



**THE SOUTH AFRICAN
DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY GROUP**

SADAG	011 262 6396
Suicide Crisis Line	0800 567 567
Pharmadynamics Trauma Line	0800 20 50 26
AstraZeneca Bipolar Helpline	0800 70 80 90
Sanofi Aventis Sleeping Disorder Helpline	0800 753 379
Substance Abuse Helpline	0800 12 13 14
Dr Reddy's Mental Health Helpline	0800 21 22 23
Support Group Helpline	0800 20 51 21

Website: www.sadag.org • Email: zane1@hargray.com • SMS: 31393



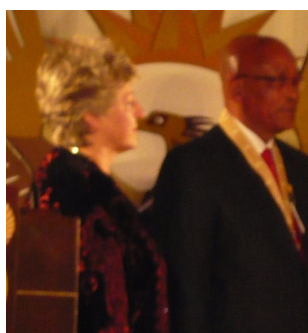
SADAG Mental Health NGO Honoured by President with South Africa's Highest Community Award

The Order of Baobab

For the first time ever, this community award has been bestowed on a mental health NGO. The South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG's) Founder, Zane Wilson, who received her award for "her outstanding contribution as a mental health care practitioner, and a leader in the struggle to create awareness against diseases such as Depression, Bipolar and Anxiety and her work in the formation of the South African Depression and Anxiety Group". Other notable recipients included Edward Kennedy Jnr receiving the award on behalf of his father, the late Senator Edward Kennedy, who helped pass the Anti-Apartheid act in the US congress and fought constantly for Mandela's release.

Celebrating 18 years of mental health and advocacy this year, the South African Depression and Anxiety Group is the country's largest and most recognised mental health initiative. "SADAG was established in 1994 in response to the absence of any formal advocacy structure for people with the common and potentially disabling mental health problems of depression, bipolar and anxiety. Since its inception under the visionary leadership of Zane Wilson, it has become the leading mental health advocacy organization in Africa, and its achievements place it among the most innovative and effective organisations worldwide," says Psychiatrist Prof. Michael Berk, who assisted Wilson in establishing SADAG 18 years ago. "SADAG has been advocating for the rights of mental health patients since its inception" said Berk.

Mental health has always been the stepchild of health, many areas across the country lack even the most basic of resources. Many mental health patients suffer alone and in silence, fearful of the stigma that still surrounds mental health issues. Crazy...Dangerous...Unstable....Useless...Words so often associated with illnesses like Depression, Bipolar Disorder and Schizophrenia – On average about two-thirds of South Africans never seek the help they so badly need. With a permanent staff complement of just five, assisted by many volunteers, this organisation is demonstrating a very great commitment to serving the urban and rural communities in South Africa. The Head of Psychiatry at UCT Prof Dan Stein who was also instrumental in the beginning said that "SADAG has taken the lead in bringing the key message, that there is "no health without mental health" to South Africa; they have done this by having consumers share their experiences with the public, and by providing practical assistance to tens of thousands of South Africans".



Said Lillian Dube "it is very important for people to learn about mental illness. When you can see a wound, then people around you know you are in pain, but when you cannot see a wound it is very difficult for people to understand that you are in severe pain. SADAG has educated people that Depression is an illness that causes great pain but the wound is on the inside." Wilson has led teams to work in areas with virtually no access to psychiatric care for millions of people, capacitating lay people in communities to help with Mental Health problems. SADAG supports the training of Home-based Care Workers, Youth Groups, Teachers, NGO's, Community Health Careworkers, Nurses, Police and Church groups, teaching how to identify the symptoms of mental health and how to access treatment for people within their communities.

South Africa has 22 suicides a day, and 10 times as many attempted suicides. For many people in crisis, there is nowhere to turn – apart from SADAG's toll-free counselling centre. "So many people are alone and

scared, they feel like no-one understands them”, says actress and SADAG supporter Lilian Dube. “SADAG is a voice for these people, a safe place they can turn for help.” Facilitating 160 support groups across the country, Wilson says that the National Order of the Baobab Award goes as much to its dedicated and compassionate support group leaders, as it does to the incredible volunteers and staff of the organisation. Support is vital and through support groups, people feel connected to their world. Support groups bring people together, people who understand each other and fight isolation, loneliness and stigma. “Support Groups are often the only place people have where they can be honest about their illness”, says Peter Mathlelela from Siyabuswa, who has been running a support group for over 14 years.

In 2005 Zane Wilson created an innovative new learning tool, the “Speaking Book”, to enable low level literacy communities to receive vital health care messages. The books are an interactive, multilingual tool that can be seen, read, heard and understood regardless of reading ability and addresses mental health issues such as Depression, Suicide, Bipolar, Malaria, TB, as well as HIV and AIDS. The Speaking Books are an affordable African solution for a problem which is now being used throughout the world, such as in India, America, South America and the rest of Africa." For her work, Wilson has won the World Bank Award (2003), United Nations Health and Innovation Award (2011).

SADAG’s programme, “Suicide Shouldn’t be a Secret” is aimed at reducing South Africa’s high rate of teen suicide and has been run in schools for teachers and hundreds of thousands of learners throughout the country. SADAG teaches youth that depression is treatable and suicide is preventable. SADAG offers fifteen toll free crisis and support lines and helps callers by providing counseling and referrals.

Wilson has an unparalleled level of insight into systems and people. “Wilson has a level of drive, energy, enthusiasm and commitment that is truly remarkable and she is committed to assisting the most disadvantaged individuals in the most disadvantaged environments suffering from stigmatising and poorly resourced conditions” said Prof Berk.

This award is a huge honour and a tribute, not just to SADAG, but to all those people who have suffered in silence, scared and alone. Mental illness has always had the power to separate people. “With this award, we feel like there is hope – that the path travelled by mental health practitioners will be more supported and accepted”, says Wilson. Like the Baobab itself, education and awareness about mental health issues will bring people together in understanding, support and mutual respect. The spirit of the Baobab is believed to bestow wisdom and humility on leaders. In this spirit, Zane Wilson is honoured to have been awarded the Order of the Baobab.

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