

Before we get started please can you take 1 minute to complete this survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025PreSGLT>





INTERESTED SUPPORT GROUP LEADER TRAINING PART 1

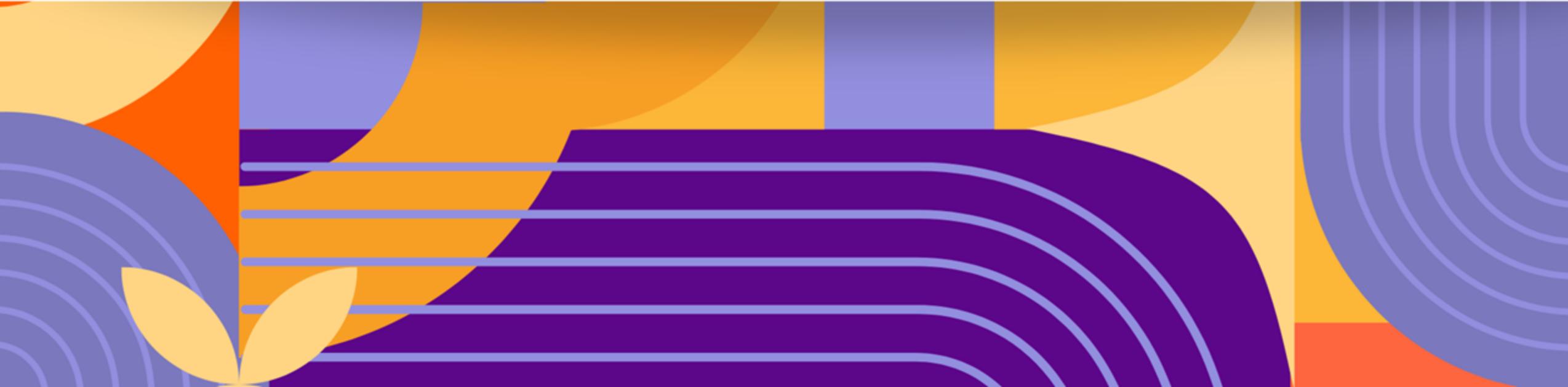
WELCOME:

Hello and welcome to the SADAG Support Group Leader Online Training. We are delighted to have you here and have been absolutely blown away by the response to and interest in this training.



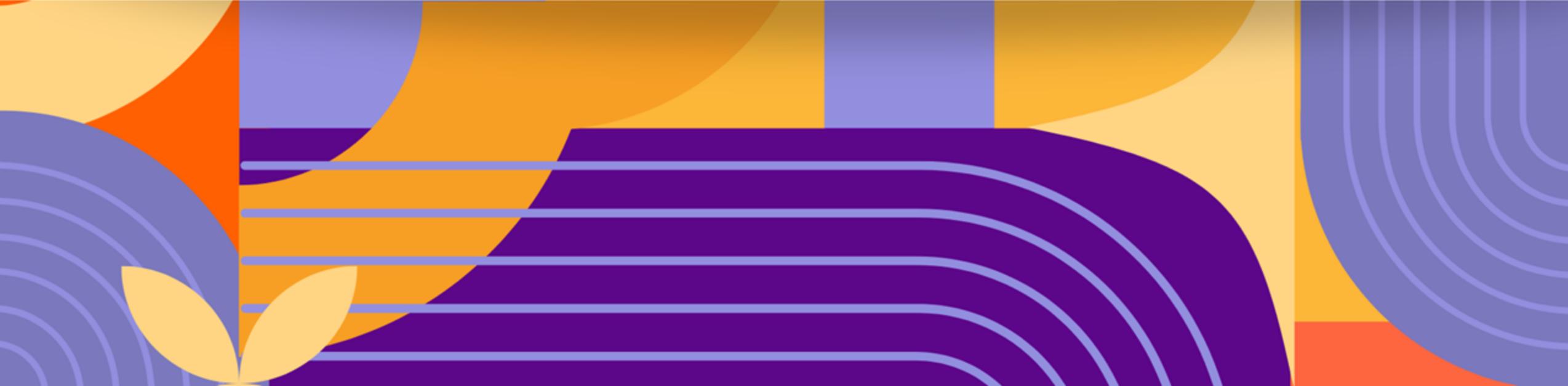
TRAINING OUTLINE

- **Part 1:**
Introduction to SADAG & Support Groups
- **Part 2:**
The Support Group Leader
- **Part 3:**
Planning your Support Group meeting
- **Part 4:**
Getting down to the nitty gritty
- **Part 5:**
Hosting your first Support Group Meeting
- **Part 6:**
Support Group Value Statement and the future of your Group



AGENDA:

- Who is SADAG
- What is a Support Group
- What a Support Group Isn't
- SADAG Support Group Rules
- Who should start a SADAG Support Group
- How SADAG supports its Support Groups
- Where to from here?
- Q&A





WHO IS SADAG?



The South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) is a registered Non-Profit Organisation

- Leading voice of patient advocacy, education and de-stigmatisation in the Mental Health sector
- Established over 30 years ago
- Expertise lies in assisting people throughout South Africa with Mental Health queries
- Offers psychosocial education and training at various levels, i.e. Support Group Leaders & Lay Telephonic Counsellors
- Highly experienced team of psychiatrists and psychologists on its Board
- Serves as a support network for thousands of South Africans who live with Mental Health problems and other associated disorders such as HIV/AIDS, TB and Substance Use.

Currently, it is estimated that one in three people in South Africa will, suffer from a mental illness at some point in their life.



SADAG ACTIVITIES

- School Talks: "Suicide Shouldn't be a Secret"
- Fundraising
- Powerful Media Campaigns
- Substance Use Program
- Over 180 Support Groups
- Mental Health Workshops / Talks and Training Programs / Wellness Events
- Rural Community Projects: Diepsloot and Ivory Park Counselling Containers of Hope
- Speaking books
- Brochures, Pamphlets, Webinars, Weekly Facebook Friday Live
- Monthly newsletter sent out to over 30,000 people
- Website with over 600,000 hits per month, containing local and international content, videos, questionnaires, brochures and handouts

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS SADAG SERVICES



SADAG has been making Mental Health Matter for almost 30 years

2500-3000
CALLERS PER DAY

- Provide free telephone counselling
- 1 in 4 calls are Suicide Related
- Run South Africa's only Suicide Crisis Helpline
- Receive calls from various ages, races & genders from 9 provinces

2800
WhatsApp Messages
per month

R75.5
MILLION
free advertising &
press in 2022

38 000+
RECEIVE OUR
NEWSLETTER

260
VOLUNTEERS

WWW.SADAG.ORG
600 000
HITS PER MONTH

TOLL-FREE HELPLINES

30+ LINES OPEN **24** HOURS A DAY **365** DAYS A YEAR

PHONE BILL OVER R160 000 A MONTH

160
SUPPORT GROUPS
NATIONWIDE

**RUN FREE ONLINE
OR FACE-TO-FACE
MEETINGS**

SCHOOL TALKS

- Provide Brochures, Manuals and Posters for High Schools
- Team of Counsellors present Teen Suicide Shouldn't be a Secret to learners class-by-class
- As well as present various talks on other Mental Health topics such as Bullying & Stress
- Workshops & Training for Teachers and Parents

SOCIAL MEDIA AWARENESS

Instagram Facebook
Twitter TikTok YouTube

Reaching
thousands
of people
every week

SADAG CALL CENTER

- Based in Joburg (Head Office) , KZN & CPT
- Telephonic counselling and referrals nationwide
- WhatsApp counselling
- Online counselling
- Only Suicide Crisis Helpline in the country
- 30+ lines that deal with Depression, Trauma, Anxiety, Panic, Suicide, Bipolar Disorder, Substance Use, etc.
- Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year
- Over 2800 calls per day
- Extensive referral service to Mental Health professionals across the country
- Dedicated 24-hour Helplines

How to contact SADAG

PHONE 24 / 7

Suicide Crisis Helpline
0800 567 567

CIPLA Mental Health Helpline
0800 456 789

Substance Abuse Helpline
0800 12 13 14

WHATSAPP 8AM - 5PM

Cipla Chat Line
076 882 2775

Maybelline BraveTogether
087 163 2030

SMS 24 / 7

31393





WHAT IS A SUPPORT GROUP



SUPPORT GROUP FUN FACTS

- Did you know that SADAG was started as a Support Group over 30 years ago by our founder, Zane Wilson
- Pre-COVID, there were no online SADAG Support Groups, now we have over **100 online Support Groups**
- We host weekly Support Group Leader Connect Sessions on a Friday Morning, and two monthly evening Connect Sessions
- We have WhatsApp groups dedicated to our Support Group Leaders
- Introduced our 1st annual Support Group Awareness Week Campaign in 2021, and celebrated our 5th one in January of 2025
- This is our 5th Annual Support Group Leader Training



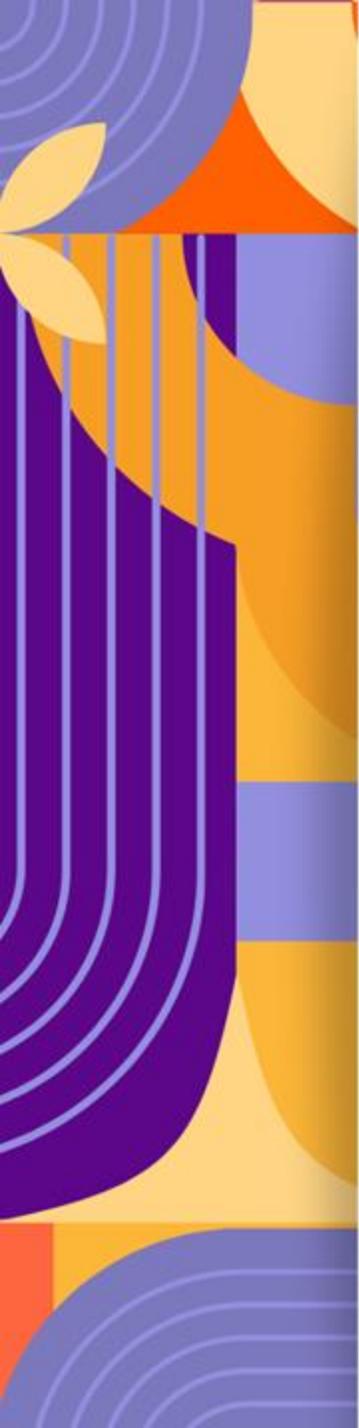
A Support Group is a Group of people who have similar personal experiences of the same problems or life situations and are there to help each other feel supported.



Support Groups foster an environment that:

- Encourage a sense of community
- Is empathetic
- Creates a space for mutual support, respect and understanding
- Encourages equal opportunity
- Is safe and non-judgmental
- Offers unconditional positive regard
- Allows a place of sharing practical coping skills

- 
- Members of Support Groups often share their thoughts and feelings
 - They learn from other people's sharing and others' life experiences
 - **Everyone is seen as an expert of their own life experiences**
 - Rather than a teacher/pupil relationship, everyone, including the Support Group Leader, plays the role of both the expert and the pupil
 - Emphasises the power of listening without offering a solution
 - Sharing experiences enables us to give each other a unique sense of mutual support
 - A platform to collect practical information and ways of coping
 - Group Members offer each other emotional support
 - Groups reduce the sense of isolation that can be associated with Mental Illness



As humans we want to **connect with people**. Depression, Stress, Anxiety and Worry can sometimes threaten this. When we are struggling emotionally, we feel alone and lonely, **we feel that others cannot understand us**, and we **withdraw** from people when we need them the most.

Fear of stigma and being judged often make us fearful of telling even those we love that we are struggling or suffer from Mental Illness.

Joining a Support Group, or deciding to set one up, is a **powerful commitment to taking care of your Mental Health and forming relationships with others**.



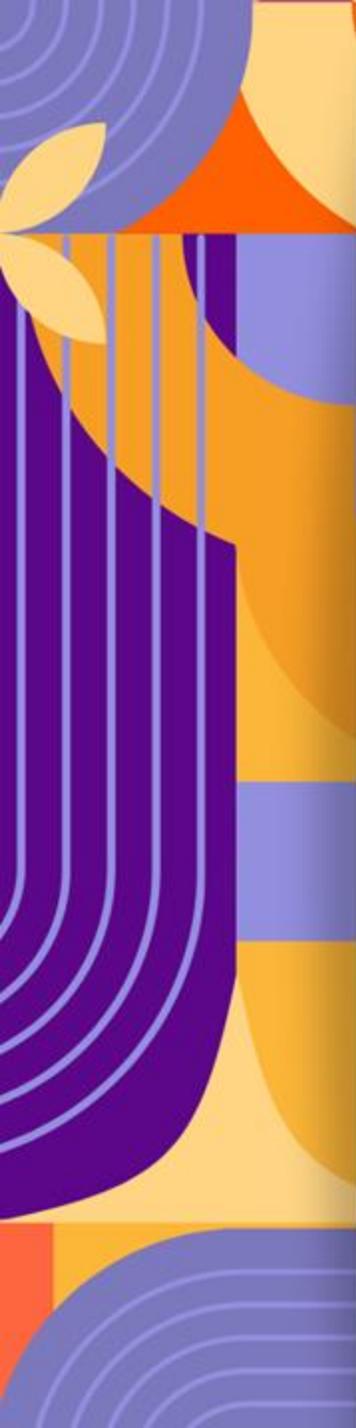
SADAG has many different types of Support Groups, each serve different communities and different issues.

Different factors can assist you in choosing the type of Support Group you run:

- Identifying a need in your community
- Your own Mental Health journey
- Lived with experience
- Specific area of interest or passion

It is up to the Support Group Leaders to decide on what type of Group they would like to run. Support Groups sometimes transition from focusing on one topic to a different one depending on the needs of the members.

If you decide to launch a SADAG Support Group, it is important to keep SADAG up-to-date with the type of Group you are running, so that we can ensure we refer the correct people to your Group.



There are many different types of Support Groups, each serve different communities and their specific needs. These include, but are not limited to:

- Mental Health in the Workplace
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Trauma
- Substance Use
- Bipolar Disorder
- Post / Peri Natal Depression
- Support Groups for loved ones and family members who have loved ones with Mental Illness
- Groups for people who have lost loved ones to Suicide
- Unemployment
- Managing Retirement
- HIV/AIDS
- Chronic Illness
- Grief and Bereavement
- Mental Health
- PTSD



It is possible to join two or more Health issues together. This is because many people who are experiencing one type of problem may be experiencing others as well.

Possible Examples of some of these Support Groups are:

- Depression and Anxiety
- Chronic Illness and Its Impact on Mental Health
- Depression, Anxiety and Bipolar Disorder
- Depression, Work and Life Stressors



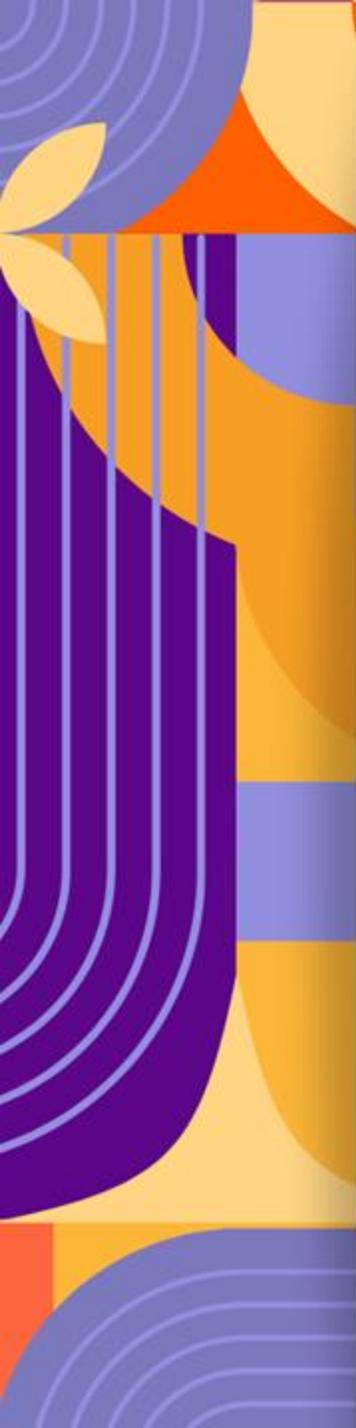
Who attends Support Groups?

Mental Health does not discriminate against race, gender, socioeconomic standing, age or religion, it is something that almost all of us are affected by, be it personally or through a family member or loved one.

There are an incredibly diverse group of people who attend and run Support Groups.

As mentioned above there are many different types of Support Groups, and these Groups' offerings **extend the patient, or a person living with a Mental Illness.**

There are Groups dedicated to loved ones and family members of people with Mental Illness, Groups dedicated to the unemployed, those suffering with Trauma and PTSD, as well as caregivers, to name a few.



Frequency and Duration of Support Groups:

- Support Group Meetings can be held:
 - monthly
 - bi-monthly
 - or weekly, depending on the availability of the Support Group Leader, and the needs of the Group
- The recommended duration of each meeting is approximately an hour and a half, which accommodates 8-12 people comfortably.
- Starting a Support Group is a long-term commitment; some of our SADAG Support Groups are over 10 years old.



**WHAT A SUPPORT GROUP
IS NOT...**



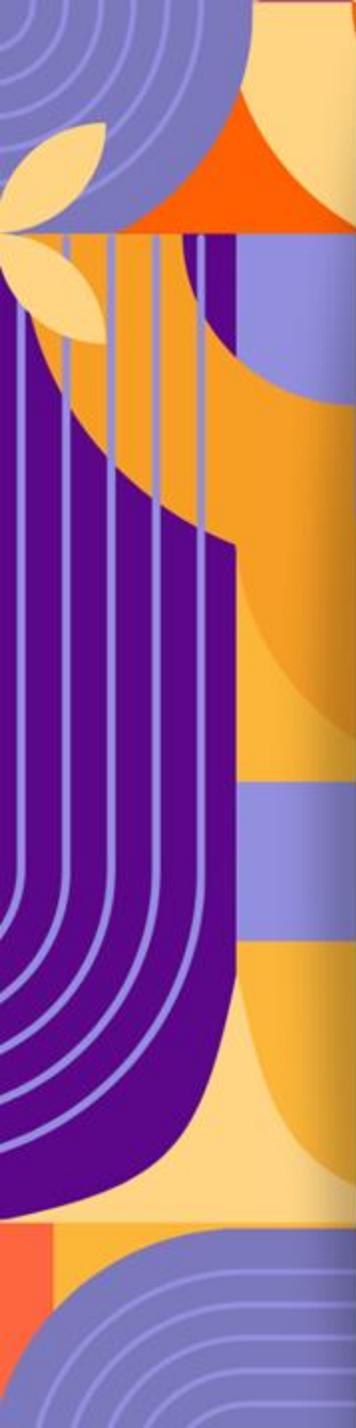
First and foremost, a Support Group is NOT Group Therapy

- While a **Support Group can be therapeutic, it is not the same as therapy.**
- It does not need to be run by a Mental Health Professional as it does not involve Professional Counselling or Psycho-Education.
- **Group Therapy** is run by a **Mental Health Practitioner** who is trained and accredited to conduct Psychotherapy, for example, a Psychologist, Social Worker, Occupational Therapist etc.
- The majority of SADAG's Support Group Leaders are patients, or ex-patients who have experienced difficulties with their own Mental Health, or the Mental Health of a loved one.
- We do have Support Groups that are run by Mental Health Practitioners; however, these Mental Health practitioners do not run their Groups in their professional capacity.
- We also have Groups run by individuals who have a keen interest in Mental Health and advocate for it.



It is not necessary for Support Group Leaders to be Mental Health Practitioners, because Support Groups are not therapy

- A Support Group should never be the first line of patient intervention
- If someone is struggling with their Mental Illness, it is **STRONGLY** advised that they first see a Mental Health Practitioner for one-on-one dedicated treatment and diagnosis.
- In many ways a Support Group can be compared to a halfway house. People have received the professional help and intervention that they require, and are managing with their Mental Illness; they just need a space where they are understood, accepted and supported.



When we are considering if someone should Join or Start a Support Group, we have 3 things in mind:

1. The wellbeing of the **Support Group**
2. The wellbeing of the **Support Group Leader**
3. The wellbeing of the **Support Group Member**

Important to remember:

A person with Depression and / or Anxiety :

- Does not need to be on medication to join a Support Group, but we recommend that they have been diagnosed by a professional and gone for treatment – this is for the safety and well-being of the Member, the Group and the Leader.

A person with Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Borderline, etc.:

- Should only be advised to join a Support Group if they are coping with their Mental Illness, are on medication/treatment, and have discussed joining the Group with their Mental Health Practitioner.
- In as much as Support Groups can be therapeutic, if a person joins or starts a Support Group before being ready to do so, Support Groups can be a very overwhelming and triggering environment.

Receiving help and, where applicable, a diagnosis from a Mental Health Practitioner makes sure that the member is getting the right help and support that they need.



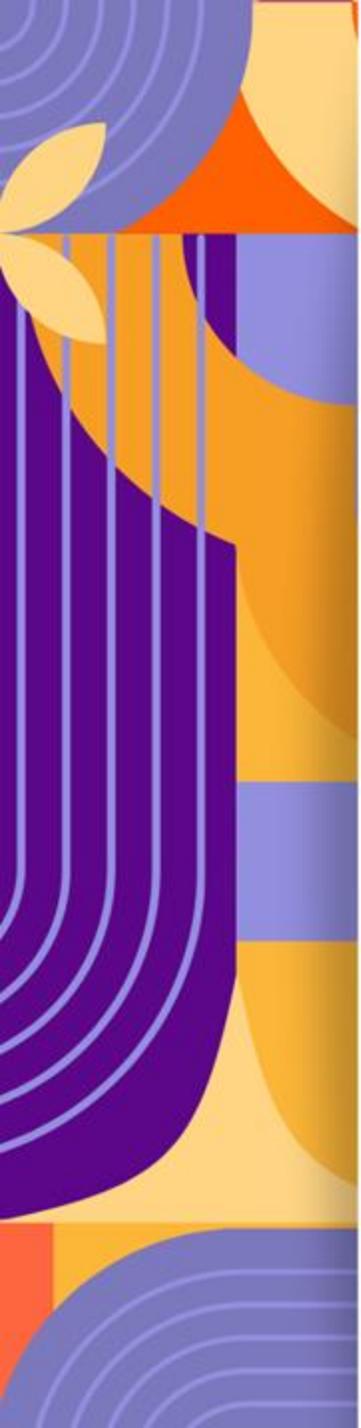
SADAG SUPPORT GROUP RULES



Each Support Group is unique, while some Groups are structured, others are unstructured and this is usually decided on by the Group dynamic, and the different individuals who make up the Group.

While SADAG suggests different ways and ideas that we have found effective in running a Support Group, the final decision on the Group values the Group chooses to adopt, is made by the Group as a whole.

We do have some rules however, that each SADAG Support Group has to comply with.



If you wish to start a Support Group that doesn't adhere to the below rules, SADAG will continue to help and support you as best we can, however, the Group will not fall under the SADAG Support Group umbrella.

If you choose to run a non-SADAG Support Group, you (and anyone in the country) can still make use of our toll-free call center lines that can assist you with counselling, referrals and information.



Rule Number 1: All SADAG Support Groups are non-denominational

Our Groups don't subscribe to any one religion.

SADAG Groups are secular, and we advise against religious content, discussion or practice in specifically 'SADAG' Groups.

As Mental Health affects people from all races, cultures and beliefs, this rule helps to ensure that anyone and everyone feels welcome to join a SADAG Support Group. SADAG Support Groups use a person-centred approach.



We understand that faith plays a massive role in many people's recovery and Mental Wellbeing.

We support all religions – we are religion neutral to accommodate as many people as possible. We can't adopt one religion over another, but we offer and have offered training to many faith-based organisations.

As such we are more than happy to help wherever we can.

The more Mental Health awareness, help and resources we as a community can provide the better.



Rule Number 2: SADAG Support Groups are not open to minors

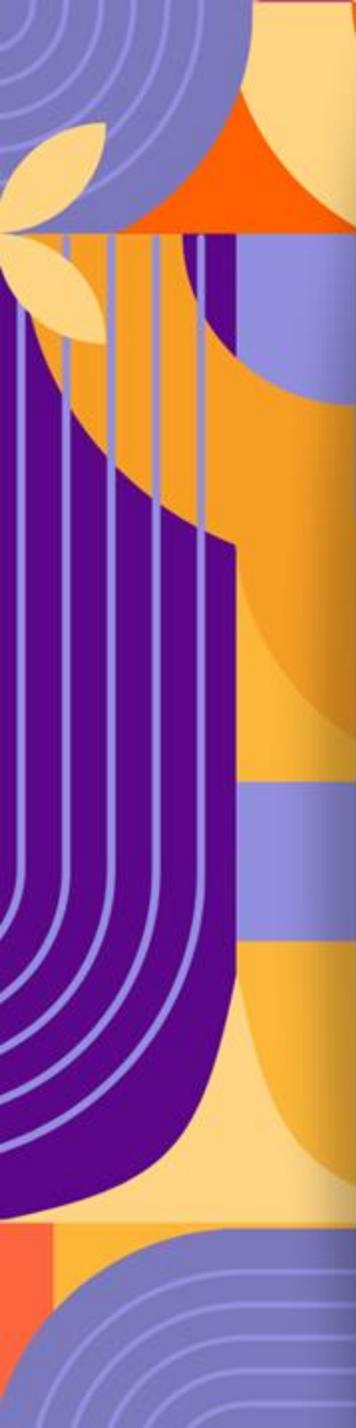
Due to the vulnerability and suggestibility of the youth, as well as ethical obligations, we advise that only people eighteen and older attend Support Groups. Responsible practice, and an emphasis on doing good, not harm, means that we recommend youth seek other Mental Health resources where there is a dedicated team that can ensure the safety and well-being of the individual and Group.

While we understand that there is an important need for Mental Health Support for the youth, there are several important factors to consider when hosting a Support Group for minors

- Police clearance
- Consent – child/school/parent
- Confidentiality
- Referrals and additional Support in concerning situations

As Support Groups are a big responsibility, we recommend that only individuals **23 years of age** and older apply to be Support Group Leaders

- SADAG also offers a unique Peer Support Group Leader training aimed at students over 18, where the focus is on student related issues. To find out more about this training email peersupport@anxiety.org.za



Rule Number 3: You can't profit from a Support Group

- SADAG doesn't have the funding to pay their Support Group Leaders, so running a Support Group is purely on a voluntary basis.
- SADAG Support Groups are free of charge, so you can't charge Members to attend.
- If you are a Mental Health Care Practitioner or provide any paid for Healthcare Service, you can't see your Support Group Members in your professional capacity. You also should not recommend that your clients/patients join your Support Group as this can create an ethical dilemma in terms of dual relationships.



WHO SHOULD START A SUPPORT GROUP



Running a Support Group is a considerable responsibility and shouldn't be taken lightly, when thinking about Starting a Support Group consider the following:

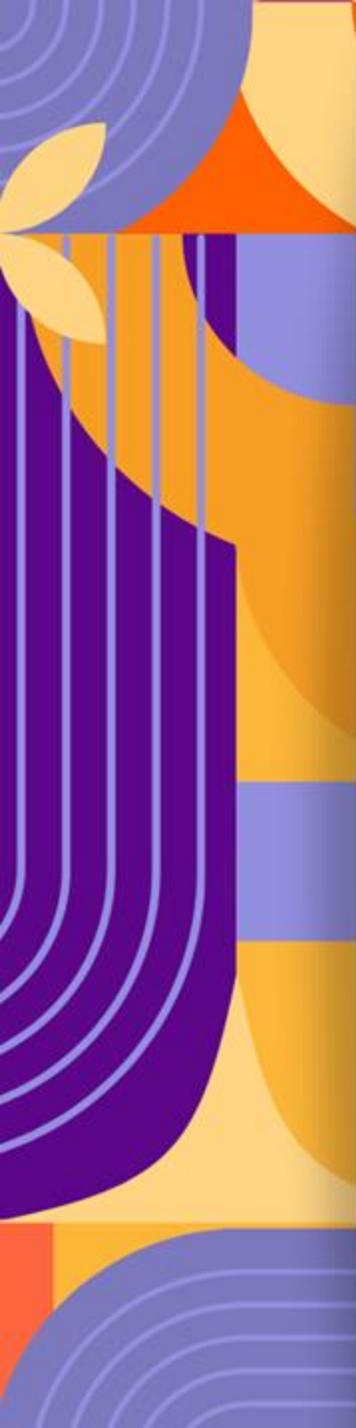
- Support Group Members become very dependant on their Support Groups
- Future plans and goals
- Current responsibilities and available free time
- Reason for starting a Support Group
- Do you want to **start** a Support Group, or **join** a Support Group
- Pay careful attention to your own Mental Health, you can't give if your cup is empty
- Support Groups at times can be a triggering and draining environment, is this the best fit for you right now?
- If you have been struggling with your own Mental Health recently, rather give yourself a decent amount of time to heal. You may want to first get some one-on-one help or perhaps join a Support Group instead.



A Support Group is a non-judgmental place for people to meet and therefore needs to be free of discrimination. Everyone has their own opinions that could affect the amount of support that they give other Group Members.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Would I be open to talking about any issue related to Mental Illnesses?
- Am I able to respect different types of therapies and/or alternative healing that may be different from my own?
- Am I open to different sexual orientations and gender identities?
- Do I have biases against different races or cultural backgrounds?
- Can I put my biases aside for the benefit of the entire Group?



Consider Co-facilitating a Support Group

Support Groups can be hosted by either a single Support Group Leader or by two Support Group Leaders who work together as co-facilitators. Co-facilitation can be beneficial to both the Group Members and the Support Group Leaders.

- Capitalising on Diversity
- Accommodating large Groups
- Modelling
- Mutual Support
- Partnering in the process
- Stability and longevity of the Group
- Relationship Building
- Balancing each other
- Inclusion
- Debriefing



HOW SADAG SUPPORTS ITS SUPPORT GROUPS

Access to other Support Groups



Invitations to various training opportunities



Weekly Support Group Connect Sessions



Advertising your Group:

Press, newsletters & social media platforms



Weekly Support Group Newsletter



How SADAG supports our Groups

Support Group Launch Pack:

Printed posters and flyers to advertise your group, as well as informational materials



Listing your Support Group in the referral guide



De-briefing



Support Group Leaders WhatsApp group



On-going telephonic advice and support



Assistance in writing a letter to secure a venue for your Group



Organise Experts Speakersto talk at your meeting



- 
- Advice, support and debriefing
 - Venue requests and referral letters
 - Support Group Launch Pack
 - Guest Speakers on an ad hoc basis
 - (never on a first meeting and a max. of 2 per year)
 - Materials
 - Access to other Support Groups
 - Regular receipt of SADAG's National Newsletter
 - Invitations to various training opportunities
 - Debriefing
 - Listing your Support Group in the SADAG Support Group Referral Guide
 - Support Group Leader Weekly Connect Sessions (optional)
 - Support Group Leaders WhatsApp Group (optional)
 - Weekly SADAG Support Group Leader Newsletter
 - Monthly Ongoing Counsellor and Support Group Leader Training (Optional)



WHERE TO FROM HERE?

- 
- Thank you for attending Part 1 of our ‘Interested Support Group Leader Training’
 - In order to continue with Part 2 of the training and/or to let us know how the training was for you please complete the following evaluation and assessment <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025SGLTPart1>
 - **Everyone who submits the evaluation will be sent the link for Part 2.**

Questions and Answers



For more information, please email
SupportGroups@anxiety.org.za

