



Our Tribute to Dr Jan Chabalala

SADAG is shocked and deeply saddened by the loss of Dr Jan Chabalala this week on Monday the 29th September 2020. Dr Jan Chabalala, qualified as a psychiatrist in 1994 from Wits University and joined our board in 1995. It has been an honour, cut far too short, working with Dr Jan for over 25 years as a dear friend, a mentor, a colleague and always an advocate for mental health.

Dr Jan Chabalala was part of the SADAG family for well over 25 years. He helped us grow over the years and helped us to provide more support services to all communities within South Africa. He was always generous of his time and helped us with many talks, trainings, workshops, articles and countless press and media interviews. The press loved him and even in his last weeks, he was doing press interviews from hospital when we had no idea that he was sick. That was Dr Jan.

He believed strongly in speaking with Traditional Healers using his own voice to share common wisdom and knowledge. He always understood the powerful combination African and Western medicine brought to mental health when combined for the same cause. His talks on the African perspectives of Mental Health were always the most popular at our Counsellor Trainings and Press

Workshops and he always highlighted the importance of compassion, understanding and inclusion of all African cultures and beliefs – something that we will ensure to pass on to future counsellors too. He could speak on any topic of mental health no matter the audience – he spoke to journalists, counsellors, support group leaders, healthcare professionals, students, traditional healers and community members.

Dr Chabalala worked in both Private and Public Sectors, he was a Past President of SASOP (South African Society of Psychiatrists) between 2008 and 2018, and he was currently Head of Department of Psychiatry, 1 Military Hospital in Pretoria.

Dr Jan was a gentle giant with a kind heart and a passion for helping people living with mental health issues. He has left a huge gap in mental health and we already miss him dearly. We will miss his funny jokes and contagious laugh, his voice of reason in board meetings, and his willingness to always help SADAG whenever we needed him. Thank you, Dr Jan Chabalala, for your wisdom, your passion, your kindness and heart.

Our deepest condolences to his wife, children, family and friends – thank you for sharing him with us and so many people who he helped over the years. Thank you, Dr Jan for your service, your help and your commitment to mental health – we will miss you dearly.

Rest easy now.

Sincerely

Zane Wilson & SADAG Board

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