



**Miss South Africa Shudufhadzo Musida launches mental health initiative #MindfulMondays in partnership with SADAG**

Miss South Africa 2020 Shudufhadzo Musida launches her online mental health initiative #MindfulMondays hosted in conjunction with the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG), launches on Shudu's Instagram platform @shudufhadzomusida on Monday, February 8, at 19h00.

Musida – who announced that she would be focusing on raising awareness around mental health when she took the Miss South Africa crown in October last year – will speak to various experts on a diverse range of topics related to the subject on Instagram on Monday evenings at 19h00.

SADAG is proud and honoured to have a platform with Miss SA to have these important conversations around mental health, and to help break the stigma around mental illness in the country. By using her powerful platform and her compassion towards mental health, we hope to debunk myths, encourage people to seek help and share practical self help tips for people to use as part of their mental wellness.

Musida's first guest will be Clinical Psychologist and SADAG Board Member Zamo Mbele whose conversation focuses on mental health. Their discussion will include the difference between mental health and mental illness; mental health stats in South Africa; how it impacts people; what are some of the different types of mental health issues; who treats them; what resources are available and how COVID has impacted mental health.

On Monday, February 15, the focus will be on teen depression to mark Teen Suicide Prevention Week. Shudu's guest will be GP and social media influencer Dr Sindi van Zyl who will talk about teen depression, its causes and symptoms; are boys and girls affected differently; how does one identify the warning signs for suicide; how to start the conversation with a friend or child about depression

or suicide and how does one get help if you, or someone you know is thinking of suicide?



Going forward Musida will tackle other vital mental health issues including:

Bullying, grief and loss, men and depression, social media and mental health, substance abuse and the impact on families, the power of support groups, understanding the highs and lows of bipolar disorder and sleep and mental health.

Musida has always been candid about how bullying affected her mental health: “The bullying happened when I moved to a new school. Before the age of nine I was a bubbly little girl but then people found it okay to bring me down at a time when I was only trying to discover myself. The ramifications were enormous,” she says.

During the bullying, Musida started to dress like a boy.

“It got to the point where I thought if I covered up and didn’t draw too much attention to myself, maybe it would stop. I developed low self-esteem and it took me a long time to realise that it was actually never about me but about the people who were doing the bullying.

“For me personally, mental health is something that is not really spoken about. Unfortunately, it is considered a taboo subject that is often engaged with, not to rehabilitate but to shame, so I want to bring that conversation into the open. It’s time our society stands together to confront this.”

Musida will host the open, live and frank discussions on Instagram. Her conversations will also be available at a later stage on the Miss South Africa social media platforms, YouTube, misssa.live and as podcasts.

“I have been working on this since I was crowned Miss South Africa while also completing my honours in International Relations at the University of Witwatersrand. I am thrilled with the result and cannot wait to reveal the end product. I have put my heart and soul into it,” she says.



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SADAG contact details:

- Website: [www.sadag.org](http://www.sadag.org)
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