Welcome to our monthly newsletter. Please read and share widely. Mental Health is everybody’s business!

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On 13 November we celebrated World Kindness Day, a movement celebrated in over 28 countries. While everyday should be World Kindness Day, this day highlights the importance of being kind and spreading kindness through small gestures, creating a positive environment.

According to research from Emory University, when you are kind to another person, your brain’s pleasure and reward centre lights up, as if you were the recipient of the good deed not the giver. This phenomenon is called the “helper’s high”. A feeling, following selfless service to others, of elation, exhilaration and increased energy, then a period of calm and serenity. This “high” was said to be similar to that following intense physical exercise.

Celebrate kindness this December with these fun and easy ideas!

- **Be kind to others**: Tell a friend exactly what makes them great - just because! You don’t need an excuse to remind someone why they’re awesome.
- **Be kind to the environment**: Litter makes our beautiful planet look ugly. Invite some friends to help clean up your neighbourhood, local park or beach.
- **Be kind to yourself**: A daily dose of sunshine and natural light is just as important as brushing your teeth. Vitamin D makes our bones strong and some people even say that sunlight makes us happier.

How will you show kindness this festive season? Share your small and big acts of kindness on social media. Hashtags #StepUpKZN #WorldKindnessDay and tag @kznmentalhealth @sadag.

https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/world-kindness-day-2019
WE MOVED FOR MENTAL HEALTH!

Thank you to everyone who showed up by supporting the movement for mental wellbeing this past October. While we physically moved we also joined the global movement towards greater investment in adequate mental health care. It does not end in October! It is an all-year-round push to ensure mental wellbeing for all!

Subscribe to our Youtube account for recordings of events @KZNMentalHealth
WE ALSO TALKED MENTAL HEALTH!

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic our 6th annual Durban Mental Health Symposium was hosted online this year. The event included 3 x panel interviews with internationally renowned mental health activists from around the world. We had some incredible conversations with incredible minds.

Panel 1: The future of global mental health
Panel 2: The voices of lived experience advocates
Panel 3: Transforming community engagement and research

The event is free to watch online - click here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9A_Xd3HCC48&t=77s
The Mental Health and Gender Initiative (MHaGi), which took off in August, has been steadily making progress towards achieving its outcomes for 2020. Dr Ruwayda Petrus, an industrial psychologist from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, has come on board to set up the academic component of our project, and our proposal to conduct a situational analysis of gender-related mental health activities in KZN is currently awaiting research ethics approval. In addition, Sandy Kalyan, a clinical psychologist, has been facilitating workshops with youth and women from the Congolese refugee community in the Durban CBD, as part our youth support group, and women’s sewing group. Three sewing machines have already been purchased and sewing lessons are underway to help women start generating an income – especially during these difficult Covid-19 times. From 2021, our project will expand to include activities for both LGBTI people and mums with postnatal depression. If you would like to get involved, please contact Lynn Norton at kznsadag@anxiety.org.za.
To every single person who helped our SADAG KZN team this year.

You are all incredible! We cannot do any of the work we do, without your dedication, passion and kindness.

We salute you for getting us through 2020, which turned out to be one of the toughest years in recent history.

We salute you for your courage, strength and empathy you have shown to yourself, and those around you.

Thank you for making mental health a priority in our KwaZulu-Natal community and beyond.

Please be safe this festive season, we are looking forward to more inspiring work in 2021.

Our very best,
Dr Suvira Ramlall, Suntosh Pillay, Lynn Norton, Chantelle Booyse, Lori Barausse and Rivendri Govender

PS. Kindly note that our office will be closed from 11 December 2020 to 11 January 2021.
SOLOS: Survivors of Loved Ones of Suicide
Join this WhatsApp support group if you need mental health support during the festive season. Contact Lori at suicideprevent@gmail.com for more info.

Mums Support Network
Join this online support for mothers and mothers-to-be. Zoom sessions every Monday and Thursday at 10am. Contact Alex on 0837880689 or alexandra@mumsupport.co.za.

Refugee Whatsapp Support Group
Led by Peter Buhendwa for members of the refugee community living in and around Durban. For more info WhatsApp Peter on 076 662 9899.

Westville Support Group
Most Wednesday Evenings
A support group with an emphasis on Buddhist Mindfulness techniques. Email Shawn on skc@telkomsa.net for info.

Thank you to all our SADAG C.A.R.E volunteers and the Social Workers from TAFTA for their commitment to our C.A.R.E project supporting the elderly during the difficult period of lockdown.
SADAG Social media + Helplines
Facebook: "Ask the expert" chat @TheSADAG
Online chats: www.sadag.org
Tel: 0800 21 22 23
24/7 helpline: 0800 456 789
24/7 Suicide Line: 0800 567 567
Sms: 32312

COVID-19 National Contacts
Toll-free helpline: 0800 029 999
Website: www.sacoronavirus.co.za
Whatsapp: 0600 123456

Department of Social Development
Substance Abuse Line 24hr helpline
Tel: 0800 12 13 14
SMS: 32312

Narcotics Anonymous KZN
Helpline: 086 100 6962
WhatsApp: 079 592 2294

Alcoholics Anonymous South Africa
www.aasouthafrica.org.za
Tel: 031 301 4959 / 301 9830
24/7 helpline: 0861 435 722

Safer Spaces National Safety Services
www.saferspaces.org.za/safety-services

Gender Based Violence Helplines
24/7 helpline: 0800 428 428 / 0800 150 150
Call back: *120*7867#
Tears GBV SMS: *134*7355#

MobieG Counseling for Teens
www.mobieg.co.za

Childline
24/7 crisis line: 0800 555 555

Meals on Wheels
Donate here:
www.mow.org.za


COVID-19 Mental Health Toolkit
Integrate Mental Health into All COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plans

Increase Funding for Mental Health as part of COVID-19 Response

Leverage Innovations

Ensure Mental Health is Built into Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

"Globally, mental health is being challenged like never before by COVID-19. Whilst there are many uncertainties about how the pandemic will progress, what is clear is that the impact on the mental health and psychosocial well-being of those most affected will be significant. This is a pivotal moment in the history of mental health. How the world tackles these challenges now will determine the well-being of a generation, and impact the drive to successful recovery and building back societies stronger for the future.

Those with existing poor mental health are facing a number of risks including increased rates of mental ill health and disruption to treatment, medications and the lifeline of support services. Studies are showing COVID-19 is likely to exacerbate existing mental health symptoms or trigger relapse among people with pre-existing mental health illness. In an online survey in South Africa, of those with a prior diagnosed mental health condition, some 12% identified feelings of suicide as the main challenge, and 6% indicated substance use as a difficulty.

Recommendations for countries:

- Integrate Mental Health into All COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plans
- Increase Funding for Mental Health as part of COVID-19 Response
- Leverage Innovations
- Ensure Mental Health is Built into Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

Across most countries governments weren’t set up to respond to the growing mental health crisis before COVID-19 and they certainly aren’t now. That’s why we are determined to ensure quality mental health support is accessible to everyone, everywhere both now during this pandemic, and in the future. There is no health without mental health. Now more than ever is the time to invest in mental health."