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NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER 2011



This has been one of our most exhausting months ever and one that has tested our skills in getting help to callers to the limit. Whether it was fighting with Discovery Health about reducing the allowance for psychological care, or making our voice heard on radio and TV, or helping the hundreds of callers we get every week, SADAG has been pushed to the limit. With Medical aids running low or depleted, the economic recession and layoff issues, SADAG is having to refer many more patients to Government Hospitals – but we are often told that these facilities are full. This is inflicting on patients' rights and is not legal. It cannot be allowed to continue it puts patients at risk and we are constantly bringing it to the attention of the Department of Mental health.

We have also received some of the most difficult cases for a long time. Imagine being totally housebound, suffering from Agoraphobia for 15 years, and not being able to go to the shops, work, a doctor or dentist. This is our caller's reality and she will need a lot of help so that she can be part of the outside world again.

We had a terribly traumatic incident recently – a woman came home to find her boyfriend standing in the doorway, her baby bludgeoned to death. He is now in prison but she is severely traumatised. Another of our callers has severe depression and as a result, he has lost his job, his car, and is living with friends because he can't pay rent. His depression is compounded by his diabetes. He now walks 5 kilometres to get to the clinic for his medication. It is a struggle every time he goes, and he always hopes that he won't arrive too late and be turned away. But PJ needs help, and it is SADAG's job to keep him motivated and on his medications.

Another caller was the mother of an acutely Bipolar son who was incredibly ill and will not take his medication. He was hospitalised for severe suicidality was discharged three days later. He was still suicidal on discharge and sadly took his life last week.

Depression and mental illness have been said to become the world's biggest health issue by 2020. But neither the government or the Medical Schemes are taking the issue seriously enough and are penalizing Mental health patients nationwide by lack of funds from the schemes, shortage of accessible treatment centres, and at times clinics and hospitals, running out of medication.

Medical Aid Schemes need to consider their patients and professionals in the field before making decisions that may harm the patients' well-being. Discovery Health has taken a step backwards by merging psychological treatment with other "allied health professionals". The amount in that pool was also reduced. We have already been in discussion with them and are working together to try to clarify a more appropriate and user-friendly approach. We will keep you informed.

Patients YOU have a voice, WE have a voice on your behalf - but you need to notice, advise, act and phone to clarify how this will affect you.

Make your voices heard in Mental health, very often other schemes implement similar policies the following year. Also if you have had bad service from your Medical Aid Scheme in mental health, let us know, advise us of what is happening and how your mental health is being affected - and never stop telling your Medical Aid also tell the Council for Medical Schemes if you are not getting fair treatment.

SADAG is a patient advocacy network started by patients for patients 17 years ago – but we need help too. Before you do another thing today, please offer help to us – by lobbying for patients' rights, funding (every

bit counts), starting a support group, helping us with the practical day-to-day things we need, like computers. SADAG has only five full-time employees for the whole country!

No money comes in from the Department of Health. Millions are pumped into HIV and AIDS but the connection to mental health is largely ignored. It's time that mental health was fully supported by you the patients, family members, the pharmaceutical manufacturers, and the Government.

Please visit our website – www.sadag.org – to make a donation whether R10, R50 or R100, if you company has a monthly giving plan, please ask for us to be listed as one of the key charities.

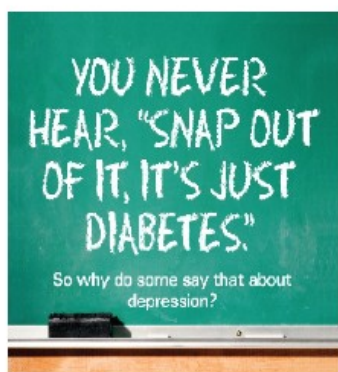
For those of you looking to get the most from your medical aid, please [Click here](#) for more information on ways to cut costs and get the best from your Medical Scheme. People interested in the latest changes in mental health benefits on the Discovery Health plan, please follow the link below.

<http://www.medicalaidcomparisons.co.za/discovery-health-2012.aspx>

There is also a great patient education series of YouTube videos that cover Discovery Health as well as other medical schemes (Momentum, Bonitas, Fedhealth etc) to educate you about the changes for 2012.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzvJDsiLWEc&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cfbdKWAs6o>



World Mental Health Day

World Mental Health Day on the 10th October was commemorated throughout the country with talks and workshops. A very big thank you goes to all our wonderful speakers and support group leaders who gave of their time to educate the public and create awareness about the link between physical and chronic illness and depression. Some of the meetings were very quiet with only 3 or 4 people, others like Nelspruit (80 people) and Durban (30 people) were busy. Once again we found that the more populated, big city areas like Johannesburg and Cape Town were a lot quieter and saw a lower turn-out – possibly because help and education is more accessible in those areas. To see comments on some of our areas please [click here](#).

We also co-ordinated an online Q&A session, which was hosted by Lundbeck, during which people could ask questions about mental illness, treatment and how to support loved ones. Thank you to Dr Frans Korb, Leeann Hartman, Cassey Chambers and Janine Shamos for their time. We have retained the contents of the online discussion in case any of you would like to see the kind of queries our callers had, [click here](#) to see the transcript.



Mental Health Film Festival 24 - 26 November

Every year, to raise awareness about mental health and start various discussions about the issues surrounding mental illness, Psychiatry MPowered hosts a **free** film festival in Johannesburg. This year the festival will be hosted at the Wits Theatre Complex. It will be held from 24 - 26 November. The programme starts at 7pm on Thursday, for a list of all the films being shown, [Click here](#). Psychiatrists, psychologists and SADAG counsellors will be there to be part of an expert panel to answer questions at the end. This is a great outing and you are welcome to bring your support group members, family and friends. RSVP to book your seat!

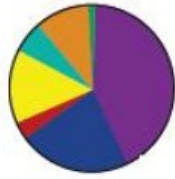


WORLD CONGRESS OF THE
World Federation for Mental Health

World Federation of Mental Health Congress in Cape Town October 2011

African Footprint in Global Mental Health – the first World Federation of Mental Health conference held on African soil – took place in Cape Town and SADAG was proud to present a talk on our Janssens Diepsloot Counselling Centre and three posters on our Teen Suicide Prevention project and Speaking Books in rural communities. The many international guests, leading academics in their field from India, Malaysia, Norway, Germany, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria and many more, were very impressed by the Speaking Books and by SADAG's refusal to give up or give in even in the face of such a mental health crisis (coupled with poverty and pandemics like HIV and AIDS and TB) that face South Africans every day. Present was [Gerrit Oberholzer](#) and [Deborah van der Merwe](#), Mental Health Journalists, Didi Dube,

Cassey Chambers and Pfizer winning mental health journalists Biddi Korke and Janine Shamos. [Click here](#) for more information on the conference. Professor Brian Robertson, a staunch ally of Mental Health globally, spoke about the lack of mental health facilities in South Africa.



✕ SADAG Funding

- **Speaking Books income - 43,23%**
- **Projects - 21,96%**
- **Training Income - 2,77%**
- **Call Centre & Drug trials - 14,77%**
- **Donations - 5,74%**
- **Pharmaceutical Sponsorship - 10,72%**
- **Memberships - 0,81%**

So many people ask where SADAG's funding comes from. On the left is the breakdown of the funding to SADAG for the year ending March 2011. Most of our income is self generated particularly through The Speaking Books, and then Projects we initiate in communities, Corporate Wellness Days, and Rural Outreach. Thirdly, the Call Centre Helplines we manage on behalf of clients, and then lastly, at 10.72%, is Pharmaceutical sponsorships, far less than people realize. This is largely due to so many mergers in the last five years and pharmaceuticals not increasing their donations in terms of volume of work we are now undertaking. Disappointing to us are professional membership at under 1%, these are psychiatrists and psychologists annual membership fees, for next year the cost for membership is only R300, which is between a quarter and a half of one appointment. We hope many more will support our work in 2012.



✕ SADAG Talks this month

As usual there was a wide range of wellness days for corporate clients and rural outreach for which we have a huge number of calls. This month we had talks in Pretoria, Katlehong, Bela Bela, Johannesburg and a joint project in Ivory Park with Wits Medical School. One of our senior staff, Roshni Parbhoo Seetha, addressed the third year Wits Medical Health Sciences students on the diversity of SADAG's work. [Click Here](#) to read the feedback to all of these presentations.



✕ Local Press and Media

Local Press

A big thank you to the local media for their interest in and coverage of SADAG as well as for their support of mental health through their wonderful stories. Social media is something that has become a prominent part of our society.

City Press did a wonderful article on **teens and the risks of social media** and cellphones. Be sure to read this one if you are the parent, friend, or teacher of a teen. [Click here](#) to read Marlene Malan's article.

Lindsay Ord wrote an excellent article for IOL on **chronic illness and the link with depression**. This is a must-read for sufferers and carers alike.

[Click here](#) to find out more

Elle Magazine did a two-page article on **therapy on a budget** written by Biddi Rorke— something many of us can benefit from. [Click here](#) to read the story.

Drum Magazine's article on mental health awareness tells us how to tell the **difference between depression and normal sadness**. [Click here](#) for the full story.

Dischem Benefits Magazine ran a fantastic story in their Health & Fitness section on coping with depression titled "**Chronic Illness - more than the blues**". [Click here](#) to find out more.



✕ International Articles

Terms like "bipolar", "autistic" and "schizophrenic", or "**schitzo**" are often used in **jest** to describe character traits. They are common forms of hyperbole. But how harmful is it to bandy the names of such conditions about? [Click here](#) to read more.

People tend to feel **helpless when diagnosed with depression** – many feel that there is nothing they can do to feel better. [Click here](#) to read 8 things from WebMD you can do to start feeling better.

Sleep is often illusive and many of us suffer from sleep problems – especially when we are more stressed, but did you know that men and

especially when we are more stressed, but did you know that men and women sleep differently? [Click here](#) for more information.

Another story that caught our eye in the international media was regarding the diagnoses of more and more children with ADHD. [Click here](#) for the latest guidelines including the broader age range.

Social Phobia is often something that people live with in silence and alone. But the fear of social situations can be debilitating. [Click here](#) to read more about why diagnosing and **treating social phobia is so important**.

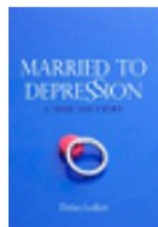
To exercise or not to exercise? Many of us don't have the energy or motivation for a run around the block but exercise can be an important part of mental health treatment. [Read more](#).

SADAG gets many calls about medication and **whether medications expire**. This article can give you a few guidelines. [Click here](#) for more



☒ Christmas Gift for SADAG the whole year

SADAG has very kindly been donated R5 000 per month towards cell phone use for many of our Support Group Leaders. This has been donated by Cell Network cell company, and will be taking effect from January 2012. This generous donation will give 100 of our support group leaders the opportunity to call people back who need to talk to them urgently. Thank you for your kindness Richard Lurie and Eleanor Mitrovich from MTN, we greatly appreciate your donation.



☒ New Books

Thelma Lockhart's book "**Married to Depression**" is now available electronically – for iPad and Kindle users. "Married to Depression" presents a vivid and uninhibited picture of what life can be like when being married to someone who suffers from bipolar depression and your love for him/her does not allow you to "give up".

For iPad and Kindle links for purchase [Click Here](#)



MAXDOG is a new book about a woman's amazing relationship with her dog and how this helped her beat depression. Written by Caryl Moll, the book is a tool to help lift the stigma and stereotypes of mental illness. MAXDOG (R160) is being released in December and anyone wishing to reserve a copy can contact Caryl on carylmoll@yahoo.com

[Click here](#) for more on this insightful book.



Very little information has been written on how OCD can impact on school work, and more importantly, what students, parents and school personnel can do to help them function in school. It is estimated that 1 in 100 students could need help.

[Click Here](#) for more information about the new **OCD Handbook**, it is available through Amazon too.



☒ SADAG's Website – New Online Scales

Please look on our website – www.sadag.org - under Depression; we have added a self rating questionnaire for Depression and one for anxiety and one for PTSD. These are very helpful for patients to fill in who need to have a visual aid to explain to their Doctors what may be wrong with them. We have had many instances recently where callers have needed to do this, particularly if patients are going to their GP or clinic doctor who may not know them well or know what questions to ask.

Follow this link for the **Depression Self Rating Scale**:

<http://www.sadag.org/images/stories/zungselfrateddepressionscale.pdf>

[Click here](#) for Anxiety Rating Scale.

For the PTSD Rating Scale, [click here](#).



☒ MediHelp's New Series of Shows on KykNet

The second series of the popular kykNET talk show "n Lewe met" launched in October, with 13 new episodes that tell the true stories of people who live with various mental health conditions every day. MediHelp's DVD series "Living with" is available for purchase from their website www.medihelplivingwith.co.za directly, or visit SADAG's website for more.

[Click here](#) for more information about the DVD series and the new shows on



Future Life Contributions

We have been highly fortunate to have Future Life sponsor boxes of their energy, low GI meals to our Gauteng-based support groups. Future Life is South Africa's first low GI immune-boosting energy meal to contain clinically tested MODUCARE® and has 23 vitamins and minerals, 19 amino acids and Omega 3 & 6, and is high in energy and protein. The low GI means sustained energy release over an extended period of time and the vitamins and minerals ensure that your immune system stays strong while putting your body under stress or challenging conditions. Future Life is ideal for athletes, children, business executives on the go, busy mums and dads, diabetes patients, many other medical conditions, and for all-round healthy living for the whole family.

[Click here](#) to see some of our support group leader's comments about the added benefits to their groups.



Support Group Corner

SADAG is very proud of our 180+ support groups nationwide, the groups provide such a crucial and invaluable support system for many patients and their family members who need further insight, information and a safe space to share their experiences. Some of our groups have had some interesting talks, such as a talk on mental health and nutrition, which is relevant to any patient diagnosed with a mental illness. [Click here](#) to read more about some of our groups in Pretoria, Alberton, Sandton, Tzaneen, Durban and Cape Town.



Interesting New Blog

Sarah Britten is well known to many for her insight and quirky ways of tackling SA's issues. (www.thoughtleader.co.za/sarahbritten) Her Blog "My year of panic" is no different. [Click here](#) to read



CONGRATULATIONS!

We are very excited and proud to congratulate our counsellors who succeeded in being accepted into various Masters Psychology Programmes across the country! Well done to Nokulunga (University of Stellenbosch), Kalliste (University of Pretoria), Beverley (Rhodes), Shai (Unisa) and Cindy (SADAG Trainer and Presenter) (Wits Neuro-Psychology).



Thank you

Dear Zane, Cassey, Clare, Adri and the rest of the Team, Words cannot really express my appreciation - we all know that "charity work" makes a difference in other people's lives and we love it. But now and then, each and everyone of us needs a prod, a nod to show that one is moving in the right direction and that serves as a big motivation to try even harder in future. Thank you for your assistance and for being there for us - don't underestimate what it means to the satellite groups countrywide.

Love Wynand and the team.

You guys really should be proud of this fantastic year 2011, just changing our lives for the better. God will most definitely reward you and bless you with all his mighty blessings. S

Even via SMS: "Thanks SADAG TEAM 4 helping a patient who had OD on meds. We rushed her 2 Hosp, and saved her life. She will b getting 1on1 Counselling by me, when she leaves Hosp until she's ready 2 join my SADAG Group. Thanx SADAG TEAM once again! Good Team Work! J & P"

The counsellor that I spoke to (Tammy) was very helpful – please thank her for me. The information that she gave me helped me. Thank you very much for your help and your time - it is much appreciated. E



Christmas is a time for giving and receiving

We are coming up to Christmas and SADAG has some old desks that we are donating to any charity who can collect them from us in Illovo and assemble them. Please call the office or email info@anxiety.org.za if you are interested.



them. Please call the office or email info@sadag.org.za if you are interested.

We at SADAG, need five desk top computers that we can link to each other via a network. This will make our ability to help with the information that callers need so much more efficiently. Anyone who can help, please call Cassey or Clare on 011 262 6396.

Remember that SADAG is open 7 days a week 365 days a year from 8am to 8pm, so we will be open throughout the festive season as usual, thanks to our counsellor Shanne who has given us her precious time on Christmas Day for the last 15 years to take calls from those people needing help. To all our other Christmas counsellors thank you for your help on these special days.

Regards,

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