



Support Group Corner

Cape Town Support Group

The Cape Town Support Group, run by Chris Carter (082 444 1952) and Justin Kennedy (082 370 2080) meets every Tuesday night from 7pm to 8pm at the Cape Town Medi Clinic. The group is open to sufferers of depression, stress, burn-out and anxiety. Family members are welcome.

Anyone wanting to start a support group in the Southern Suburbs or Tableview area, please contact Diane Mallaby on 021 557 6066.

Swaziland

BIG congratulations to Denise Mortlock for winning an award from the Swaziland Rotary Club in recognition of her voluntary work! The award came with a cheque with which she has opened a bank account in the name of Mbabane Mental Health Support Group to be used for buying books. Well done Denise - you are doing amazing work and SADAG salutes you.

Mental Health Day, Swazi style, was one of the most colourful in the world! After a procession of drum majorettes, traditional dancing and singing, there were presentations by (amongst others) the Director of Health Services, the Matron of the Psychiatric Centre, a presentation by Denise and an address by World Health Representative, Dr. E. Maganu. Denise was asked for a copy of her speech by the WHO and taken to lunch by the Director of Health Services to discuss the way forward. Good luck Denise!

Polar Bears: Bipolar Support Group in Rondebosch



Welcome everyone,

We have decided to merge our newsletters for October and November. October is always a very busy month with World Mental Health Day, and as you know we were in Parliament this year, but we were still able to participate in many other talks and activities.

To those of you who ask us why we can't put all our activities and talks on the internet in advance, the unfortunate truth is that we are often asked to step in at very short notice, so it isn't viable to put up a planned schedule as it will more than likely change.

In our next newsletter we will give a list of 2009's special days!



World Mental Health Day in Parliament

Dear SADAG,

I wanted to let you know that SADAG 's organisation of the day at Parliament celebrating World Mental Health Day was of an extremely high standard, thanks to the team and particularly to Katherine who worked very hard indeed.

It was a very interesting and successful day and we spoke to many different people

at Parliament who were very supportive of what we were trying to do. By chance I spoke to a gentleman who turned out to be a parliamentarian, who suggested we make a presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Health and indeed make an appointment with Barbara Hogan. I hope you do in fact follow up on that.

Well done for the initiative.

Ruby Ward (Cape Support for Mental Health)



People Magazine Visits SADAG!

People Magazine recently featured an article about SADAG and visited our offices to see what goes on behind the scenes at a crisis line call centre and to interview those who answer the phones. Cassey Amooore and Janine Shamos were interviewed and the feature includes great comments and pictures!

[Click here to read the article](#)



Educator's Conference at Crawford College - 2 & 3 October

Crawford College played host to a two-day conference for educators, educational psychologists and school counsellors on various aspects of teen mental health. Janine Shamos gave two talks on bullying and teen suicide respectively. Many attendees have noticed an increase in bullying, self-injury, teen depression and suicide, and often feel isolated and unsure of where to turn to or where to refer others for assistance. For this reason both talks were

This group – with the great name-meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 7.30 pm for a support meeting, tea and fun at Ivydene, Glebe Road (off Sandown Rd), Rondebosch.

Please contact Lucille: 021 685 1747 or Suzanne 021 794 2738 / 084 2933214.

The group has a library and sometimes organises guest speakers and asks for a R10 donation to cover refreshments. .



East Rand World Mental Health Day: An Amazing Success Coordinated by Carlos Pretorius

The East Rand World Mental Health Day attracted a good deal of local media attention. Besides the local papers, the Beeld visited Carlos and his group and published a full-page article with photographs.

Carlos was very busy arranging a full day of activities at the Glynwood Hospital. A series of talks were presented, including talks on Anger Management, Post-natal depression, a talk by Dr Adele Frisby Lowe about her book, and a talk by psychiatrist Dr Zako for doctors on "Identifying Depression In Patients", all talks were well attended.

Between 12-1pm, a GP, Dietician, Psychiatrist and Psychologist spoke on East Rand Stereo and answered questions from callers. From 1-4 pm, Carlos spoke (in English and Afrikaans) about the support group and answered questions. This was an incredibly powerful day and created enormous awareness for the East Rand community. Our thanks to Carlos and his team for always being ahead of their game and really putting the community first.

incredibly beneficial and very well received, the conference was very interesting and informative.

A very powerful talk was given by Charl Louw of the Teddy Bear Clinic on the traumatic sexualisation of children, which I am sure the audience wished had a longer time allocated to it, as it was so informative. Another very interesting, and entertaining talk was on ADHD and trauma given by Dr Jeeva. A big thank you to Terry Wilke for inviting SADAG and Janine to participate in this wonderful conference.



World Mental Health Day and the Police Line - Thanks Chad!

Gratefully, the Kliptown Police Station has not only recognized the need for mental health advocacy but also the need for people on the police force to realize that mental health care is a necessity. This was put into action through a fun walk held for the neighbouring police stations, which was well received.

SADAG was represented by Chad Owen who used the opportunity to remind the officers and support staff of SADAG's toll free Police Line sponsored by PharmaDynamics. Chad spoke to officers who had experienced loss and trauma, (many acknowledged they had), but many seemed to feel they should handle it on their own and not seek counselling. Hopefully Chad's enthusiasm and passion helped dispel the myths and negativity and bring a change to the police force's approach to mental health. Thank you Chad for giving up your time and supporting the South African Police.



Wellness Day at the Department of Science and Technology - 15 October

Thavanisha and Janine attended and manned SADAG's stand at the Department of Science and Technology's Wellness Day as part of a comprehensive and holistic 'health team' which included dietitians, nurses, eye specialists and VCT counsellors. The day was very well attended and many employees asked specific questions about how to help a friend or family member with depression, bipolar, anxiety or substance abuse. Thank you to Loretta Pillay for inviting us to attend and for doing such an amazing job at the Department to raise awareness amongst employees.



Talk at SABDA: Schizophrenia and Bipolar Disorders Alliance

Cassey Amooore was our speaker at SABDA's October meeting. The title of her talk was "Managing Stress in all aspects of your life". Judging by the number of calls received, her talk was a real hit. "Cassey's knowledge of anxiety, stress and panic attacks is extensive and her personality and warmth make her an absolute natural on radio and TV", said Norma who coordinated the program.

Carlos has been involved with Mental Health for many years and is to be commended for the powerful work that is done on the East Rand.



Substance Abuse School Talks

We have targeted over 3 000 learners in Soweto, Diepsloot, Vosloorus, Alexandra, Randburg, Daveyton, Boksburg and Midrand with a talk aimed at the youth, regarding substance abuse and it's link to depression. Many youth turn to drugs and alcohol to cope with stress, numb emotional pain or to fit in with the crowd. The talk looks at why this is a bad idea and helps teach learners new coping skills. If anyone would like a talk to be presented to their school or youth group, please contact Cassey on 011 262 6396. This is conducted with funding from the Department of Social Development in conjunction with our toll free substance abuse help line which is operated 24 hours a day. 0800 12 13 14.



SADAG Counsellor Meeting Dr Frans Korb "Depression and the Elderly" 25 October

A very big thank you to Pfizer's Grant Queck, who accommodated our counsellors at such short notice, we really appreciate it. Dr Korb presented a very useful talk on Depression in the elderly – something we tend to forget about in the face of the soaring teen suicide rate in SA. His talk led to a very energetic discussion between him and the counsellors. Thank you to all those counsellors who attended even though most of them were writing exams and under immense pressure. We wish all our counsellors best of luck for their exam results.



Talk at Baragwanath Hospital - 17 October

On the 17th October, Baragwanath Hospital hosted a day's workshop for nurses, doctors, psychologists, and social workers dealing with youth. Mpho manned our stand and Janine gave a talk on depression in children and teens. The workshop included talks by renowned psychiatrists and psychologists and we were very honoured to have been invited. We were able to elaborate on what SADAG can, and does do for mental illness awareness.



Joburg General Hospital Wellness Day - 21 October

The Joburg General Hospital held a Mental Health Wellness Day on the 21st October. SADAG's stand was gorgeously decorated with balloons and banners and our brochures were a huge hit. A big thank you to Elizabeth, Tim and Zuki for representing SADAG at this day, which was filled with many questions, lots of interest and was very needed and appreciated by the nurses and staff who attended. Once again it was an opportunity for SADAG to clarify how we are able to help outgoing patients.



Tara Hospital Wellness Day - 24 October

On the 24th October, SADAG was invited to man a stand at Tara and attend a meeting with other NGOs to discuss Mental Health Advocacy and Patient Sustainability. The day was a very important one as Tara is one of South Africa's leading psychiatric hospitals. Thank you to Elizabeth Matare, Richard and Nosipho who manned the stand and answered questions about the work that SADAG does.



Hollard Insurance Wellness Day - 29 October

Hollard Insurance had a Wellness Day for their staff, and SADAG was invited to man a stand. Thank you to Christine and Yumna for manning the beautiful stand and welcoming everyone with a smile. In addition to creating awareness and being able to assist Hollard staff, we were also able to do some networking among those representing other NGOs, such as CANSA, CHOC, outreach programmes for adolescents and a home for those with special needs in Orange Farm. Hollard's wellness manager, Judi Reid, is an absolute powerhouse of energy and was extremely interested in SADAG's different programmes.



TV Shows on 3Talk, Morning Live, and e-tv Sunrise for World Mental Health Day



A huge thank you to Nkini Phasha, Dr Frans Korb, PJ Powers and Steven Swart for doing interviews to raise awareness on World Mental Health Day on the 10th October. Without your support and passion so many people would suffer in silence and isolation.



In addition to getting signatures to our petition requesting parity in spending for mental health, we were able to explain to Hollard staff how we are available to help those with mental health problems. On the whole, our brochures on anxiety and depression garnered the most interest among those who visited our stand, as many people had suffered from one or both of these conditions themselves or had a friend or relative who had suffered. Having said that, there was also interest in our new brochure on schizophrenia as a number of people wanted to know more about the illness. Our thanks to Hollard Insurance and CAF for hosting the day.



Save Tara - GOOD NEWS!!!

In response to SABDA's application and internal appeal (via attorneys Webber Wentzel), for information in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act ("PAIA"), Mr. G. Kanyika (Manager – Revitalisation and Capital Projects) of the Gauteng Department of Health has now provided SABDA with the following information regarding the future of Tara and a proposal to establish a new health precinct near Edenvale to be known as the Joe Nhlanhla Memorial Health Precinct:

- To date, there has been no work undertaken to examine the feasibility of selling or relocating Tara Hospital.
- There are no plans to sell or relocate Tara Hospital at the moment. If Tara Hospital were to be sold, it would only happen if there was a new Tara Hospital built elsewhere with the same service package, or even better.
- There is no intention to move patients to Edenvale Hospital at all.
- As there is no ongoing work on the sale or relocation of Tara Hospital, the public have not been engaged



Helen Joseph Wellness Day - 30 October

A Wellness Day was held at Helen Joseph to raise awareness and inform the hospital staff about mental health. Thank you to Dr Bernard van Rensburg for doing a presentation about the Psychiatric Unit, we all learnt so much. A very special thank you to Dale Joynt from Pfizer and Goran Pilipovic from GSK who joined us, it was great to have your support. SADAG's stand elicited great interest and we had the opportunity to speak to a large number of the nursing staff from all sectors of the hospital. We were also visited by some of the building staff who seemed extremely appreciative of the help and information we were providing.

SADAG's counsellors received many questions concerning teenage depression, suicide and substance abuse from concerned parents. We had various people ask our advice on specific problems they were having. One popular question was what the difference between depression and bipolar is. The nurses seemed very over-worked and were incredibly grateful to know that there was somewhere they could turn to if they needed extra help or counselling for patients. Thank you to our upbeat and informative counsellors who helped man a bright table: Enrico, Nosipho, Tiffany, and Carmen.

The psychiatric ward at Helen Joseph is one of only a couple of government units in Gauteng, it houses 30 patients and nursing staff, which is quite cramped. Interestingly enough, there is plenty of room to expand the ward as there are completely empty and unoccupied spaces surrounding the unit on the same floor. It would take R5 million to renovate the ward. The psychiatric unit only takes up about 3% of the entire hospital's budget. It seems that the funds are there, but are not distributed to Mental Health which is unfortunately not seen as a priority. Plascon has donated paint to the ward and if anyone would like to help renovate the ward in any way, such as by providing desks, reception furniture, pot plants or lockers please let us know. They are desperate for any assistance.

- on the future of Tara Hospital.
- Regarding the Joe Nhlanhla Health Precinct, feasibility studies are underway to examine the possibility of developing an integrated health complex on the site encompassing Edenvale Hospital and the Sizwe Tropical Diseases Hospital.
- The Department of Health has stated that it will endeavour to keep all relevant stakeholders informed of further developments in the proposed Joe Nhlanhla Precinct area.

In response to SABDA's PAIA application to the Department of Public Transport, Roads and Works ("Public Works"), the department has supplied SABDA with a substantial amount of information dealing, inter alia, with the significance of Tara as a mental health facility (the department experts describe Tara as one of the foremost mental health facilities in South Africa). Such information also includes various pre-feasibility studies regarding the proposal of the Joe Nhlanhla project. These studies reveal a number of problems and concerns regarding the Edenvale site.

SABDA was supported in its abovementioned PAIA applications and internal appeal by SADAG (The South African Depression and Anxiety Group) and the Central Gauteng Mental Health Society. Also thanks to CAM who have contributed to this committee.

SABDA is extremely thankful to countless people for their help and work on the 'Save Tara Committee'. In particular Beryl Allen for setting up the Committee and chairing it and Hugh Gibson for his incredible amount of work. He has spent many hours with the lawyers (who did this work "Pro Bono") and also communicating with the relevant government departments.

This just shows what can be done if there is the will and motivation. We do not believe the fight is totally over but at least for the next few years TARA is safe where it is. Thanks to all concerned for your hard work and

Helen Joseph has come to the assistance of SADAG's callers frequently in times of crisis and we thank the staff for their unwavering support, dedication and care of Gauteng's patients.



South Africa Needs to Demand Parity for Mental Health

South African mental health patients do not receive parity in their treatment and their medical aids for mental health as they would with a physical illness. This is grossly unjust and it is only with your help that we can achieve the same status as in the USA. If anyone wants to lobby their party representative or get forms to sign at their place of work, their support groups, or in their families or communities, please contact Cassey on 011 262 6396, who will send the relevant forms to you.



Parity for Mental Health in America New Legislation

Marlene Busko

September 26, 2008 – New legislation passed by the US Senate and House of Representatives will make it mandatory for insurance companies offering private health insurance to provide coverage for mental illness that is equivalent to coverage for other medical illnesses.

Before this becomes law, however, the 2 chambers will have to pass an identical mental health insurance parity bill that will require ratification by the president.

In a statement, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) supports the historic legislation, which it believes brings the United States 1 step closer to ending discriminatory and unequal coverage of treatment for mental healthcare by most health insurance plans.

Further, the APA urged the 2 chambers to act swiftly to ensure that this landmark legislation becomes law.

It would end current discriminatory practices whereby patients with mental illnesses are faced with greater insurance coverage restrictions than those with medical conditions. Such individuals commonly have higher deductibles and limits on the number of visits to health professionals.

End of Stigmatization

This change in insurance coverage is long overdue, Carolyn Robinowitz, MD, a practicing psychiatrist in Washington, DC, and past president of the APA, told Medscape Psychiatry.

According to Dr. Robinowitz, scientific evidence shows that mental illnesses are medical disorders and can be reliably diagnosed and treated, and the legislation reflects this. "The legislation shows we are no longer stigmatizing those with mental illness," she noted.

This parity legislation has had historic bipartisan support. The vote in the

time.

Senate was 93 in favor and 2 opposed. The vote in the House was 376 in favor, 47 opposed.



Depression and Stress in the Workplace Talks at St. Leger and Vinay - 24 October

Janine gave two talks for the head-office staff at St Leger and Vinay on stress and depression. The group's participation was excellent and group discussions were beneficial to everyone - presenter included! Many of the attendees know a friend or family member who has suffered from depression, anxiety or PTSD and many interesting questions were asked. Thank you to Michelle for inviting us and for her warmth, hospitality and energy.



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.



The Hospice Association of Witwatersrand - the "Magical Maze Journey"

The "Magical Maze Journey" is a board game designed to help children through their grief. The death of a loved one is one of the most fundamental and tragic losses a child can face and is a time of great confusion and pain for the grieving child. The help and support the child receives can have a significant impact on their adaptation to loss. The "Magical Maze Journey" aims to help children through their experiences and feelings associated with the death of a loved one. Games have proved to be very useful when working with children and help them express themselves openly and learn new ways of coping. The "Magical Maze Journey" is an incredible tool that can be used by therapists, lay counsellors, and teachers.

The game costs R250 and is available from the Hospice. Please call (011) 483 9100 for further information.



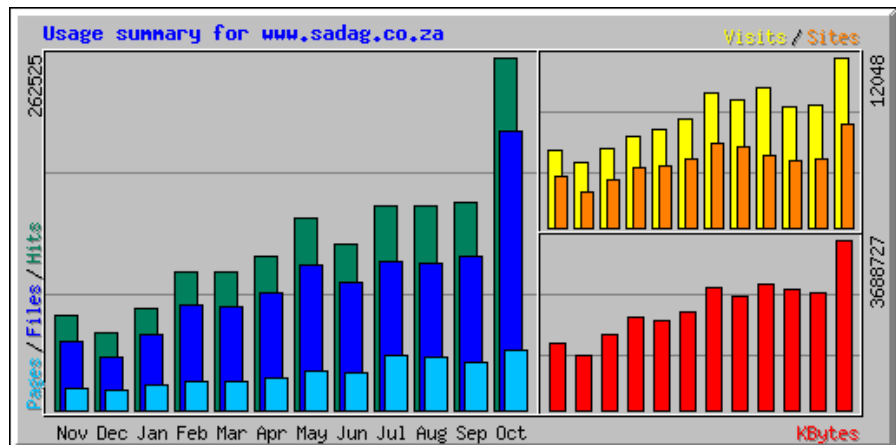
SADAG's Website Explosion

SADAG's website, which has been maintained by Cindy van Wyk for the last four years, has grown from month to month and in October it exploded then surpassed itself again in November through the number of hits received daily.

We are constantly looking for new ways to advertise our services and let people know that they can download all our information brochures from our site. All the latest local press releases are placed on our website as well as stories we have seen published overseas that will be of local interest.

Various contact numbers are available for psychiatrists and psychologists. We also very gratefully recognize our donors on the site. SADAG's website is a great place to find new locally written books on mental health issues, and links to local and international organizations.

If your organization wishes to link SADAG to an existing corporate site, please be in touch with me, Zane Wilson, via email at Zane1@hargray.com





Have A Happy Festive Season