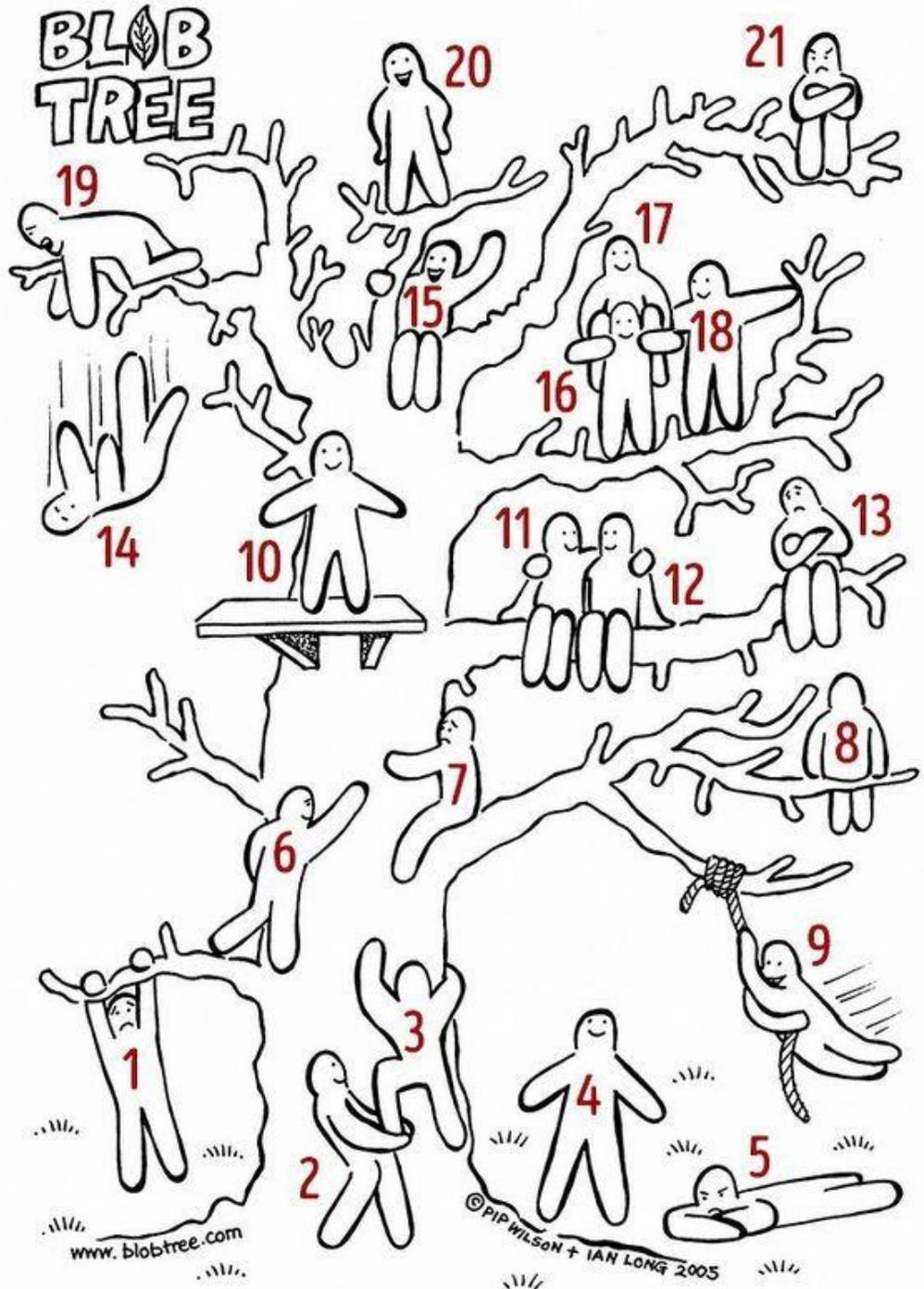




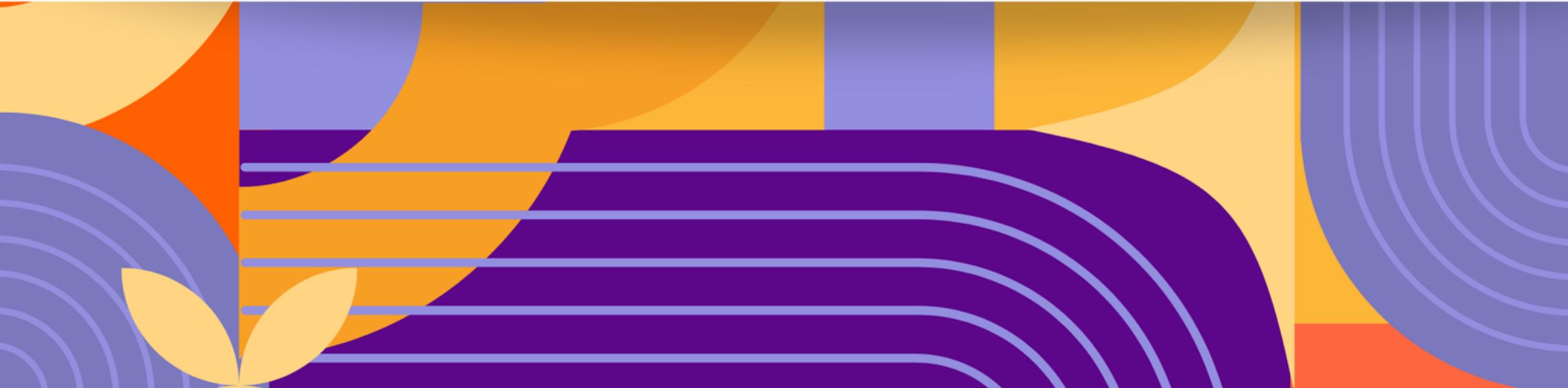
**INTERESTED SUPPORT GROUP
LEADER TRAINING
PART 6**

**SUPPORT GROUP VALUE
STATEMENT & THE FUTURE OF
YOUR GROUP**



AGENDA:

- Support Group Value Statement
- The Future of your Support Group
- What next?
- Role Play





SUPPORT GROUP VALUE STATEMENTS

Group Values and rules help form the foundation of a Support Group:

- Make Members feel safe and comfortable
- Helpful in defining and enforcing boundaries
- Give Members a better understanding of what to expect from the Group
- Indicate acceptable and unacceptable Group behaviour
- Remember: The best way to get buy-in, is by empowering Members to have their say





Deciding on a Group Value Statement

- This should be a discussion between your Group
- Opening it to the Group shows that it is the “Group’s Group” not your Group
- If Group Members help make the rules, it is likely they believe in and agree with the rules
- It also means that it will be easier to implement the rules
- You can vote on rules as a Group by putting up your hand



Examples of a Group Value Statement

- Arrive on time
- Attend meetings as often as possible – the Group is not the same if I am not there
- No physical or verbal violence
- Confidentiality of all Group Members – what is said in the Support Group stays in the Support Group
- Only one Member speaks at a time
- Be aware of Members preferred pronouns
- I will not interrupt others
- No side conversations
- Give everyone an equal opportunity to talk
- It is OK not to talk
- Accept other Group Members without judgment
- Respect other Members' feelings
- No minor Members
- Steer clear of religion and politics

Examples of a Group value statement

- Be mindful of what you say and how you say it
- Avoid unsolicited advice
- This Group exists to offer supplementary Support, should you feel that you are not managing please let us know
- Be aware of how the Group is making you feel, if you are finding meetings triggering it may be best to seek one one-on-one help
- If I am in crisis or I am having an emergency I will contact one of SADAG'S helpline numbers
- I will not attend meetings if I am under the influence of narcotics or alcohol
- I will trust the Group and share my feelings with others; I expect other Members to do the same
- I don't have to like or agree with what you are saying, but I will be respectful of your situation and the choices you have made
- Avoid conversations where you provide the names of specific medications you have taken. Remember each person reacts to medication differently and we don't want to discourage others or cause Anxiety.
- Discussing medication is best left to the professionals
- **Can you think of any others?**

Core Values that SADAG suggests using:

Confidentiality

- Decide with your Group how to address confidentiality
- You can start every meeting by reminding Members about the Groups confidentiality pledge
- Assists in providing a safe environment
- Creates strong and healthy boundaries for the Group
- Encourage Members to share any other boundaries that they feel are important





Confidentiality outside of the venue:

- What should Group Members do when they bump into one another in public?

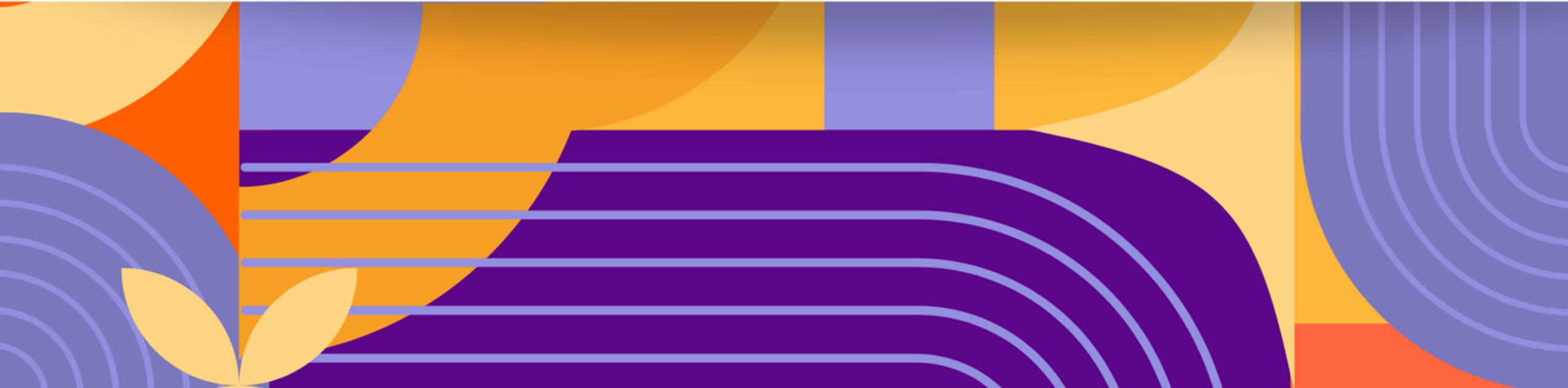
This can be awkward, so prepare for it, by opening the discussion topic to the Group.

- Should I say hello to other Members?
- Would it embarrass them?
- Should I introduce them to my friends?
- Remind Members to be discreet. Some Members may not want to tell anyone that they attend a Support Group.
- Each Member is different so discuss these possible situations with your Group and come up with guidelines that everyone is comfortable with.

Respect

Respect can be achieved in many ways:

- Being non-judgemental
- When people are conscious about others' time
- By not constantly speaking about oneself, and one's own problems
- Being mindful that there are other people who would also like to share and discuss with the Group
- By being respectful and mindful of others' beliefs and opinions, even if they are not your own
- By actively listening to others when they talk
- By taking fellow Support Group Members feelings seriously

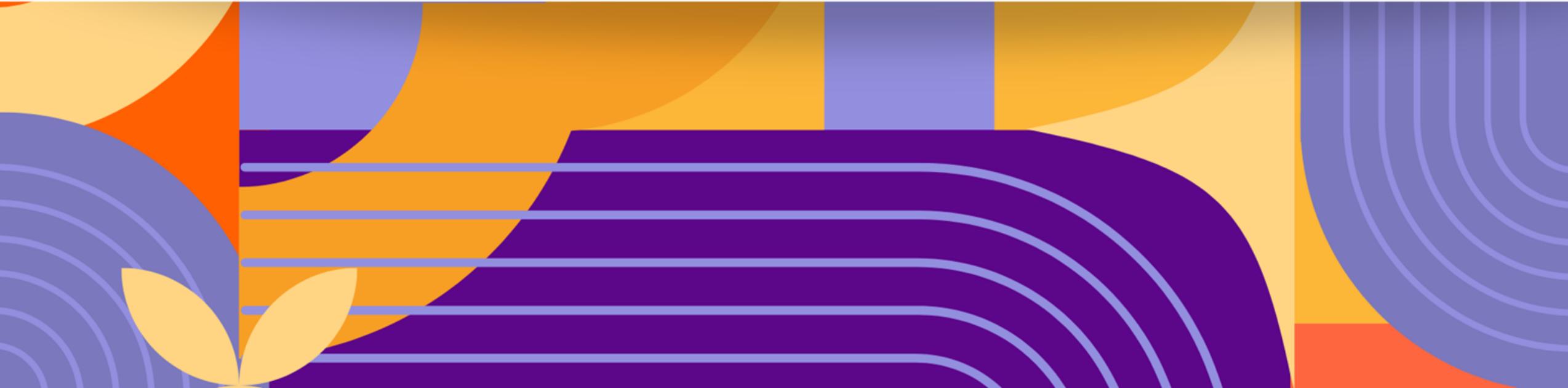


Equal Opportunities:

- Each Member should be respected equally.
- Feel free to talk and be part of the Support Group at the same level as every other Support Group Member.

A Support Group **provides support to sufferers and their loved ones regardless of their**

- Race,
- Colour,
- Gender,
- Sexual orientation, Disability or age.





Non-judgemental:

A Support Group should be **free of discrimination and judgement** .

As a Support Group Leader, you will develop ways to remind Members about the Groups ground rules / values.

These values and ground rules ensure Members feel:

- Safe
- Welcome
- Valuable
- Heard

Group Rules

Please take note...

Identity

We are United by our experience of having been diagnosed and treated or being affected by mental illness

Let's speak from this perspective

Participation

We encourage everybody to participate

Contributions must be kept relevant to the topic

Confidentiality

What happens in group...
Stays in the group

Respect

Respect choices and experiences

No side conversations or interruptions

Be supportive rather than judgemental

Inclusion

This is a safe place to share feelings, obtain and provide support, information and reassurance and encouragement

The group is open to all persons struggling with mental illness

Disclaimer

The group leader is not a mental health professional

Please reach out to your therapist should you need professional care

The Support Group does not replace professional help

Purpose

Support
Break the Stigma
Educate

"Dealing with mental illness is extremely hard in it's own, doing so in silence makes it that much harder"



**THE FUTURE OF YOUR
SUPPORT GROUP**

- 
- Taking the time to reflect on each meeting, as well as empowering yourself with new knowledge and resources will ensure that your Group continues to grow and strengthen.
 - Guest speakers, interesting and relevant topics ensure Members stay interested and committed to the Group. It also often translates in your Group becoming a well-known and successful advocate for Mental Health in your area.
 - **Support Groups are about making connections.** The most obvious connections are those between the individual Members, the links between the Support Group and their Leader, and the connection between you, your Group and SADAG.
 - Support Groups also have a place in your community. Some Leaders feel that one way of ensuring continued strength and development for a Support Group is to be **well-connected with local service providers, particularly the other NGOs and voluntary organisations and Mental Health services.**



Meeting Topics and Themes

Topics & Themes to help guide the conversation

Articles and Handouts.

- Start by sharing some of your own personal experiences on the topic
- Read the selected handout / or watch a short video
- Go around the Group asking opinions or experiences on the topic, or in the case of self-help discussions; which tips they have tried
- Discuss views on the topic, or with self-help, which tips worked, and which didn't

Other topics and Handouts you can use:

- No-cost Ways To Dealing With Depression
- Self-help Tips For Stress
- Self-help Guide To Treat Trauma
- Suicide Safety Plan
- Taking A Look At Controlled Breathing For Anxiety Management

Using the Annual Mental Health Calendar

Each year we send out a Mental Health calendar, pointing out awareness days, weeks or months.

This calendar is very helpful in regard to identifying possible topics for your Group that are current and relevant.



MENTAL HEALTH CALENDAR

January	26-31	Support Group Awareness Week
February	9-16	Teen Suicide Prevention Week
March	30	World Bipolar Awareness Day
May	24	World Schizophrenia Awareness Day
June	26	Substance Abuse Awareness Day
July	1-31 10	Mental Health Awareness Month Panic Awareness Day
September	10 14	World Suicide Prevention Day National ADHD Awareness Day
October	1-31 10	World Mental Health Awareness Month World Mental Health Day
November	1-30 5	Mens Mental Health Month World Stress Awareness Day

What topics have you covered or would you like to cover with your Group. Which ones have you found very beneficial?

- *Anxiety, Depression, Bipolar, Mindfulness*
- *The topics we cover go from very specific, say sleep hygiene to much more general like 'what do you think forgiveness is and is it overrated?' (This was a fabulous topic by the way, Members really opened up about big stuff and there wasn't pressure to be virtuous).*
- *The topics come from previous meetings and issues that arise in them.*
- *I introduce the topic which they often choose themselves, and we discuss different aspects as we go along. I try and engage everyone. Questions come up from both sides. Lately we continue with the same topic at the next SG meeting. Emotions, Forgiveness, Over-thinking, Test your degree of adjustment to life, Cognitive distortions, The excitement of change, Self-confidence, Healthy Personal Boundaries.*



What topics have you covered or would you like to cover with your Group. Which ones have you found very beneficial?

- *Bipolar Disorder, Anxiety and Depression, how to handle disappointment, stress management, stigma.*
- *I gave a presentation on Depression and Anxiety which I felt was the most beneficial. People still don't understand Depression and they are non-compliant on meds*



What topics have you covered or would you like to cover with your Group. Which ones have you found very beneficial?

- We don't have predefined topics. As I find that Members are not always that keen. When discussed some other Members seem to get triggered - a delicate balance.
- Recently we have done a weather update at the check in - a good metaphor to find out how each Member feels at the time.
- After check in we discuss various coping skills and problems
- We sometimes have an outside speaker
- Online Support Groups are very different: We refuse to just have chit chat at meetings. The subject must be Mental Health related.



Ideas to maintain and grow your Support Group

- Invite a Guest Speaker
 - Psychologist, Psychiatrist, General Practitioner, Social Worker, Lawyer, Counsellor
 - Can offer free professional advice to your Group
 - Advertising such an event can raise awareness and interest in the Group
- Visit other Support Groups
- Use interesting articles and topics
- Attend SADAG events and Awareness days
- Creative advertising



SADAG WILL HELP WITH ALL OF THIS!

**For more information email
SupportGroups@anxiety.org.za**

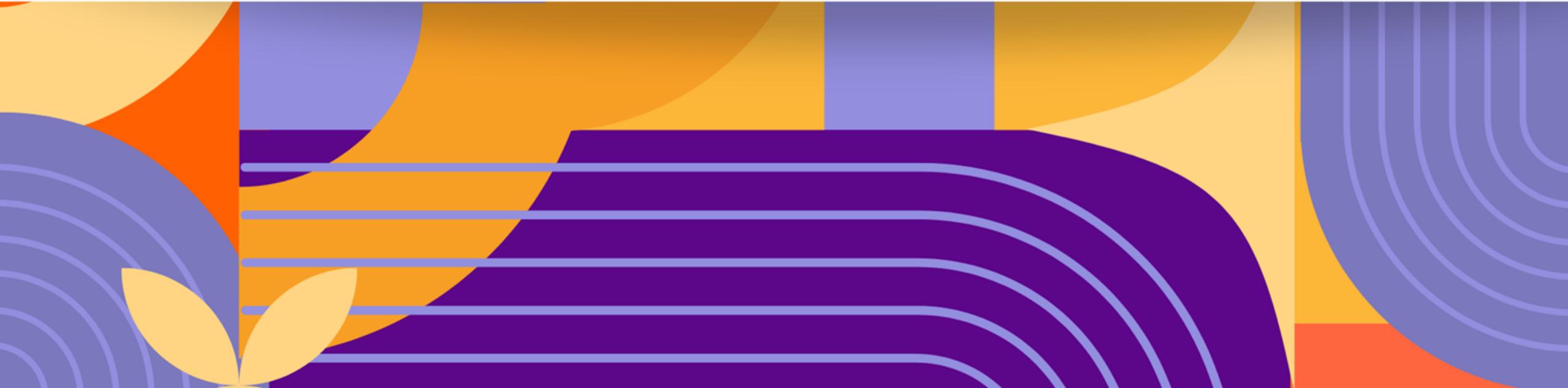


Members will come and go

- It is very natural, and to be expected that Group Members will come and go. Don't assume that this is because someone didn't like you, or your Group.
- It may be a direct reflection of the effectiveness of your Group, the Member came and received the help they needed and were ready to move on.
- It could also be as a result of schedule changes and time commitments.
- Remember that it is the Group's Group. So don't take on full responsibility on generating new topics, ideas, and discussion points. Depending on the frequency of your meeting, you may want to set aside 15 minutes every few sessions to find out from your Group if they have anything they would like to suggest. Or ask each Group Member to prepare a topic or question which they can pop into a box at your next meeting.
- What's happening in the news? Or on the Mental Health Calendar?

Advertising your Group in the community:

- If you see a decline in Members, or want to generate more awareness about your Group, let SADAG know
- Word of mouth is often the strongest form of advertising. Organise a 'bring a buddy' day
- Organise a Wellness Day / Event
- Chat to your local radio station or newspaper
- Introduce yourself and your Group to clinics, hospitals and pharmacists in your area
- Social Media community groups





WHERE TO FROM HERE?

What Next?

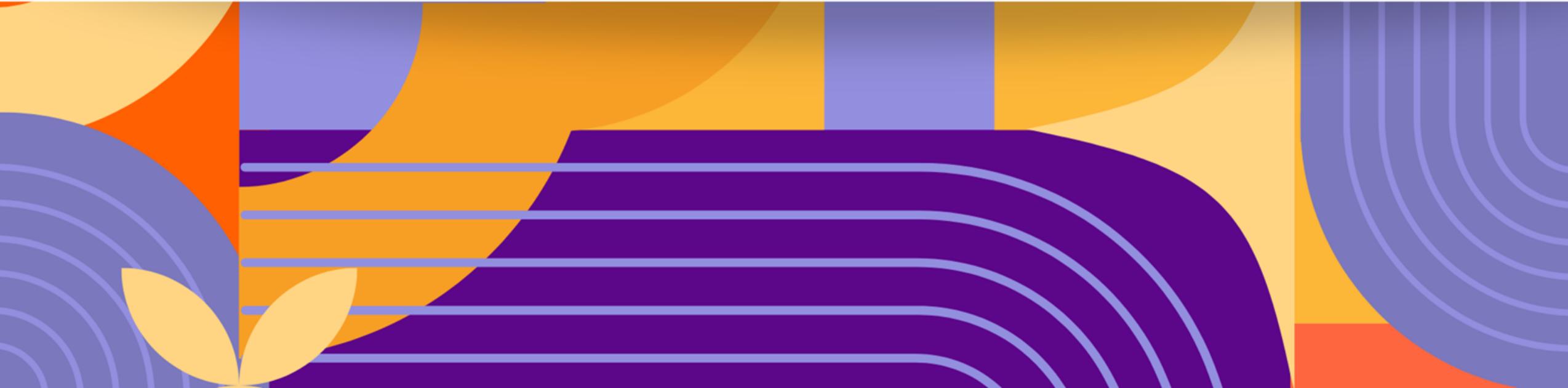
Thank you for joining us on our theoretical 6-week Support Group Leader Training Program

- Please complete the following evaluation so we know where you stand, and how you would like to proceed

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025SGLTPart6>

- For those wanting to **start a SADAG Support Group** please make sure to complete the Support Group Leader application form:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SGLTApplication2025>



Which statement best describes you

I don't want to start a Support Group right now

I want to start a non-SADAG Support Group

I want to start a SADAG Support Group

I'll **'Pause'** here, and let us know if/when I want to continue.

Thanks for the info. I'll take it from here

Make sure that you have completed Support Group Leader application:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SGLTApplication2025>

I would love to join a Support Group

Awesome, thanks!

But wait! What about the practical component

We will evaluate your application

Call SADAG and chat to a counsellor about different options available

We'll be in touch in the next week or two

Successful applicants will be sent an information form. Once you have completed the form we can start with your advertising

Unsuccessful applicants. We'll call you to chat.

Q&A with Support Group Leaders | Simulated Sessions to Observe | Practice Support Groups

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

