



WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

10 SEPTEMBER 2019

0800 567 567 www.sadag.org SMS 31393

URGENT PRESS RELEASE

9th September 2019

World Suicide Prevention Day, 10th September 2019

SADAG's Suicide Crisis Helplines have received over 41 800 Suicide calls since January 2019

The South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) runs the country's only Suicide Crisis Helplines, and receives hundreds of calls every day from people who feel helpless, hopeless and who feel like suicide is the only solution left. For World Suicide Prevention Day (10th September 2019), SADAG is releasing some alarming figures to help create awareness and offer insight into Suicide in South Africa. Since January this year, SADAG has received over 145 000 calls to the 22 lines at the Helpline Call Center, and of those calls, over 41 800 calls have been to the Suicide Helpline alone with people seeking crisis intervention and urgent help.

The recent passing's of radiant young South African musician, Kathryn Swain, who died by suicide at the age of 25 and Ian Visser, a Grade 12 boy, who took his own life in Pretoria recently, as well as local singer Nichume Siwundla – are some of the recent suicides we have seen in the news. However, there are so many more people who die by suicide that don't make the headlines.

These recent suicides, as well as the alarming figures from the Suicide Helpline, highlight the urgent need within this country to ensure that we continue sharing as much information on Suicide Prevention as we possibly can.

Cassey Chambers, SADAG's Operations Directors says "Suicide is still a very taboo topic in our current society - no one wants to talk about, no one knows how to talk about it, and parents don't want to talk to their children about it, in case it "plants ideas". However, suicide is a very real issue in South Africa and we can see that by the increasing number of calls we are receiving every day to the Suicide Helpline from people all over the country."

A significant number of people contemplating Suicide experience anxiety, depression, hopelessness and may feel that there is no other option. Talking about or threatening suicide may be a desperate cry for help. SADAG urges families, parents, loved ones and colleagues to take every Suicide mention, threat or attempt seriously. Psychiatrist and Psychologist, Dr Frans Korb, says “Over 75% of people who die by suicide tell someone first – it is so important to know the warning signs so you can identify when someone you care about needs urgent help.”

It is important to change the narrative around Suicide, in order to address the stigma about Suicide we need to change the way we talk about it. We should no longer say 'xxx has committed suicide', there is a major problem with using the word 'commit'. Dying by suicide is not a crime so you cannot commit suicide. Depression, which we know to be the leading cause of suicide, is not a crime. Rather say 'died by suicide', 'death by suicide' or use the new international term of 'suicided'.

“From the calls we have received to the Suicide Helplines over the last 8 months, the main contributing factors for someone feeling suicidal include relationship issues, financial problems and trauma. But still, the main contributing factor is undiagnosed and untreated depression,” says SADAG’s Operations Director, Cassey Chambers

Every day people around the country get up and pretend everything is okay, yet on the inside they are overwhelmed, desperate and not coping. Many people have no access to mental health treatment or care, or don’t know where to even begin to get the help they need, never mind the stigma that prevents people from speaking up and getting help, until it is too late. Majority of SADAG Helpline callers are female however, men are more likely to commit suicide than women globally.

While so many people have already reached out to the Suicide Helpline for telephone counselling, crisis intervention and emergency help – there are still so many people who don’t know how to get help, or where to call, or who are too scared to seek help.

Although there is no single cause of suicide, one of the risks for suicide is social isolation, and there’s scientific evidence for reducing suicide risk by making sure we connect with one another. We can all play a role through the power of connection by having real conversations about mental health with people in everyday moments – whether it’s with those closest to us, or the waiter at a restaurant, a friendly face at work, or the security guard at the shopping centre. It’s also about the connection we each have to the cause, whether you’re a teacher, a doctor, a mother, a neighbour, a policeman, or a suicide loss survivor or attempt survivor. We don’t always know who is struggling, but we do know that one conversation could save a life.

For World Suicide Prevention Day this year, SADAG is aiming to reach more people and create awareness about suicide and depression. SADAG have partnered with Facebook SA and BBDO Advertising agency to produce an online campaign ([click here](#)) speaking directly to someone who may be feeling suicidal. With the campaign launching online and promoted through Facebook, especially with SADAG figures showing that over 13 000 people have reached out via email, sms, whatsapp, online

or social media in the last 8 months. The aim is to reach more people and direct them to contact SADAG via the helplines, sms, email, website or social media for help.

SADAG is urging all South Africans to:

- learn about the warning signs of suicide – you never know when it could save a life
- know the symptoms of depression so you can identify it in a friend or loved one before it is too late
- if you are worried about someone close to you – learn how to talk about suicide and know where to go to get help
- learn more about depression and suicide – you never know when you will need the information to help someone close to you. Please go online, visit SADAG's website (www.sadag.org), or call the Suicide Helplines for more information.

SADAG runs the country's only Suicide Helplines (0800 567 567) offering free telephone counselling, information, crisis intervention and referrals to resources country wide – open 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

It's never too late to seek help – there is always help! There is always hope!

SADAG SUICIDE CALL CENTRE STATISTICS

JANUARY – AUGUST 2019



*ONLY SUICIDE CRISIS HELPLINE IN THE COUNTRY

CALL CENTRE OPEN



“140+ Volunteer Telephone Counsellors”

We receive over 13 000 sms's, emails, online forms and whatsapp chats

SADAG receives 600+ calls per day

Suicide Helpline Telephone bill is over R110 000 per month

SADAG receives calls from all age groups, race and gender. DEPRESSION DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE



Youngest Suicide in SA has been 6 years old



0800 567 567 | SMS 31393 | www.sadag.org

ENDS.

For press interviews, expert comments, information, case studies and statistics, please contact:

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