

## Gilan Gork

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**From:** SADAG [zane1@hargray.com]  
**Sent:** 26 January 2009 05:57 PM  
**To:** gilan@agetech.co.za  
**Subject:** SADAG Newsletter



**SADAG**  
**Tel:** 011 262 6396  
**Suicide Crisis Line:** 0800 567 567  
**Police Line:** 0800 20 50 26  
**Support Group Line:** 0800 20 51 21  
**Substance Abuse Line:** 0800 12 13 14  
**Email:** zane1@hargray.com



## Support Group Corner

### Durban Suicide Support Group

Should anyone in the Durban area have queries about suicide prevention, or need support for survivors of suicide, please contact Durban's Suicide Support. Gaylynn takes calls on behalf of SOLOS, Sue fields calls for general suicide support, and Joy will deal with any emails.

Contact details: Sue Fairall: 074 182 4360  
Gaylynn de Villiers: 084 873 3560  
Joy Chiang: [suicidesupportsa@gmail.com](mailto:suicidesupportsa@gmail.com)



### Ermelo and Support Groups around South Africa

The Ermelo Support Group is ending their year with a braai for all its members. This is probably one of many support group Christmas get togethers for members and their families, and SADAG would like to thank all support groups around South Africa for their amazing work, dedication, help, support, and kindness shown to those in need throughout the year. We appreciate your work – and we know all your members do too. Thank you for always being there. We wish everyone well over the holiday season.

### Self-Esteem Workshops for Youth and Adults

2.2 million youth exposed to bullying; 9.5% of teen deaths due to suicide. South Africa's teens are in crisis and too often feel they have nowhere to turn. Bullying, suicide, substance abuse and other risk-taking and self-destructive behaviours often have a common basis – low self-esteem. Showing the youth how valuable they are, what a vital role they have to play, and teaching them resilience and coping skills is critical to

## Welcome everyone,

2008 has had a hectic yet extremely fulfilling year and with the year almost at an end, SADAG is already preparing for a busy year in 2009. With the global financial crisis hinting at seriously affecting the South African economy, more and more people are looking for somewhere to turn for help. SADAG offers such a place. And with matric results and the festive season on their way, our counsellors are gearing up for an increased volume of calls.



### SHIFT - 3 November

Nkini Phasha represented SADAG on SHIFT for their show on Exam Stress. The show received 772 calls and over 4 800 SMSs from matric learners across the country who were stressed and depressed about the matric exams. Due to this massive response, SHIFT produced another show on the same topic on the 25<sup>th</sup> November. SADAG has been receiving many calls from matric learners looking for advice and support during this tough time.



### "Patient Education Advocacy" IAPO Conference in Uganda: 3-8 November

Elizabeth Matare attended the conference on Patient Education Advocacy in Kampala, Uganda, at a beautiful venue on Lake Victoria. She spent a very busy 5 days there and had 54 meetings in addition to attending the conference! She met people from Ugandan ministries as well as making other international contacts. She also met very interesting people and learnt new facts about health in Uganda – 320 people die everyday from Malaria and only 20 from HIV and AIDS!

The International Alliance of Patients' Organizations, IAPO, which is a unique global alliance that represents patients across all disease areas and from all around the world, held their first patient workshop for patient groups in Africa, Kampala Uganda from 2-3 November 2008. As IAPO approaches its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday, this workshop was a landmark in their work. IAPO recognizes that it is essential for patient groups to be active and vocal in all the regions of the world. IAPO also recognizes and values the importance of work undertaken by patient groups in Africa often with very minimal resources.

The workshop was stimulating and explored IAPO's vision and objectives of patient centered healthcare and asked what this meant in the context of the 49 individual patient organizations represented from the Africa Region. The workshop agenda deliberated on exploring the challenging issues patient organizations faced in their work and how they overcame the challenges, what patient centered healthcare meant in each organizations' context, collaborating for positive change, strengthening health care in Africa and aligning healthcare systems with patients' needs. Participants took home new knowledge, and inspiration to assist in their work promoting patient centered healthcare. The workshop provided a platform for the organizations to look at common challenges each participant faced

reducing the rate of self-destruction amongst teens.

The programme already in 15 countries is now in South Africa. The Resilient Adolescent Programme (RAP) is a teen resilience programme run individually or as part of a group, privately or at school, and helps youth to identify and build their self-esteem and resilience through recognising their own strengths and developing a range of skills such as problem-solving and conflict management. There is a sister-programme for educators and parents.

For more information, please contact Janine Shamos on 082 338 9666 or via email on [janine.shamos@gmail.com](mailto:janine.shamos@gmail.com)



## When Death Impacts Your School - Training for Educators and Parents

Recent school tragedies have highlighted the need for schools to have measures in place to handle traumatic events before there's a crisis. In the event of a death, it is vital that schools know what to do and act swiftly to prevent increased trauma for the learners and staff, and it's crucial that procedures are put in place before these events occur.

SADAG now offers training and policy facilitation for schools and will be holding a group training workshop in February in Johannesburg during Teen Suicide Prevention Week. For more information, please contact Janine Shamos on 082 338 9666 or via email on [janine.shamos@gmail.com](mailto:janine.shamos@gmail.com).



## From Our Callers

Working as a counselor at a suicide crisis call centre is often very challenging and in many of cases, SADAG's counsellors never know how their callers are doing. It is, therefore, so rewarding when we hear positive feedback from the callers we have helped. It is humbling and gratifying for our dedicated counsellors to hear what changes people have experienced in their lives as a result of

regardless of disease area or geographical location. The lessons learnt from the workshop empowered the patient organizations to use the resources at hand effectively and efficiently to best serve their constituencies.

The workshop was co-sponsored by GE Healthcare, PHRMA and Medtronic Foundation. The patient organizations represented at the workshop dealt with Hypertension, Diabetes, Depression and Anxiety, People living with HIV and AIDS, Epilepsy, Chronic Mental Illnesses, Cancer, Hemophilia, Fertility, Arthritis, Multiple Sclerosis, Alzheimer and Patient Coalitions such as PHANGO.



## Substance Abuse Conference ISAM Congress, Cape Town: 16-20 November

ISAM's annual meetings focus on the diagnosis, management and research in the domain of substance abuse and addiction medicine. This is encapsulated in the theme of the 10th ISAM Annual Scientific meeting - "Understanding Addictions and Providing Comprehensive Care". The theme is resonant with the need to provide knowledge to those affected by addictions and making care accessible to all who need it.



In light of this theme, Katherine Sorsdahl presented the results of an evaluation of the effectiveness of SADAG's substance abuse line. The research entitled "The lines are open! The South African Depression & Anxiety Group opens the country's first substance abuse toll free line", reported on the first 200 calls to the helpline and their satisfaction with the services provided.

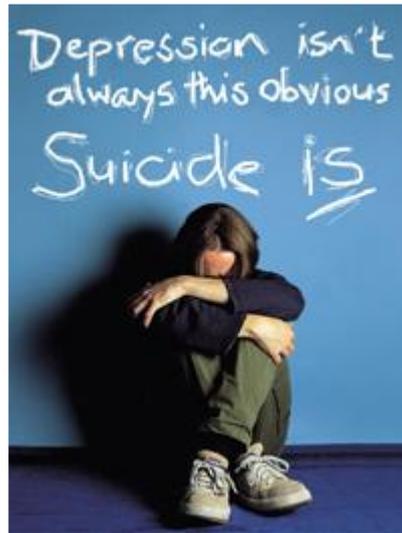


## Martin Primary School Talk 19 November

SADAG was asked to do a school talk on depression, suicide and substance abuse for the Grade 7 learners (140 learners in total) at Martin Primary School in Benoni. Our sincere thanks to trainers Carla, Marzenna and Tim who did the talks and stayed for over 2 hours after the talk to counsel some children in need of help.

our services.

"The last I emailed you I was extremely depressed, feeling hopeless and helpless and I did not expect to live to see my 21st birthday! Thank you so much for all your help and SADAG counselors for helping me in taking the first steps to reclaiming my life from depression. I'll be eternally grateful for your assistance; you truly changed my quality of life! I'm still in therapy, found a wonderful therapist and I know I've got a very bright future ahead of me! Thank you for helping me get back to me!"



 **Please Remember SADAG when deciding on your holiday gifts...**

Contributions and donations from the public are the lifeblood of NGOs, of which SADAG is no exception. In this challenging economic environment, it is so vital that money donated to charities and NGOs are directed to those doing the most good for the greatest number of people. Your support of SADAG helps make that happen! If you would like to make a donation to SADAG or if your company supports CAF, please contact Cassey on 011 262 6396.

 **SADAG Counsellors Christmas Party at the Zoo - 29 November**

Thank you to the Johannesburg Zoo for kindly donating the venue and giving us a special entrance fees for our counsellors. 60 counsellors joined us at the zoo, where we went for a ferry ride around the zoo with a personal tour guide who told us interesting facts about some of the animals. There was plenty of delicious food, cold drinks and fun.

 **Radio 702: Suicide in South Africa 19 November**

Redi Direko did a great 1-hour show on Suicide in South Africa. The show discussed the warning signs and causes of suicide and gave practical advice on what to do to help someone who is suicidal. It was a very vital show for us to be able to highlight the current issue of suicide. SADAG received an influx of calls regarding suicide during and after the show. Thanks to the counsellors who were on duty and to 702 Talk Radio for their constant support, even John Robbie highlighted the issue of mental health on his breakfast programme.

 **Mitigating HIV and AIDS related Stigma and Depression in the Workplace: Conference in Durban 25-27 November**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> November, Phyllis King and Janine Shamos headed to Durban to present at an international conference on HIV/AIDS and stigma. Other presenters included David Patient and Neil Orr from *Empowerment Concepts*; Eric Richardson from *Themba Interactive*; Brett Anderson from *Lifelab*; and Mary Kaddu the Prison Service Commissioner of Uganda. The delegates were mainly from across Africa which provided a very interesting forum and cross-section for discussions. Much was learnt by the delegates - and presenters - about various aspects of HIV and AIDS, and many myths and misconceptions were debunked. It was a fascinating conference as each presenter was passionate about their topic and conveyed that passion to all who were listening. Thank you to Brian Mugala from Pinnacle Conferencing for inviting us to speak and taking such good care of us during our stay.

 **Redhill High School - 27 November**

SADAG presented a school talk on substance abuse, depression and



suicide to all the Grade 11's of Redhill High School - a total of 100 teens. A big thank you to Sherianne, Venessa and Romy for talking to the group. Many questions were asked and students were grateful for the information and brochures. Thank you to Sharon Brummer from Redhill High School who called SADAG and asked us to do the talk for the group.



### World AIDS Day Press and Dr Korb

Frans Korb appeared on TV for World AIDS Day to talk about depression and AIDS, and the issues around co morbidity and treatment. Many calls came into our call centre, some of which we could help and others we referred on to the AIDS Help Line. People who are HIV positive have a 36 times more likelihood of committing suicide and the link between HIV and AIDS, and depression is a strong one. Treating depression also helps patients stick to their other treatments and get better sooner.



### Talk on World AIDS Day - Katherine Sorsdahl

The 1<sup>st</sup> of December, World AIDS Day, is the day when individuals and organisations from around the world come together to bring attention to the global AIDS epidemic. 2008 marks the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day and the devotion to combat this epidemic is going strong. Since the theme for World AIDS Day 2008, was "Stop AIDS: Leadership & Unity", 50 employees from the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry in Cape Town dedicated the entire day to discussing topics related to HIV. Of course SADAG was present on the day to talk about HIV and Mental Illness. A special thanks to Justin Kennedy who took time out of his busy practice to discuss the signs and symptoms of mental illness and discussed in detail the consequences of this "double stigma" that is associated with these devastating diseases. Additionally, Katherine ended the talk by discussing the importance of establishing sustainable support groups and how they can be useful at a community level to help South Africans suffering from both HIV and AIDS, and mental illness.



### Thank You to our very kind and generous sponsors:

Eric Hamilton, Vegeworth and Betafresh Foods who donated salads, Nicky Road from Nestle who donated chocolates for the counselors, Gorette de Goveia of Nestle Water who donated cases of Sparkling Water and finally to Cadbury who also



### 180 Degrees - 3 December

Janine appeared on SABC International's 180 Degrees with Desiree Chauke to talk about the misconceptions of substance abuse, new medication research to help prevent relapse and the difficulties faced

donated chocolates to our counsellors.

Thank you to everyone who donated and who attended and to all our very dedicated counsellors, we really appreciate all your hard work throughout the year. And thanks to Roshni, Dr Frans Korb, Lizzy and Miriam for joining us at the zoo- it was wonderful to have you all there! Cassey and Carla coordinated it all in the midst of their normal work and we appreciate everything Cassey has done to help the counseling centre run smoothly during 2008.



## A Final Note for 2008 Thank You for all Your Support

SADAG would like to thank all our Support Group leaders, board members, professional members, counsellors and staff – without you our work would not be possible. The public's support is vital to the work that we do – without your donations, keeping our crisis lines running is a difficult task indeed. If you would like to make a donation to SADAG to help us this festive season, please contact Cassey Amoore for our banking details.

Also a big thank you to Mr Peggie Shanmugam for all his support with our phone lines and for always being a phone call away when we need help with our lines! Your help means we can always be there for people.

Thank you to Telkom for allowing us to have such a long-term diversion and voice mail for our lines. Many of our callers know our old numbers but thanks to Telkom, they are now able to find us quickly!

We wish you all a happy and safe festive season and a joyful New Year. Remember we are open throughout the holidays, 365 days a year, 8am to 8pm.

by substance abusers over the festive season. Thank you to SABC and Ms Chauke for always highlighting and supporting our education drive.



## Human Rights Commission - 3 December

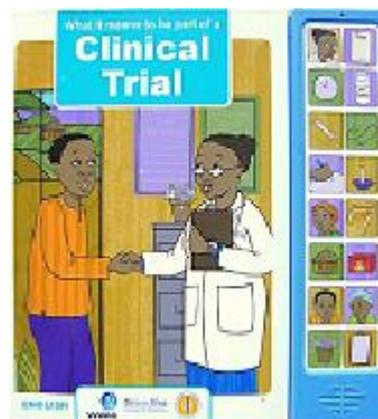
Janine joined a panel of experts to present a talk at the Human Rights Commission in Parktown, Johannesburg. The workshop was chaired by Dr Solly Ratamane and co-chaired by Dr Thabo Rangaka. Charlene from Central Gauteng Mental Health and the Consumer Advocacy Group gave a moving talk on her own experiences with living with a mental illness.

The workshop addressed many issues surrounding mental illness, access to treatment and care, stigma, and the human rights of all patients. Many interesting questions were asked about the boundary between a patient's right to privacy and their right to get help. The topic of police – and their role in helping patients with mental illness was also extensively discussed and it was agreed that they need far more training on how to cope with many of the situations they face. Another issue that was discussed was the fact that South Africa doesn't have a body that timeously addresses problems or complaints associated with mental illness – like the problem of finding a bed for a seriously ill patient.

Thank you to the Human Rights Commission for inviting us to participate this year and to Charlene for her courage and for sharing such harrowing personal stories with us – you are truly an inspiration.



## New Speaking Book on Clinical Trials and Informed Consent



SADAG's latest Speaking Book, launched at the World Medical Association's General Assembly in Seoul, South Korea, was done in collaboration with the World Medical Association, the Steve Biko Centre of Bioethics, and the South African Medical Association and funded by Pfizer. This book - "What it means to be part of a Clinical Trial" - is a book on clinical drug trials and informed consent and



**Have A Happy Festive  
Season**

was developed to explain to people entering a clinical trial, what their rights and responsibilities are. Dr. Edward Hill, Chair of Council, WMA, said: "More than ever it is necessary to do research, with, in and - most important - for poor populations. I applaud the production of the *Speaking Book*, because it means paying more attention to the poorer communities of this world instead of abandoning them or just ignoring their needs." Requests for this book are already coming in and it will be distributed to rural drug trial centres to assist nurses, doctors and trial staff to inform participants of their rights and responsibilities.

The *Speaking Book* is a world first, created by South Africans for South Africans and subsequently other illiterate communities around the world. SADAG is the sole supplier of these books worldwide and, being a small NGO with a big reach, the *Speaking Books* are an income generator to help operate our 15-line crisis centre.







## Volunteer At SADAG!

If you have suffered from a mental illness and are now well, and you want to help others, SADAG's call centre in Johannesburg is always looking for volunteer counsellors. We will be having training in February that will cover all aspects of mental health and treatment as well as answer questions on counselling and support groups. The centre is open 7 days a week and runs on four-hourly shifts so even if you work, there will be time slots you can fill. For further information or to fill in an application form, please visit our website ([www.sadag.co.za](http://www.sadag.co.za)) or call Cassey on 011 262 6396.

<http://www.sadag.co.za/>

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