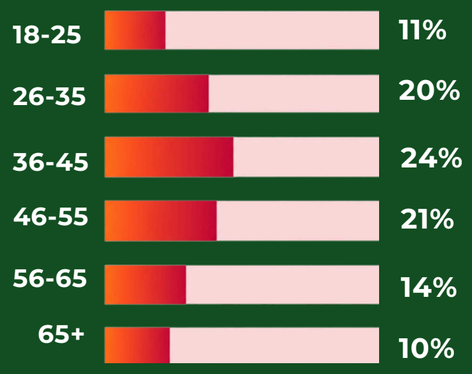
SADAG's World Mental Health Month Survey

Lived Experiences *Spoken* to be Heard

07 October – 23 October 2026 (n=535)

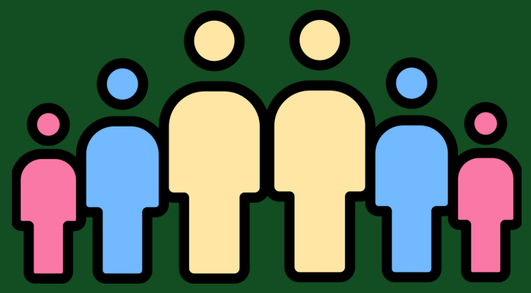
DEMOGRAPHICS

Age Distribution:



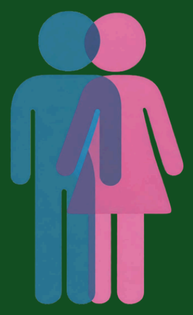
Race Distribution:

Black African: 56% | White: 25%
Coloured: 12% | Indian: 5%
Mixed race: 1% | Preferred not to say: 1%



Gender

Female: 76%
Male: 22%
Gender fluid: 1%
Prefer not to say: 1%



SUPPORT GROUPS

Number of SADAG Support Groups Represented:

120

Support Group Role:

Current Support Group Member: 66%

Former Support Group Member: 19%

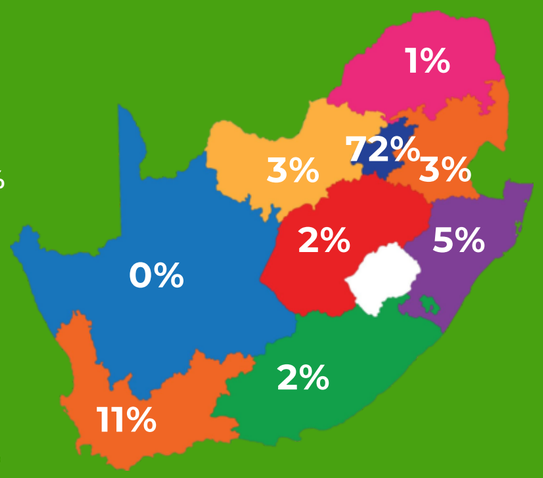
Support Group Leader: 15%

Motivation to Join the Support Group:

Gain Peer Support	Struggling with a specific problem	Diagnosed with a mental illness	Caring for someone diagnosed with mental illness	Undiagnosed but suspect personal mental illness
34%	29%	22%	10%	5%

Provinces

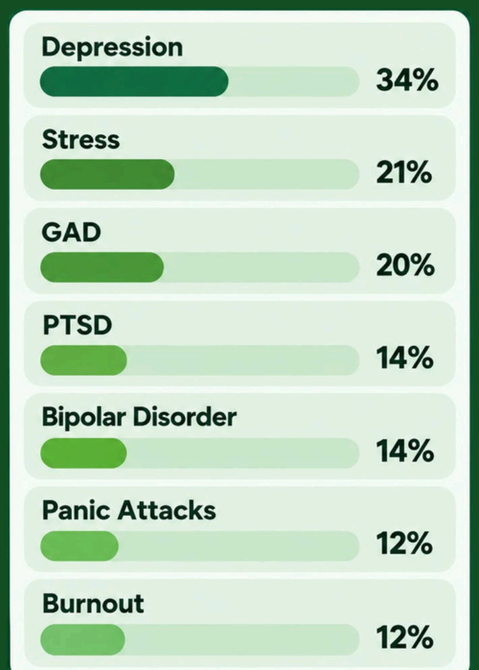
- Gauteng: 72%
- Western Cape: 11%
- KwaZulu-Natal: 5%
- Mpumalanga: 3%
- North West: 3%
- Eastern Cape: 2%
- Free State: 2%
- Limpopo: 1%
- Northern Cape: 0%



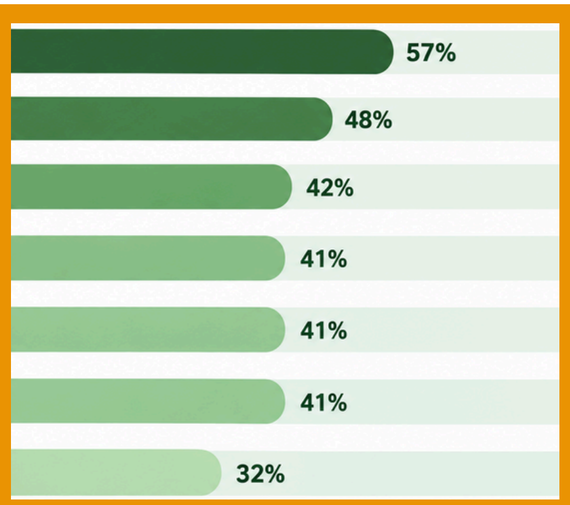
30%

Have never been professionally diagnosed with a mental health issue

Mental Health Challenges



SWEMWBS: (respondents felt this way Often or All of the Time)



- I've been able to make up my own mind about things
- I've been feeling useful
- I've been thinking clearly
- I've been feeling optimistic about the future
- I've been feeling close to other people
- I've been dealing with problems well
- I've been feeling relaxed

I have been diagnosed with generalised anxiety

You just need to try harder to feel better

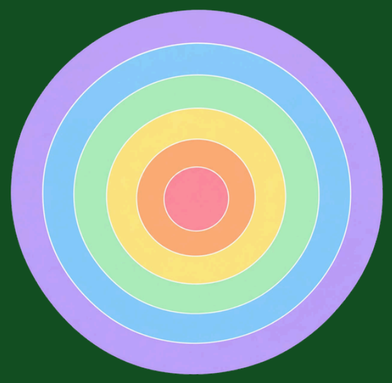
Talking About Mental Health

My doctor really listens to me when I describe my symptoms	76%
There is a word for depression in my language	70%
I feel comfortable talking to my family about mental illness	50%
My family members care about topics like mental health	50%
I can't talk about mental illness to my elders	49%
AI chatbots are great because they don't judge a person	49%
I have asked an AI chatbot questions about my mental health	44%
I don't talk to my family about mental health	25%

I am clinically stressed

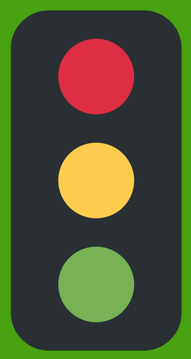
I'm sorry you feel this way, would you like to talk more about it?

How to Talk to Family Members



- Let's talk about this, we'll do it all together
- We'll get through this together
- I don't understand your diagnosis, but I still care about you
- Try to get professional help
- I will pray for you
- Get well soon

How to Talk to Doctors



- Ultimatums (high, medium, low stakes)
- Emotional Appeals to Healer / Seek new care provider
- Multifaceted Communication Strategy (legitimacy, calm, eye contact, paraphrasing, examples, prognosis)