org](http://www.sadag.org)

## Facebook Friday

In order to help more people get FREE access to top expert advice about mental health related issues, SADAG have hosted LIVE video Q&A sessions every Friday from 1pm to 2pm. Expert guests include a variety of professionals such as Psychologists and Psychiatrists who discuss audience questions about various topics such as Depression, Substance Abuse, Gender Based Violence and more!

Over the past year, SADAG have hosted over 44 #FacebookFriday Sessions with over 70 experts who contributed and answered questions LIVE. They delve into signs, symptoms and give practical first-hand tips on how to manage various mental health challenges. These sessions typically reach between 5 000 – 15 000 people and remain a great source of help for the thousands of South Africans who need mental health help and support.

If you were not able to join the sessions, please feel free to watch and share the sessions with anyone in need of expert advice. Please see below for the most recent Facebook Friday sessions which may be helpful during the festive season:

- Unpacking Medication FAQs
- Surviving the Holidays
- Support for Gender Based Violence
- The effect of Gender Based Violence on families & loved ones
- The psychological impact of Gender Based Violence

To watch any of our Facebook Friday session please go to our Facebook page: [@The South African Depression and Anxiety Group](#)



## **The Power of Support Groups**

Support Groups have formed the foundation of the mental health support that SADAG have provided to thousands of people in South Africa and without the

endless and unwavering dedication from the Support Group Leaders, the support we can provide to South Africans would not be possible.

A special thanks to all the Support Group Leaders who selflessly go above and beyond to offer support and a safe space to those in need. Not only do they freely give their time and knowledge, but each day, their combined efforts, help to break the stigma that surrounds Mental Health in SA.

From having a total of zero online Support Groups in January of 2020, SADAG now have over 35 online nationwide groups around the country. We have hosted over 15 guest speakers in the last year, enjoyed over 40 Support Group Leader Connect Sessions, and launched our first annual Support Group Awareness Week.

While many of our Support Groups close over the holidays – we wish all of our Support Group Leaders a restful break. There are still a number of online Support Groups that will continue running support and online meetings over the festive season to provide support and a safe space to connect during these challenging times. If you would like to join a Support Group over the festive season, please contact a Counsellor on 0800 21 22 23 or 0800 70 80 90 or sms 31393 and a counsellor will call you back to help further.

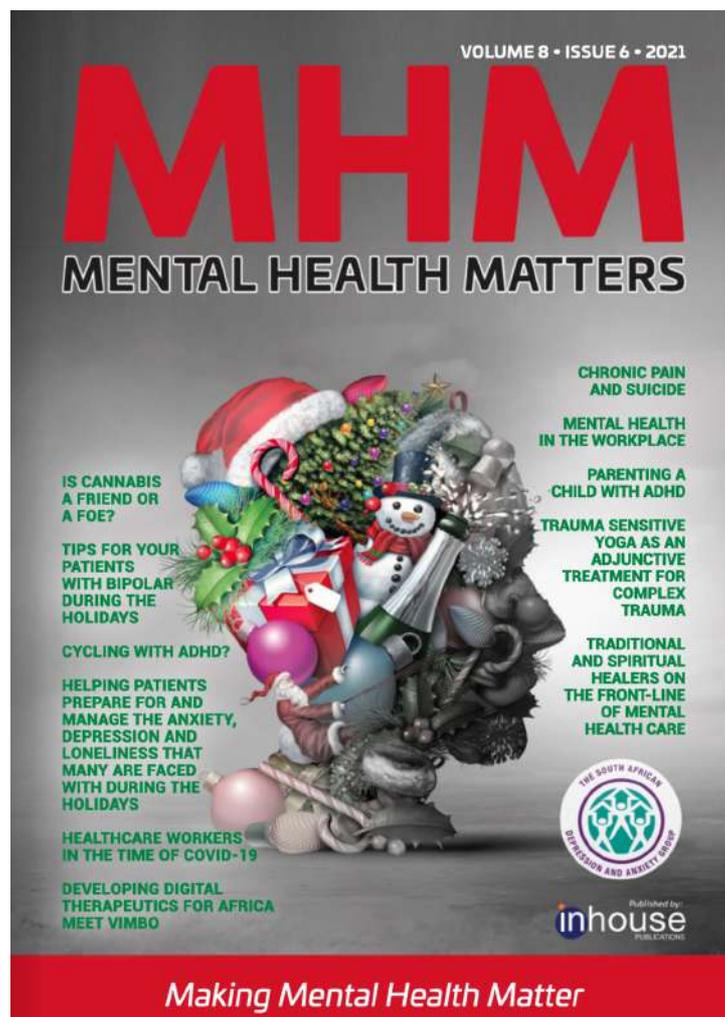
## **Mental Health Matters Journal**

SADAG in partnership with Inhouse Publications have just published its 6th issue of Mental Health Matters Journal for 2021. This year we have covered many brilliant topics by top mental health experts.

For the final issue this year, we have some great articles from various experts which include:

- **Healthcare Workers in the Time of Covid-**

**19:** A fantastic editorial by psychiatrist and psychologist, Dr Frans Korb to lead us out



of 2021

- **Helping Patients Prepare for and Manage the Anxiety, Depression and Loneliness that Many are Faced with During the Holidays:** A great read and a fantastic, practical resource by psychologist, Alexa Scher
- **Chronic Pain and Suicide: Important insights by psychiatrist,** Dr Kobus Roux
- **Mental Health in the Workplace:** A thought-provoking discussion by psychiatrist, Dr Christoffel Grobler and lawyer Willene Holness
- **Cycling with ADHD?:** A fascinating look at ADHD in women by psychiatrist, Dr Dora Wynchank
- **Parenting a child with ADHD:** A heartfelt account by a loving mother

To read the latest December issue of Mental Health Matters Journal , please click [here](#)



**SADAG SALUTES HENRY COCK NOT ONLY HAS HE BROKEN THE WORLD RECORD FOR THE MOST CONSECUTIVE HALF MARATHONS BUT ALSO HAS RAISED THE MOST FUNDS BY AN INDIVIDUAL!!!**

We are grateful to be the chosen beneficiary and to be part of this incredible journey!  
Thank you Henry !!!

 #RunHenryRun #MentallyAweh #MentalHealthMatters

## Run Henry Run!

Earlier this year, Henry Cock set out on a campaign to not only run across the coastline of South Africa, from Kosi Bay to Alexander Bay, between July to November, but to break the Guinness World Record for most consecutive half marathons. His initiative was inspired by his personal Mental Health

journey and wanting to create change and raise awareness about the mental health issues that many face on a daily basis.

Henry has not only achieved his goal on breaking the record by running 133 consecutive half marathons but has **raised just over R1.2 million for SADAG**. This is the most money that has been raised by any one individual for a cause in Africa! This inspiring campaign will help SADAG cover costs of our toll free helplines for an entire year.

The SADAG team is grateful to Henry for his selfless act of kindness and his efforts will not be forgotten. Thank you Henry Cock and to those who supported him on this epic campaign to make Mental Health Matter and for supporting SADAG.

**Diepsloot  
Counselling**



## Container

Globally, Covid-19 had huge impact on every sector, including the Counselling Container in Diepsloot. Due to strict lockdown regulations, the container had to close its doors until May 2021 to ensure the safety of our staff and clients. As the number of Covid-19 related cases started easing, the container started operating

fully again in July.

During the closure period, we tried to keep as many support structures operational as possible - We received 9 calls daily from clients seeking our assistance and our 51 Support Group members were contacted weekly to ensure their wellness. We also conducted house visits to all our members and also distributed food hampers to all including some other clients amounting to over 70 people. These kind of donations were greatly appreciated as many clients were financially impacted due to the pandemic.

As the need for services increase, the need for additional staff and support staff was required. This year, the Diepsloot team embarked on recruiting additional staff to ensure that the help and support provided remain up to standard. The container sees over 10 clients a day who present with issues such as Depression, Anxiety, psychosis induced by Substance Abuse, GBV, job loss, relationship problems, Suicide and Treatment Non-Compliance.

Another project that has been growing is the vegetable garden which serves as an empowerment activity for Mental Health patients. There are currently 4 women and 2 men who are involved in the garden where the produce is a source of fundraising and food for the community.

As the year came to a close, the Diepsloot Container hosted its yearly Christmas Party for orphaned children and the Support Group members. Gifts for the party were collected for the Diepsloot and Ivory Park communities through SADAG's Santa Shoebox Project where we were able to give over 134 children a shoebox filled with goodies. Each and every gift was given to the community members and was met with extreme happiness and gratitude.

The biggest achievement this year was that the Counselling Container received the prize for best service delivery in the Diepsloot community. This recognition leaves us beaming with pride and has inspired us to continue going the extra mile to help reach all those who need extra help and support during this time.



## Container

SADAG officially launched a new Counselling Container in the Ivory Park community on 27 October 2021.

The container is based centrally at the Thuthukani Centre which is situated on the main road close to clinics, the police station and fire station.

In March of 2021, staff were recruited, which was followed by an intensive training for the selected candidates. Operations started in August, where we started to offer free face to face counselling and Mental Health Awareness Talks in schools, NGO's, churches and malls. Currently, we receive many clients daily who need help and support with

various psycho-social issues and launched a mental health Support Group in October which has been growing from strength to strength.

In order to find out more about the community, a Mental Health Survey was conducted in September. One finding that clearly stood out was the great need for Mental Health awareness, services and support that is needed. This finding solidified our presence and need for support within the Ivory Park Community.

Every year, SADAG host a Christmas party for orphaned children and the Support Group members in the Diepsloot community, and this year, Ivory Park joined the project. Two separate Christmas parties were hosted where staff members handed over Santa Shoebox Gifts to the 134 children in the communities. The day was concluded with the last Support Group meeting for the year – Members celebrated the year with joyous song and received a food hamper for the festive season.

The Ivory Park Team would like to thank everyone who contributed to the Santa Shoebox gifts and hampers. Each one of the many donations received brought a smile to so many faces in the community. We look forward to making a greater impact in Ivory Park in 2022.

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## NPOwer Helpline - Supporting NPOs Nationwide

In the past year, NPOwer has received more than 8000 calls, hosted over 200 Trauma Debriefing



Sessions, launched a Support Group specifically for staff and volunteers working at NGOs and NPOs, and hosted 8 online webinars on various mental health topics including burnout,

compassion fatigue, Anxiety, Panic and Depression.

NPOwer is growing into an incredible platform for NGO's, NPOs and community organisations to get the mental health help and support they desperately need – NGO staff and volunteers rarely take long breaks during the festive season and may need extra help and support during this time. If you, or someone you know, work in the non-profit sector and are in need of FREE Mental Health help, call the 24 hour NPOwer Helpline 0800 515 515, SMS 43010 or visit [npowersa.org](http://npowersa.org) for more information! And thanks to the great partnership with Tshikululu Investment, we will continue to see NPOwer grow in 2022.



**Call 24/7**  
0800 21 21 21

**SMS**  
43001

**Website**  
[healthcareworkerscarenetwork.org.za](http://healthcareworkerscarenetwork.org.za)

Free confidential individual counselling sessions available for all healthcare workers.

## Healthcare Workers Care Network (HWCN)

***Caring for the Carers by the Carers***

Free support, Pro bono therapy, Resources, Training and Psychoeducation



Since the launch of the Healthcare Workers Care Network (HWCN) 24 hour Helpline in June 2020, we have received over 2600 calls from healthcare workers from across the country, and have received over 410 online requests for help via the website. Over 230 healthcare

workers have started probono therapy sessions ,and our volunteer mental health professionals conducted over 613 therapy sessions.

We would like to thank the wonderful HWCN volunteers from across the country, who have given their time and effort to help all those frontline workers who needed it the most over the last 20 months. To all 570 volunteers, we salute you for providing the sessions and service in these uncertain times!

The HWCN Helpline (0800 21 21 21) will be open throughout the holidays providing free mental health support and help, please share the contact details with any frontline or healthcare worker who needs mental health assistance.

## Press and Media

SADAG works closely with press and media from around the country - national and local press - to help create awareness and educate people about mental health. During November, SADAG had over 288 press clippings in newspapers, television, radio, online and medical journals, with an estimated advertising value of R13 619 091. We are so grateful to Newsclip Media Monitoring Agency for helping us to track all of our press and media across all platforms - we really appreciate it.



### SADAG PRESS & MEDIA

Below are some articles on various mental health topics from recent press activity which are helpful for the festive season:

- Our youth are at breaking point - we must invest more resources in student Mental Health. Read more by News24 [here](#)
- Centering the soul during Covid and festive season. Read more in Soweto Sunrise News by Ntsumi Karin Duma [here](#)
- COVID 19 Pandemic: Single mothers bear the biggest brunt . Read more in Health – E news by Sakhile Dube [here](#)
- How to handle panic attacks by Daily Sun [here](#)
- Give a little, get a lot: Volunteering as a Mental Health panacea in FA News by Lyn Muzond [here](#)
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: What it is and what to do if you suffer from it's symptoms in Daily Maverick by Tea Bell [here](#)
- Dealing with Stress and Anxiety whilst waiting for your matric results in in IOL by Harvest Thwala [here](#)
- What's so jolly about the festive season when some of us are dealing with grief in IOL by Sacha van Niekerk [here](#)
- New Join Panda App makes Mental Health Support more accessible in Novus Press Group Bulletin by Panda App [here](#)

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## Substance Abuse Helpline

The 24-hour Department of  
Social Development  
Substance Abuse Helpline



provides FREE telephonic counselling, support, information and nationwide referrals such as rehabilitation centers, addiction specialists, support groups, brochures, and self-help tips and videos to assist those struggling with addiction or loved ones needing support.

The helpline has received over 110 000 calls, SMS's, online chats and Contact-a-Counsellor forms from January – September 2021 from across the various parts of the country. The project has also continued to support many external collaborators and stakeholders with materials for their various projects and activities

ensuring information around the helpline is shared for continuous exposure. As always, the substance abuse helpline will be available, 24/7, 365 days, including the festive season - To speak to a counsellor, call 0800 12 13 14, SMS 32312 and a counsellor will call you back. Alternatively, visit [www.sadag.org](http://www.sadag.org) to access the online counselling platforms.



## **SADAG Thanks You for Your Support**

There is no doubt that 2021 was a year defined by trauma, loss and grief. But we also witnessed continuous support from corporate companies and individuals in the face of adversity which spread hope to so many. As we reflect on the past year, we are grateful to have received the support to continue to do our work. We couldn't do this without everyone's help and generosity.

SADAG would like to thank every individual that has made donations

during 2021, every act of kindness does not go unnoticed.

SADAG have been supported by so many different people during the course of this year. We would like to extend a huge thank you to Henk, Nico and Yolande at Trunuty Telecommunications for all their help throughout the year with our phone systems. And a big thanks to Sarah from SIMCHAT who helps with our SMS system, and Heidi from CM for our Whatsapp chat support. To our talented webmaster, Jacs, for helping to keep our website updated. And a very special appreciation for Noreen and Beulah for providing us with our lovely office space. And to our technical support team – Stefan and Lovemore – who are always on standby ready to give us IT Support at any time. All of these amazing people and companies have helped us keep SADAG operating through the year.

To all the generous companies who have donated to SADAG this year including MTN SA, Investec, Discovery Health, KPMG, Standard Bank, ABSA, Public Hollard Insurance, Sanlam Glacier, CAFSA, Playmates and many more who have contributed over the last year to help fund our Helpline costs.

A special thanks Henry Cock, The Couch Practice, Jamie Brouze, Miss South Africa Shudufhadzo Musida, Esjay Sports, Dragonfly and Pirates Running Club for the special initiatives you created this year to help raise funds for SADAG.

Finally, a big thank you to our Board Members who have helped develop and grow SADAG during this last year, to whom we all appreciate their time, dedication and advice. Our thanks to Dr Colinda Linde, Zamo Mbele, Nkini Phasha, Shai Friedland, Dr Mashadi Motlana, Dr Frans Korb and Dr Laila Paruk.

To everyone, we have appreciated your kindness. You have played a key role in helping us to fulfill our vision, our passion and kindness to support so many people who needed us.

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**After a very long and difficult year, it is important to take care of your mental well-being. Make sure you take time to rest and recover. Many have had a sad year - you are not alone, we are here for you. SADAG are open throughout the festive season, even on Christmas day.**

**The SADAG Helplines provide free telephonic counselling, information, referrals and resources 7 days a week, 24 hours a day – call 0800 21 22 23, 0800 70 80 90 or 0800 456 789 or the Suicide Helpline 0800 567 567. Alternatively, visit our website [www.sadag.org](http://www.sadag.org) for free resources, online video's and Mental Health information.**

**Have a happy and safe Holiday Season. Look after yourself these Holidays and wishing you all the best for 2022**

Please join in on the conversations, get regular updates and stay connected throughout the month - Follow us on our [SADAG Facebook Page](#), [Twitter Page](#) and [Instagram Page](#).

Sincerely

Zane Wilson  
SADAG Founder  
[zane@sadag.org](mailto:zane@sadag.org)  
[www.sadag.org](http://www.sadag.org)



**SADAG**  
**HELPLINES**

<b>SUICIDE CRISIS HELPLINE</b> <b>0800 567 567</b> 24 hours	<b>DR REDDY'S MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINE</b> <b>0800 21 22 23</b> 8am-8pm
<b>CIPLA MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINE</b> <b>0800 456 789</b> 24 hours	<b>CIPLA WHATSAPP CHAT LINE</b> <b>076 882 2775</b> 9am-4pm
<b>DEPT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE HELPLINE</b> <b>0800 12 13 14</b> 24 hours	<b>ADCOCK INGRAM DEPRESSION &amp; ANXIETY HELPLINE</b> <b>0800 70 80 90</b> 8am-8pm

**WWW.SADAG.ORG**      **SMS - 31393**      24 hours

The graphic features a central smartphone with the SADAG logo on its screen, connected to a white cord that loops around the bottom. The background is a teal-to-purple gradient.

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