

# **PATIENTS AS PARTNERS**

Brought to you by The South African Depression and Anxiety Group

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## **SADAG Activities for 2007**

On behalf of the South African Depression and Anxiety Group we would like to share with you the accomplishments that

SADAG achieved in 2007. It was a hectic year and some of our work is listed below:

- Together with the Carter Centre, we brought out the former Prime Minister of Norway on World Mental Health Day, the 10th October – Prime Minister Bondevik – to help destigmatise mental illness. We concentrated on media and medical aid schemes reminding medical aids that appropriate mental health treatment is more cost effective in the long term.
- We appeared on four episodes of 3 Talk in 2007 on Depression, Bipolar, Panic Disorder and Stigma – (Noeleen won a Mental Health Journalism Award for her show on Bipolar Disorder)
- Teen Suicide Prevention Week was in February with appearances on Gareth Cliff's show on 5FM and a significant number of TV and other press including Shift, House Calls, ETV's Morning Edition and SABC 2's Morning Live. This produced much interest and support for South African teens in crisis and our SMS line was very well received. The SMS number 31393 is on stickers and media etc.
- We highlighted Bipolar Awareness Day on the 25th May and generated incredible interest from the media and public, GSK kindly produced posters for our bipolar awareness.
- SADAG managed to gain national recognition for Prevention of Panic Day on the 10th July. The date is now permanently on the South African Health Calendar, which gives us yet another opportunity to talk about and create awareness for other mental health issues in South Africa.
- To respond to the growing suicide/homicide crisis within the SAPS, SADAG launched a toll-free police crisis line with funds from Pharma Dynamics.
- We have done countless corporate wellness days for many corporations on Mental Health topics. These include The Office of the Premier of Gauteng, Nestle, Eskom, the American Embassy Knowledge Resources Conference at the Balalaika Hotel, PFG Glass, the Traditional Healers AGM, the Paraffin Safety Association, the Institute for the Blind and South African Breweries, to name a few.
- The government offices are making more and more calls on our services. Correctional Services have had over 15 talks this year in three different provinces. We have worked with

Educators on recognising Depression and mental health problems in themselves and their students in Free State, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Gauteng and Eastern Cape.

- SADAG's first brochure on Schizophrenia is currently in production with special thanks to AstraZeneca. The depression brochure is being printed again courtesy of Pfizer, GSK is printing our Bipolar brochures and our Anxiety Disorders brochure by Adcock Ingram.
- Our rural outreach programmes, sponsored by Lilly, Pfizer, GSK as well as the Department of Health, was enormous this year with over 4 128 community caregivers (including home-based care workers, faith-based organisations, and Traditional Healers) were capacitated on topics such as, Identifying Depression, Treating Trauma and where to refer clients for help.
- The Department of Social Development, Education and Health have called us in over 16 times to present to their staff and colleagues on Depression, Bipolar and Trauma. This has helped us in spreading our message that Mental illness is treatable.
- We have also attended conferences including the World Conference on TB in Cape Town, Disability Conference and the Psychology/Psychiatry Conference and Exhibition at Sun City.
- This year has seen the establishment of many Support Groups countrywide. We now have over 150 Support Groups in the 9 Provinces, close to 20 Bipolar Support Groups and 25 Regional Telephone Support Leaders.

During 2008 we hope to reach many more individuals who have previously not had a source to help them with their Mental Health queries. People still feel the stigma of mental illness and do not know how or where to get help, by continuing to provide our vital counselling service and referrals to the many people in distress who use our services, without our volunteer counsellors this would not be possible. Our 15 telephone lines are still open 7 days a week, from 8am to 8pm, 365 days per year.

We will also continue to access fair treatment for Mental Health from Medical schemes and Government Hospitals, keeping our patients rights foremost.

Thank you for helping us continue to spread the message that Mental Health Matters.

**With our very best wishes for 2008**