



NEWSLETTER

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MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY

World Mental Health Day is observed on 10 October every year, focusing on increasing awareness of mental health across the world.

On this day, all stakeholders can discuss their efforts and what can be accomplished to make mental health care a need for people around the globe.



World Mental Health Day 2021 merits more attention in Covid-19 times

This year the theme is **'Mental Health in an Unequal World'** and underlines the pressing need to focus sufficiently on health beyond the physical in a sustained way in a world still struggling to fight the coronavirus. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased inequalities in human development, including dealing a double whammy to mental health by causing more incidence of mental disorders and disrupting already limited mental health services.

While health is complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease, mental health is a state of well-being. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the individual realises their abilities, can cope with the everyday stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to the community.

There's no doubt that mental health disorders are rising, says Dr Naidoo, a specialist psychiatrist practising at the Akeso Clinics in Parktown and Alberton. "A study published in the Lancet in November 2020 showed that people who contracted the virus and who were well or had no previous psychiatric disorder had double the risk of developing a mental health condition after the infection. These conditions include depression, anxiety and dementia, all of which have become quite common today.

National Health Insurance Medical Schemes



ADDRESSING THE CRISIS!

According to a study conducted by Sanlam, 1 in 6 South Africans already suffered from anxiety, depression or a substance use disorder before the pandemic.

However, statistics reveal that just 27% of South Africans with severe mental disorders receive treatment.

Against this backdrop, National Health Insurance (NHI) will include benefits for mental health for all South Africans. In addition, medical schemes Prescribed Minimum Benefits (PMBs) will be revised to align with NHI and provide additional benefits and services for mental health.

Phoenix Healthcare Consultants offers a free service to medical scheme and primary healthcare members to understand their mental health benefits and register or qualifying mental health conditions like depression and bipolar.

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COVID-19 & MENTAL HEALTH

The pandemic has brought up all sorts of traumas, increasing anxiety disorders, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Fear, worry and stress are normal responses to perceived or real threats when we are faced with uncertainty or the unknown. So it's quite understandable that people are experiencing fear in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fear of the pandemic leads to more paranoia in patients with psychotic disorders, such as schizophrenia, even without them contracting the virus. And in the event of them testing positive, the impact on their mental health is quite significantly more severe.

The pandemic came against the backdrop of an ailing, unprepared, and inadequate health care system characterised by a scarcity of mental health services, among other resource constraints and challenges.

Furthermore, while the coronavirus pandemic affects all South Africans, the poor and marginalised are the most affected due to socioeconomic realities such as inequality, poverty, GBV, and rising unemployment. In addition, the government's response to the pandemic should not be focused on the biomedical aspects of the virus to the exclusion of other equally significant strategies and plans offered by other disciplines.

5 TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH RIGHT NOW!

(By Reabetsoe Buys, a psychologist based in Johannesburg)

1. Stop what you're doing, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Breathe in for four counts and out for four counts. This will slow your heart rate and calm you down. Try and do a breathing or meditation exercise every morning and every evening for at least 15 minutes.
2. Identify what triggers you and problem-solve around it. Is it work, finances, relationships? What will help you manage it differently or deal with it better?
3. Walk it out. Moving your body will help to burn off some of the stress chemicals our bodies release when we're anxious. It also allows you to focus on your body instead of only focussing on the anxiety-causing thoughts.
4. Put your thoughts on paper. By doing this, you externalise what is making you anxious, make it less daunting and clear your head, which makes it easier to problem-solve.
5. Watch what you're consuming in terms of food and information. Diet-wise, it's important to stay away from caffeine, nicotine and high sugar as these can trigger anxiety, but it is vital to consider your environment too. You can do this by limiting your exposure to distressing news and social media. Of course, it is important to stay up to date but try to do so without taking on too much negative information.

NEED HELP?



A Public Benefit Organisation

The Samsodien Foundation NPC

The Foundation provides South Africans access to a core basket of support and assistance benefits at no cost.

These benefits include access to a 24/7 medical advice hotline, emotional and trauma counselling, HIV prevention and treatment as well as support for GBV victims.

There is no fees or cost to join. Simply visit the website and join Roxy Assist Services.

www.samsodien.co | (0860) 995-300

Get In Touch

<https://www.samsodien.co/get-in-touch/>





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SOURCE

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<https://www.sanlam.co.za/mediacentre/media-category/media-releases/South%20Africa%E2%80%99s%20Looming%20Mental%20Health%20Crisis>

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