



“You helped me to decide to live again and showed me the effort I needed to make.” TS

“The kindness, advice and care were what I needed after the death of my mother due to COVID.” AJ

“My loss of a job, home, car and my family was why your help was so incredible to show me a future.” SS

A year ago exactly, SADAG was hit with uncertain times and many restrictions to how we work and operate which has made the last 365 days the hardest and toughest year SADAG has ever had.

As we reflect on the year that’s passed, all of us in one way or another, were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The mental well-being of millions of people around the world was severely affected. Depression, Anxiety, Grief and Trauma were also increasing on a daily basis in South Africa.

The question was, so how did we cope?



SADAG, like everyone, has had to meet unprecedented challenges, and make major adjustments just to keep our services open in order to help the many people that were calling and contacting us on a daily basis. We had to change all of our 30+ Helplines and a range of online systems for sms & whatsapp to an online app platform for our volunteer counsellors to answer calls remotely from home to continue helping those who were in desperate need for help.

Sponsorships, funding and private donations, which we are completely reliant on, fell short initially, however, we are extremely grateful to all the individuals, pharmaceutical companies, medical aid companies and corporations who stepped up to help us and have continued to support us despite the economy being severely impacted . Your kind sponsorships and donations have helped us to make a huge difference.

For example our calls have increased from 600 per day to over 1400 per day. We had to train more volunteer counsellors and Support Group Leaders. We still have over 160 operational Support Groups, with many who no run online groups through whatsapp, Zoom or Teams.

During this time, we were contacted by various Universities and Corporates looking to put in urgent mental health support programmes for their students or staff. SADAG were also proud to partner with SASOP, SAMA, SASA & PsySSA to launch the Healthcare Workers Care Network providing free mental health support services and have received over 1 000 calls from frontline healthcare workers during lockdown.

As well as launching the first-of-its-kind mental health support programme for NPOs, NGOs and Community Organisations called NPower in collaboration with Tshikululu Social Investments providing support to NPOs working on the front-line. We hosted over 103 online Facebook Fridays chats and many Webinars on various mental health topics including Anxiety, back-to-school Anxiety, Teen Suicide prevention, mental health in the workplace, COVID19 and mental health, compassion fatigue, Grief and many others.

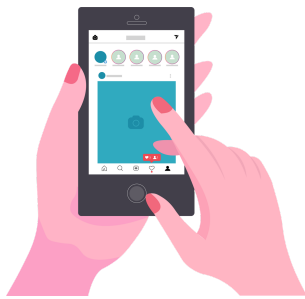
We are fortunate to get the support of all mainstream media, print, online, television and radio. We have had over R169 Million Rands worth of media coverage in the past year. And our Board Members have been constantly available to share their expert knowledge through interviews, webinars and online workshops.

SADAG has worked relentlessly over the last 12 months to ensure that our services are not interrupted and we are still able to be in contact with those in desperate need of mental healthcare. We are completely honored to be able to continue to provide this crucial support to communities around the country. The positive and beautiful messages, poems and letters we receive from people that

we have helped. We appreciate it. Thank you to all those who send us feedback.

If you would like to donate to SADAG today to help us continue to help more people provide care and support, please click below to DONATE. We would greatly value your support.

[DONATE](#)



Taking SADAG's Call Center to the next level

At the heart of SADAG is the 24/7/365 Call Centre with over 30 helplines and several sms, whatsapp and online platforms that are manned by the hundreds of Volunteers, who give back to help those in need during difficult times. From the announcement of lockdown, to moving everything remotely and online within 3 days, and then seeing our call volumes double overnight – we are grateful to the SADAG team, the volunteers and the tech support who have helped us ensure that we could keep helping people every day.

The SADAG Volunteer Counsellors have adapted, endured and persevered through the significant changes that have affected all South African citizens during the COVID pandemic and lockdown experience. Thank you for taking SADAG into your home, continuing to help others while navigating the pandemic yourselves. To our amazing team of volunteer counsellors who have answered over half a million callers since lockdown – thank you for your dedicated and selfless commitment to so many people in their time of need.

For the first time ever, SADAG had to move our entire physical training programme to online training in a short period of time – especially with the increased call volumes, we had to train up new volunteers. It was definitely hard to adjust to at first but we have managed to provide mental health education and training to new volunteers. Over the last year we have trained over 100 new volunteers, and just started a new online training programme for 2021 with over 130 new volunteers.

A special thanks to Henk, Quinton and Nico at Trunity Telecommunications and Stefan Labuschagne for helping us ensure that our call center with all its

helplines, extensions and tech systems could operate remotely and scale up to deal with the increased volumes.



MindfulMonday with Miss SA

The response to #MindfulMondays on Instagram with Miss SA's Shudufhadzo Musida has been amazing with so many people tuning in to the live sessions each Monday. Experts and lived experience guests have tackled important topics such as Depression, Teen Suicide Prevention, Anxiety, Trauma and stigma. These weekly conversations have given so many individuals the opportunity to feel a part of mental health advocacy and help destigmatise mental health.

If you would like to watch the previous episodes, please [click here](#). The next #MindfulMonday Instagram Live session is on 29 March at 7pm with Vitality Clinical Wellness Specialist Seranne Motlal covering Mental Wellbeing with Vitality. You can join the discussion around mental wellness and practical self-help tips by following @ [@shudufhadzomusida](#) or SADAG @ [@sadag_official](#).

Stay tuned to #MindfulMonday as we tackle future topics such as women and mental health, mental health in the workplace, human rights and mental health and lived experience.



Mental Health in the Press

As lockdown began, it was an extremely scary time for many of us. The lockdown was extended and lasted longer than anticipated, the impact of Covid-19 touched on every aspect of our lives. People were losing their jobs, worried about where to stay, dealing with trauma and increased anxiety.

As a way to reach more people and share key mental health information, SADAG worked closely with press and media every day to create awareness around mental health and the impact of COVID for so many different aspects. A special thanks to the all the journalists who helped us to inform and reach more

people that we could have imagined. In the last year, SADAG received over R169 383 574 in FREE advertising value in various press and media – which is a large amount for any NGO. Our thanks to Newsclip for keeping accurate records and copies of every article and electronic media.

Now more than ever is when we need to continue talking, reading and listening about mental health across all press and media platforms:

- **Volunteers work to help in time of need. Among the initial challenges, healthcare workers specifically struggled with being diagnosed with Covid-19 and not knowing much about it.** [Read more](#) in an article by Chante' Ho Hip, Fourways Review.
- **NPOwer programme is really important as it helps the helper.** 702's Refiloe Mpakanyane speaks to SADAG Operations Director Cassey Chambers about the programme. [Click here for more.](#)
- **How to manage stress during times of uncertainty. Learn more about tips to help keep your stress away** in an article by Gauteng Lifestyle.
- **Mediated Conversation: How to Deal with Burnout As A Result Of the Covid-19 Pandemic?** [Click here](#) to learn more about Burnout from various experts in a podcast by iFm FM.
- **Sadag urges South Africans to take care of their mental health. The effects of the pandemic have caused increased anxiety in the public.** [Read more in an article](#) by Skhangwiwe Mthiyane SABC News.
- **How to cope at work after the loss of a loved one. Many people have lost loved ones as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and the death may often feel unreal.** [Read more in an article](#) by Gcis Vuk'uzenzele at Sowtan Live.
- **Employee mental health and wellbeing — a company differentiator.** [Read more in a riviting article](#) by Fatima Newman at Daily Maverick.
- **Bipolar: Why Is It So Misunderstood? 2020 was a difficult year and 2021 isn't, thus far, seeming much different.** [Read more in an article](#) by Katie Hart at Longevity.
- **A survival kit for healthcare workers, before the Covid-19 third wave hits. Exhausted healthcare workers have an estimated two months of precious respite to build resilience to burnout.** [Read more in an article](#) by Chris Bateman at Mail and Gaurdian.
- **Matric Results: Sadag warns parents to monitor teens amid matric results release.** [Read more](#) in an article by IOL News.



The Power of Support Groups

Looking back on the last 365 days, with the memory of our President announcing that we would be going into 3 weeks of hard lockdown. The announcement was unprecedented and before we could even begin to process how we felt or what it would

mean. We all had to work together. Questions around what would happen to the handful of Support Groups that were about to launch, as well as how we would proceed with Support Group Meetings that were so necessary to the community – but also no longer allowed. Flights to different provinces for Support Group Training Sessions were abruptly placed on hold and we started to face a new reality – the reality of the unknown.

A year later and our lockdown continues. It was a year of resilience, dedication and a burning passion to both learn and help others during this difficult time – and our Support Groups have gone above and beyond.

- In the last year we have established over 21 Nationwide online Support Groups – where a year ago we didn't even have one.
- We have hosted over 35 Support Group Leaders Connect Sessions - which has turned into a weekly event
- We launched a WhatsApp group for Support Group Leaders
- Hosted Several Support Group Leader Master Classes and offered online Zoom meeting training to help equip more Support Group Leaders to run online meetings during lockdown
- Launched our first annual Support Group Awareness Week Campaign – which had incredible online engagement, support and feedback
- Hosted a 5 part Online Support Group Leader Training attended by over 200 people
- Created awareness around Support Groups through various press and media interviews and articles
- Developed a Support Groups tab on the website with videos, helpful info and articles

Since the beginning of 2021, we have launched over 8 new Support Groups including:

- A face-to-face Depression and Anxiety Group in Mossel bay run by Thandokazi
- A Gender Based Violence Group in Pretoria run by Renee
- Our first online COVID Support Group for Grief and Bereavement hosted by Lynne
- A Depression and Anxiety Group in Fourways run by Lara and Neil
- Two online Support Groups for family members and loved ones of those with Mental Illness hosted by Heiby and Gerhard respectively
- A Mental Health Support Group for Writers hosted by sisters Nazeera and Azeeza
- And a Women's Depression and Anxiety Group in Heartbeesport run by Monique

To all of our Support Group Leaders and their members, we thank you for your passion, bravery and dedication. Regardless of what the next 365 days holds for us, we will persevere and grow regardless of the challenges we may face.

If you would like to learn more about SADAG Support Groups [please click here](#) to our Support Group page on our website. If you would like to join a Support Group, please contact 0800 21 22 23 or 0800 70 80 90 and we can help you further.



SADAG goes Online

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift towards a more digital world and SADAG had to ensure that the support we have always provided be accessible online too. Physical distancing and isolation let many reliant on online help and support throughout the past year.

SADAG started providing daily #FacebookFriday Online Chats to meet the needs of our followers. Since Lockdown, we have done over 103 #FacebookFriday Online. We have seen our followers grow tremendously over the past year as many seek a community who support and advocate for mental healthcare. We have reached hundreds of people online through the #FacebookFriday Online chats and we will continue to do so. Tune into the #FacebookFriday Online chat next week as we discuss Mental Health in the Workplace, discrimination and how to disclose Mental Illness in the workplace.

We launched our Instagram page to ensure that we reach all audiences online. Watching it grow has been very fulfilling. The SADAG website has continuously been updated. We provide online toolkits, resources and more to ensure that we do whatever we can to provide people with accessible help online.



**Healthcare Workers Care
Network - Supporting Frontline
Healthcare Workers during
COVID19**

The mental health of Healthcare Workers and Frontline staff has been impacted greatly – and as they gear up for each wave, so the importance of mental health care and support is more crucial than ever. SADAG is proud to partner with SASOP, SAMA, SASA and PsySSA on the Healthcare Workers Care Network providing free 24/7 mental health care, therapy and training. Since the launch, the HWCN Helpline has received over a 1 000 calls and over 300 online forms from doctors, nurses, specialists and care workers from across the country. The HWCN has hosted various webinars and training sessions reaching over 4 400 attendees.

While the country gears up for the next wave, providing support and creating awareness around mental wellness amongst our healthcare workers is something we can all do to help them navigate the next leg of our marathon battle against COVID19. Please help share the HWCN number and support services with your local hospital, clinic, doctors rooms, care home and pharmacy. If you would like posters to put up, please contact Busi on projects@anxiety.org.za.

HWCN will be hosting a Webinar on Thursday the 15th April at 7pm on “COVID VACCINES: Shining a light in the darkness”. For more details, please visit www.healthcareworkerscarenetwork.org.za to register.



Making the mental health of NPOs & Community Organisations a priority through NPOwer

The past year has proven to be especially difficult for NPO'S, NGOs and community organisations around the country – with many having to stop operations, reduce staff and sometimes even close altogether.

NPOwer was launched in collaboration with Tshikululu Social Investment to provide 24/7 mental health help, support and training for all NPOs, especially those working on the frontline during lockdown. Since launching in October 2020, we have engaged with thousands of NPOs around the country and will continue to provide support and mental health help during these difficult months ahead. We have hosted various Webinars and provided self-help information specifically geared for the NPO and NGO sector. For more information and to access previous webinars, please visit www.npowersa.org.za.

Our challenge to you is to please reach out to your local charity, NGO or NPO and let them know that there is mental health support and help for them too.

Please share the numbers and website details with them so they can access support. Please keep an eye on the NPower social media pages for upcoming webinars.



Npowersa / @Npowersa



Npowersa / @npowersa



Thank You's

We are dedicated to all our callers. When a worldwide pandemic came about, we made sure that we would continue to be accessible to everyone looking for Mental Health Support and Crisis Intervention. We are continuously empowered by our callers and their resilience. We are in this together. Thank you for letting us help you!

- So amazing to have SADAG. We have lost much during this time. Family. lives and ourselves. – CW
- Good Job SADAG – NN
- Your infographics are always easy to understand and relate to. Thank you – HL
- Lovely stuff, thanks for your excellent work! – WT
- Keep up the good work guys – NN
- Guys you are doing a great job – NM
- Too much helpful.. thank you – TM
- Thank You – MK
- You Saved my life. – LR
- Thank you, I just received a call and feel so much better now. – NZ
- Fantastic help, Thank you - JW
- Thank you SADAG , helping to support our family whilst we are in Canada and they are in SA. - TG
- I honestly am grateful to have had you in my darkest hours of this episode. I dont think you guys get the applause and recognition you deserve because you are legit our true superheroes. - LA
- Thanks a lot for calling ! In a single call you were able to understand my issue and place yourself in my shoes. - BS
- Thanks again - OA

*Thank
You!*

Remember - There is always help! There is always hope! There is always SADAG to help you. We appreciate you all.

Warm Regards,
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