



**SUPPORT GROUP LEADER  
TRAINING:  
PART 1 – Q&A**



# **GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING**

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1. The interested Support Group Leader training is a 6-part online series
  2. Each week's session is unique and builds on the previous week, so you must attend each week for 6 weeks.
  3. The webinars take place once a week on a Wednesday  
The recording and presentation will be sent to EVERYONE who registers for that session when it is available on that Wednesday (although it may be late in the day/early evening) – if you haven't received the recording by Thursday, please let me know so I can investigate
  4. To receive the link for the following week's session, you need to watch and complete each week's session by the close of business (5pm) the following Monday. If you are unable to make the deadline, please keep me updated so I know to keep a look out.
  5. Links to each week's training session are unique and will be sent on Tuesday before 5pm
  6. If you are unable to attend the live training session, I will send you the recording and presentation, but please still register for that week's Zoom webinar so that I know that you are continuing with the training

**For questions, queries or concerns: [Anita.supportgroups@anxiety.org.za](mailto:Anita.supportgroups@anxiety.org.za)**



# Q&A Part 1: Assessment



## Question 12

What are SADAG's three main Support Group rules?

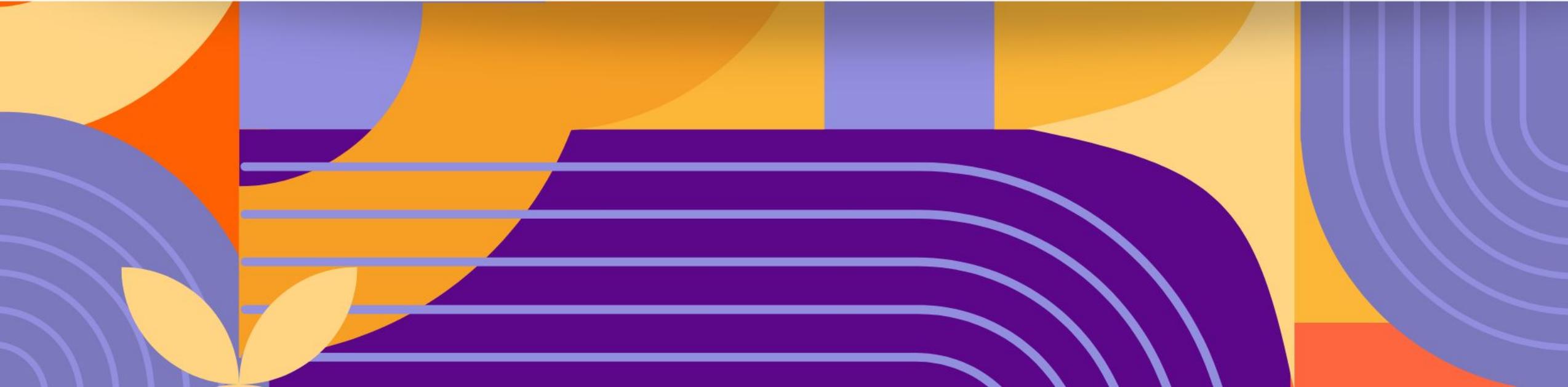
- **Rule Number 1:** All SADAG Support Groups are non-denominational
- **Rule Number 2:** SADAG Support Groups are not open to minors (anyone under the age of 18)
- **Rule Number 3:** You can't financially profit from a Support Group

# Question 13

Which 1 of the below statements is **INCORRECT**?

- You must be 23 and older to start a SADAG Support Group
- All Support Groups are the same and follow an identical structure
- SADAG will assist you wherever possible even if you want to start a non-SADAG Support Group
- Running a Support Group is a long-term commitment
- The 6 Part Support Group Leader training is free and open to anyone to attend

*Each Support Group is unique, depending on both the leader as well as the Members who make up the Group. Different Groups have different needs and wants. Some groups are more structured with specific topics, while others are more general sharing sessions. Each Group's individual 'value statement' also plays a role in the Group's structure. It doesn't matter what the Group 'looks' like as long as it is serving its purpose and providing a safe, non-judgmental, empathetic space.*





**Question 14**  
**True or False?**  
**SADAG suggests**  
**running a Support**  
**Group with a**  
**co-facilitator**

The answer to the question is **“True”**

It is not mandatory, but helpful and recommended. 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 often increases the longevity of a Group and can be beneficial to both the Group Members and the Support Group Leaders.



## Question 15?

True or False? SADAG will identify and provide you or your organisation with a Support Group Leader?

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This answer is **False**.

Sometimes people are under the impression or misconception that SADAG can 'send' them a Support Group Leader.

For example, I work at ABC and I think that my staff/employees need some help. Please will you start a Group for me at ABC and provide us with someone to run the Group.

Unfortunately we need people to volunteer to run a Support Group so that we can assist, train and guide them, but we can't provide pre-existing leaders.

This answer is **False**.

## Question 16

**True or False?**  
**Completing the 6-part Support Group Leader Training automatically means that you can run a SADAG Support Group?**

**This question pertains directly to becoming a 'SADAG' Leader.**

Having completed the training, you would still need to be screened and assessed to ensure that starting a Support Group is the right fit for you right now.

Keep in mind, when it comes to Support Groups SADAG always keeps three things top of mind

- The well-being of the Support Group as a whole
- The well-being of each Member
- And the well-being of the Support Group Leader

There are a number of reasons why we may advise that you don't start a Support Group at this time, these include but are not limited to:

- Concern regarding your ability to commit to the Group due to current or future obligations and commitments
- Big life-changing events such as moving, starting a new job or studying
- Making sure starting a Group will be beneficial to your Mental well-being. *This doesn't mean you can't ever start a Group, it just means it may not be a good fit for you right now.*

## Question 17

Hleliwe, a SADAG Support Group Leader, has recently been awarded her Life Coaching Certificate. With this expanded expertise, she is eager to integrate her knowledge to better support her Group Members, offering valuable insights that can enhance their well-being.

Which of these answers is Correct?

The answer is **Option 3**

1. Hleliwe can start a Support Group to advertise her new practice and get new clients
2. Hleliwe can encourage her clients to join her Support Group as an extra benefit of joining her practice
3. Hleliwe can run a Support Group helping Members in her community, as long as she doesn't use it to grow or advertise her practice or position herself as 'the expert'

SADAG's rule - You can't financially profit from a Support Group comes into play here. If Hleliwe were to use the Group to advertise her practice or encourage clients to join her Group, she runs the risk of developing a dual relationship.

Answer 1 is problematic because it seems like her intentions for running a Group may be divided. Possibly linked to not only providing a safe space in her community, but also driven by growing her practice. When someone reaches out to find out about joining the Group and are offered a paid for service they may not feel like the Group is offering unconditional positive regard or that there is an expectation for payment.

Answer 2 is problematic because Hleliwe could accidentally shares something with the Group that the person told her in confidence in her private sessions. Furthermore, we risk confusing the person and leading them to believe that the leader is a 'expert' rather than an equal in the Group, which means the Leader may no longer feel like they can also openly share in the Group.

## Question 18?

Mohammed is a SADAG Support Group Leader. A Member of his Support Group recently contacted SADAG and shared that Mohammed always starts the session with a prayer. Which of the following answers would be 'False'

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Option 3 is false.

1. SADAG Support Groups focus on Mental Health and well-being, they are non-denominational
2. SADAG Support Groups are non-denominational, so meetings should not discriminate or alienate any religion
3. Mohammed is the Support Group Leader, and therefore he can start the session with a prayer as part of SADAG's approach
4. Mohammed should ensure that all Group Members feel comfortable and included, regardless of religious affiliation.



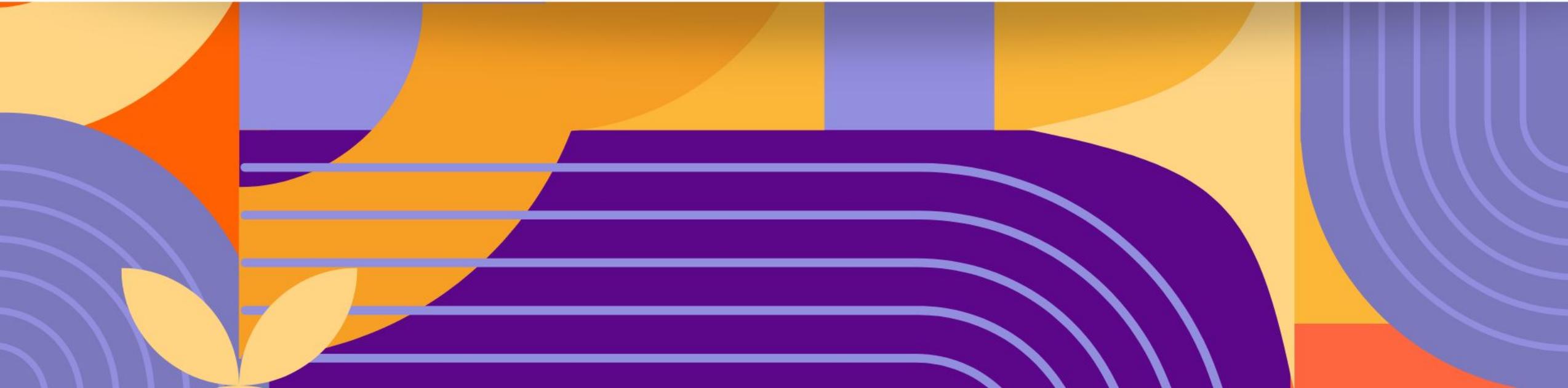
**Q&A**

**Part 1: Evaluation  
questions &  
feedback**

**Is it appropriate to have therapy sessions in a Support Group?**

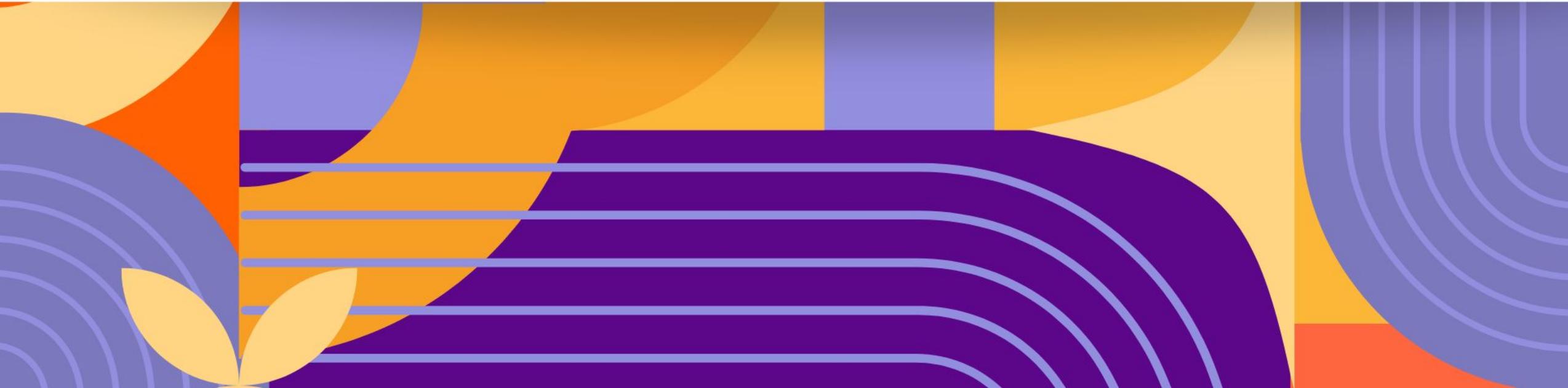
Support Group Leaders run Support Groups in their personal capacity and are not trained to conduct therapy sessions – so leave this to the professionals. If a Support Group Member needs therapy, recommend that they either call SADAG on one of our toll-free numbers, or where possible meet with their mental health practitioner.

Remember, we want to make sure that everyone in the Group has equal airtime/opportunity to share – so even if we were able to provide therapy, which we aren't, this would take time away from other Members.



A lot of people need this training, but they do not have access to the internet. I hope it will be possible in future for them to get an alternative way of getting this training.

Great point! And it's something that we are very aware of, especially in the more rural areas. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please email [SupportGroups@anxiety.org.za](mailto:SupportGroups@anxiety.org.za)





**How effective is a virtual Support Group as we understand this is obviously not ideal?**

Surprisingly, virtual Groups can be as effective as physical meetings. Both face-to-face and online meetings have pros and cons and there is a space for both. This is an important question and something we will cover more in depth in later sessions.

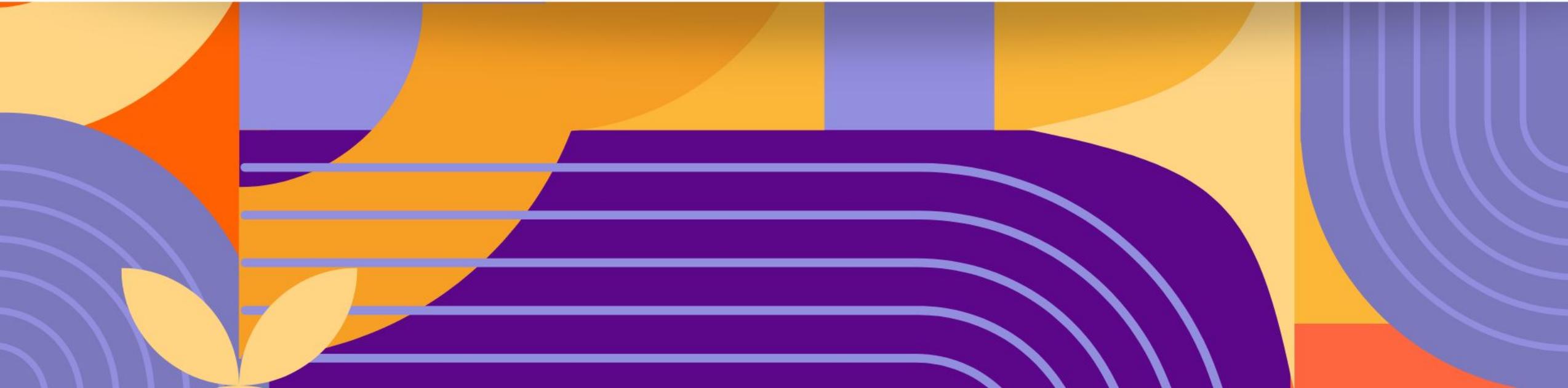
Rest assured though that online groups really do meet an important need in our community – and enable more people to get the help and support they need as they aren't restricted to location and mean that people who aren't able to travel or find that there isn't a physical Group in their area can still attend meetings.

**I am concerned about the 18-month minimum commitment for running a Support Group. What if due to circumstances beyond my control or my own relapse I want to stop.**

We understand that things happen that are out of our control, and that we can't plan for everything. The 18-month commitment is really a guide to indicate to new Leaders the commitment involved in starting a Group, and how the responsibility shouldn't be taken lightly.

If for whatever reason you are unable to continue with your group, we will assist and support you. Letting us know as far in advance as possible will help us to accommodate everyone's needs and wellbeing in the Group. Ideally identifying and training a new leader from within your group where possible, reaching out to people who may be interested in running a Group in your area or finding alternative groups for your current Members.

This is where identifying a co-facilitator right from the beginning really helps – because they can continue with the Group in the event the other leader can't.



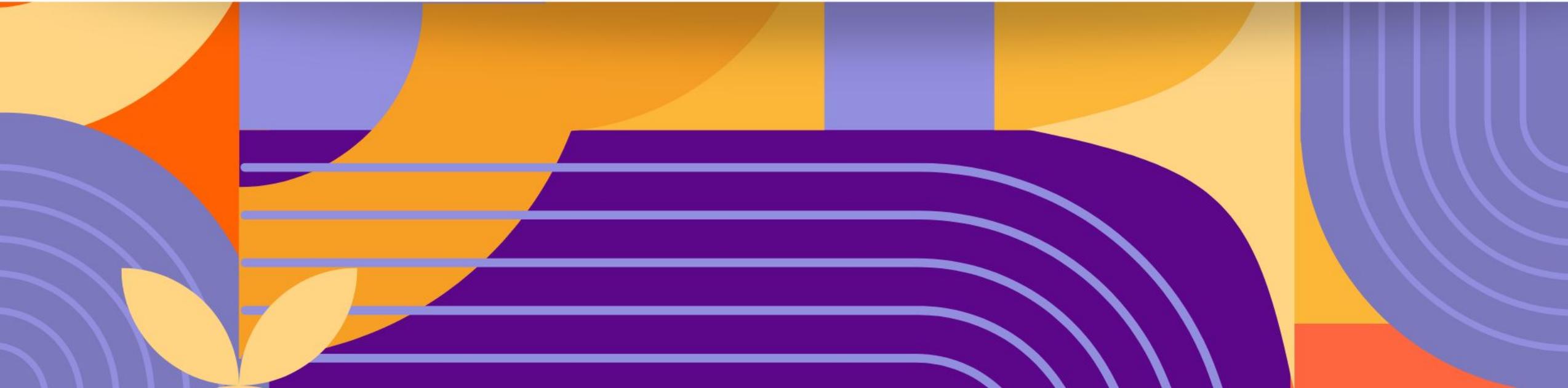
**Is it OK for Support Groups to allow coming and going of Members? What if a Member wants to leave after 8 sessions? In your YouTube presentation you mention that a Support Group should take 18 months to two years.**

The 18 months is an indication of the minimum amount of time the Leader should be willing/able to commit to running their Groups. Keeping in mind that the training takes a minimum of 6 weeks, attending physical groups as an observer prior to launching as well as a month for advertising and additional training where necessary – you are already looking at over a 2-month investment in starting the Group.

The 18-month rule of thumb indicates the responsibility of running a group – rather than an actual time.

It isn't an indication of how long Members should commit to the Group. Support Group Members often come and go depending on how long they feel they need the Group for. Some Members will stay with you throughout your journey, others will come and go as they need support, while others will stay as long as they feel they need the additional support and then leave.

Sometimes groups do run for a specific time frame and with a specific focus, but these Groups are mainly run by senior Support Group Leaders and or Mental Health Practitioners who have experience in containment, to ensure the Group doesn't end with Members feeling they still require additional support.





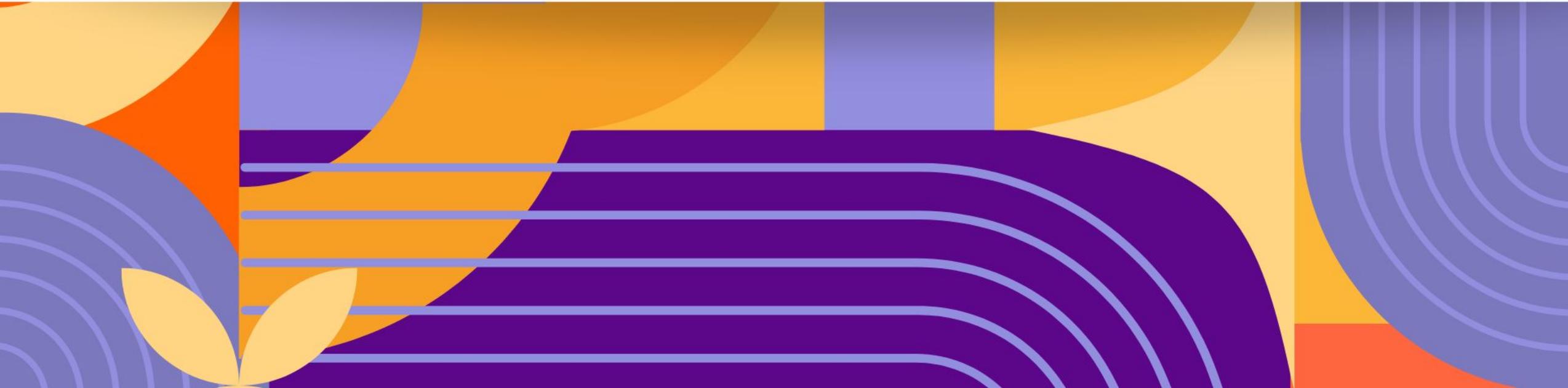
**Does the SADAG  
Interested Support  
Group Leader  
Training only take  
place once a year?**

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No, we do a mass training once a year to assist with accommodating the great need for Support Groups, however we also conduct one-on-one training throughout the year. We use the content generated in the annual intake, using the same recordings and presentations.

**The information shared was informative and I'm looking forward to part two, even though I am a bit scared of starting a Group - but I'm scared in a good way though....keep up the good work!**

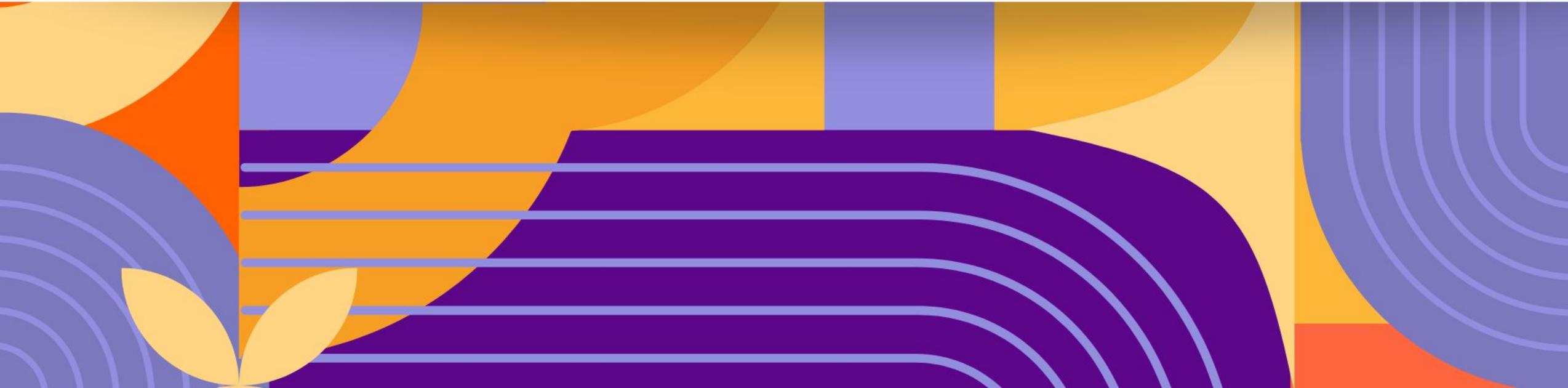
It is totally normal to be scared and excited. Remember we will be with you every step of your journey so you will never be alone. And if you are struggling or your group is facing a problem, we will work through it together.



## Are there any funds involved in starting a Support Group?

There are no specific funds that are needed however;

- keep in mind that if you are running your Group online you will need to have access to your own electronic device (to run the meeting from) as well as airtime/data
- You may also need data for your WhatsApp group if you choose to have one
- Some Groups like to have tea, coffee and sometimes cookies available for their face-to-face meetings, and while this is a nice to have it isn't essential. Remember Members are there for the Group – not the snacks. If your group does want to have beverages available, this doesn't mean the onus is on you to provide them...
  - you and your Members can take turns providing them
  - organise a little stokvel
  - each Member can contribute a minimal amount to a kitty if they are in a position to do so (R5)
  - In some Groups, Members are encouraged to bring water /tea /coffee with in a flask for themselves





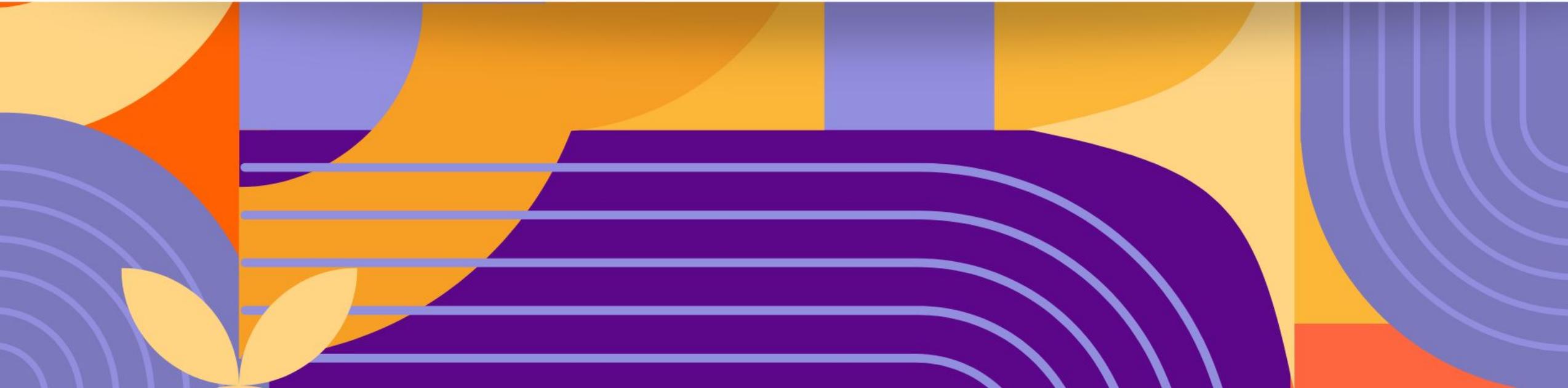
**Do you have to be going through the same issues as those you are running the Support Group for?**

- The majority of SADAG's Support Group Leaders are patients, or ex-patients themselves 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

**You don't need to have gone through the same issues as your Group Members; however, it is important to have a good understanding of their illness as well as challenges they may face because of it to be empathetic and understanding of what they are going through.**

**Please tell me more  
about SADAG  
Support Groups in  
my area?**

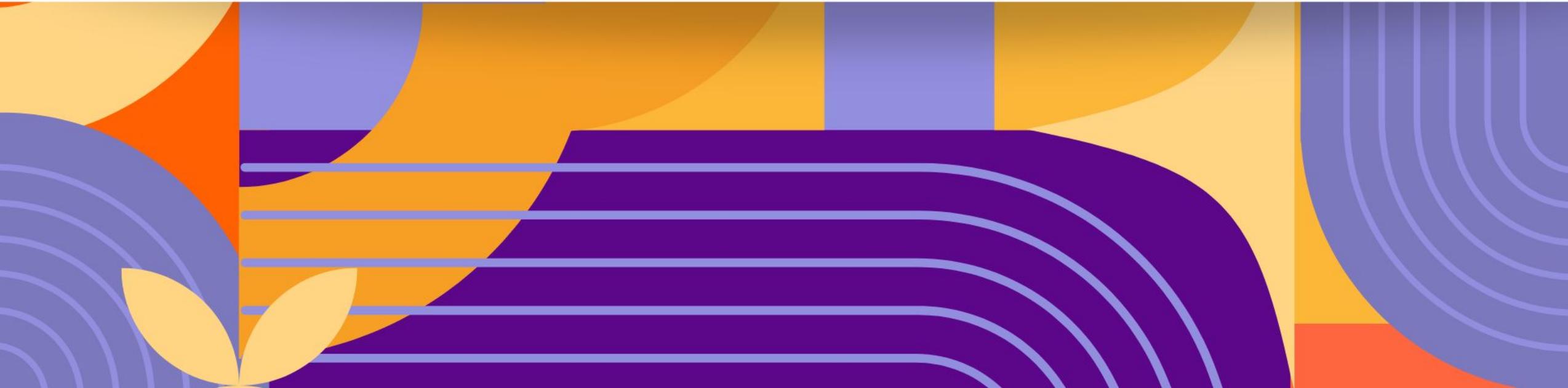
- Because we have over 180 different Support Groups around the country if you are looking for specific Groups in your area, please contact SADAG and a counsellor can assist, or visit our website for a list of different Groups running - [https://www.sadag.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=3213:support-groups-running&catid=96:support-groups&Itemid=193](https://www.sadag.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3213:support-groups-running&catid=96:support-groups&Itemid=193)



**Would you recommend that one continues with the training even if they're doing it purely to acquire information on Support Groups and not necessarily to start a Support Group?**

**Please confirm that by attending the 6 training sessions, this does not imply that you are required to start a Support Group?**

- You are welcome to continue with the training for whatever reason, our only prerequisite is that you complete the evaluation and assessment after each session.
- There is no obligation to start a Support Group after completing the training.
- If you are interested in running a Support Group but now isn't the right time, don't worry you can send me an email when you are ready, and I will take you through the training.





## Does SADAG provide continued development for their Support Group Leaders?

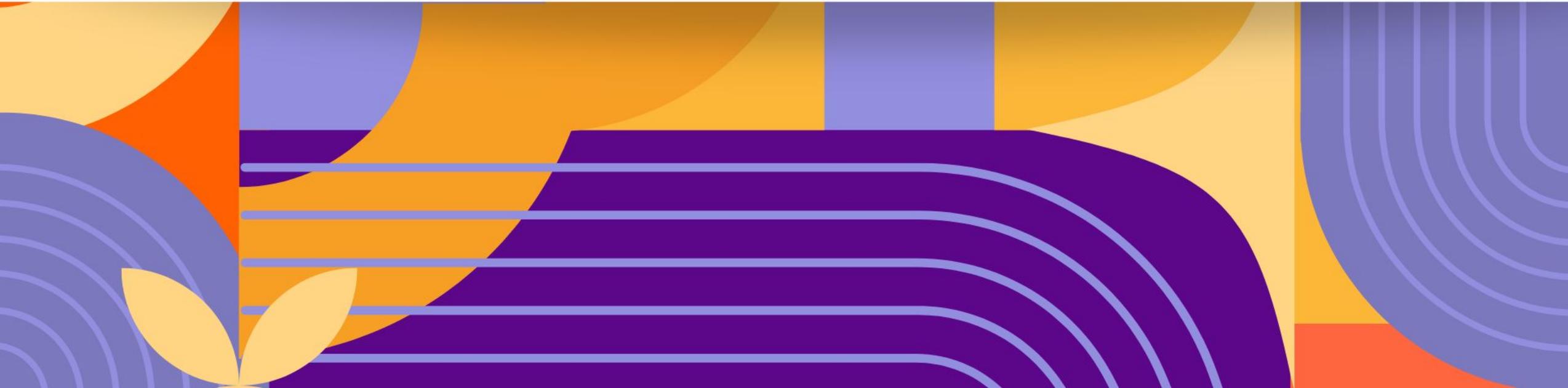
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Yes, this will be covered more in Session 3, but here's some info in the meantime

- We send a weekly emailer to all Support Group Leaders with interesting webinars, articles and links available for you to attend
- We also host weekly 'Connect Sessions' for Support Group Leaders – effectively a Support Group for Support Group Leaders where we unpack both personal and Group related topics
- I am also available for ongoing telephonic advice, support and debriefing
- We have a WhatsApp Group for our Leaders with multiple staff members from SADAG should a crisis arise

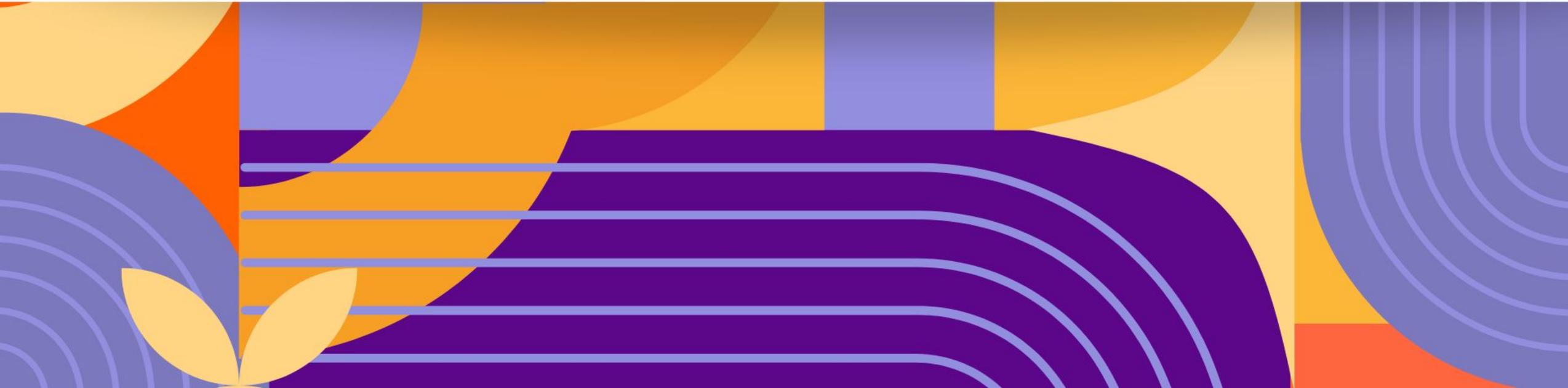
**I know you discussed you don't offer Support Groups for minors. However, being a volunteer in the community, the need for Support Groups for tweens/teens to have somewhere where they can open and just chat is becoming a major need.**

- Due to the vulnerability and susceptibility of the youth, as well as legal requirements, we advise that only people eighteen and older attend and run Support Groups. Responsible practice, and an emphasis on doing good, not harm, means that we recommend that the youth seek other mental health resources where there are a dedicated team that can ensure the safety and well-being of the individual and Group.
- For more information on teen support and resources please go to the toolkit on our website - [https://www.sadag.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=3146&Itemid=510#teen-suicide-prevention-toolkit](https://www.sadag.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3146&Itemid=510#teen-suicide-prevention-toolkit)
- Should you know a minor who is in need of help and support please contact our call centre and a counsellor can assist. You are also welcome to share our contact details with any one, including minors who are in need of help



**Is there a SADAG preferred platform for online groups?  
Considering privacy issues etc.?**

- SADAG doesn't have a preferred online platform.
- For **online Groups**, you will need to identify the best online platform for you and your Members – Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Discord, Skype and so on.
- Familiarise yourself with the platform and set up recurring meetings so that your Members always have the link
- Keep in mind that different platforms have different restraints. Most of our current online groups use Zoom although some leaders are now moving to Google Meet because it doesn't have the 40-minute time limit on the free package
- We strongly advise against recording you meeting, or allowing the Group Members to record for anonymity and privacy reasons



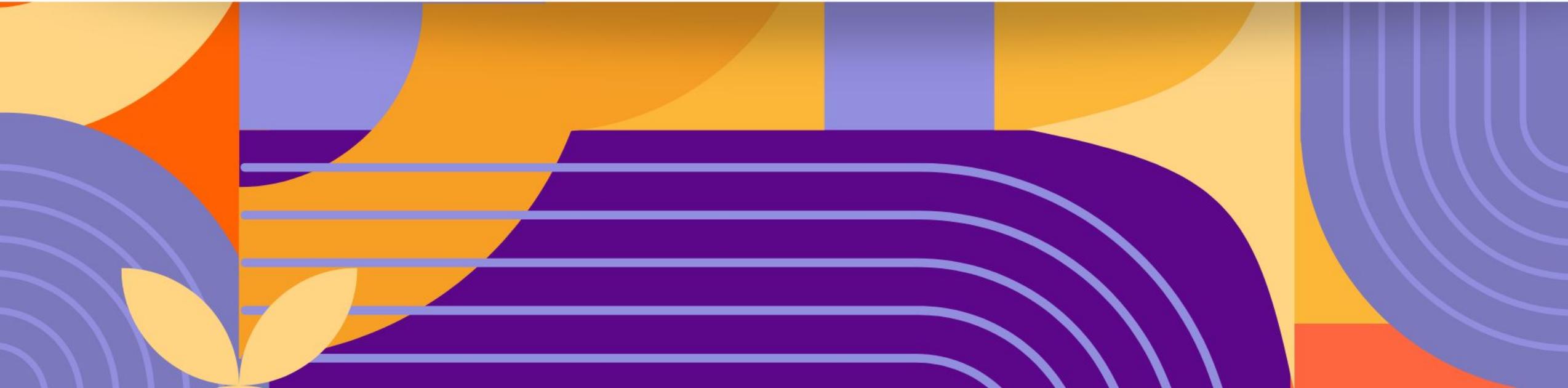


**Is it suggested to have a venue rather than hosting the Groups at home?**

- We do not advise running a face-to-face group from your home due to safety and privacy concerns.

**I am interested in joining a Support Group while completing the course. How do I ask to join a Support Group?**

- If you are looking for a Support Group for your own Mental Health, please contact SADAG and a counsellor can assist as well as refer you to a Group that meets your needs.
- If you are looking at joining a group for practical experience, please wait until you have finished the 6-part training when we will include practical sessions for you to observe and attend.
- It is important to maintain the safety and confidentiality of a Group and as such we do not allow for people to join as observers until they have been screened, attended the training in full and are ready to launch their groups





For more information, please email  
[SupportGroups@anxiety.org.za](mailto:SupportGroups@anxiety.org.za)