

PRAYERS PANDEMIC PEERS



**PROVIDING PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT TO
FAITH COMMUNITIES IN HEALTH EMERGENCIES**





THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL AIDS COUNCIL

The South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) brings together government, civil society and the private sector to create a collective response to HIV, TB and STIs in South Africa. The Council is chaired by the Deputy President of South Africa.



The vision of the SANAC is to have a South Africa free from the burden of HIV, TB and STIs. Our vision is underpinned by the commitment to ZERO new HIV and TB infections, ZERO preventable HIV and TB deaths and ZERO HIV and TB discrimination. We are a long way from ZERO on all three of these fronts.

Our mission is to build a credible Secretariat that leads the effective implementation of the National Strategic Plan (NSP) through superb execution and coordination of government, civil society and the private sector.



THE SANAC CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

The SANAC Civil Society Forum (CSF) is a formal advisory body established in 2012 by the South African National AIDS Council to facilitate the participation of Civil Society Organisations and networks, including those representing People Living with HIV, in the HIV and AIDS and TB within the National HIV response and for the implementations thereof National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2012-2016 through Sectors.



The SANAC CSF aims to promote an inclusive, competent and responsive civil society that effectively serves the needs of the people of the South African communities, by linking and diversifying civil society actors, expanding the sectors and communities where civil society contributes, improving civil society organisations' operations, and enhancing connections between civil society organisations with their stakeholders and beneficiaries.

ABOUT THE FAITH BASED TOOLKIT

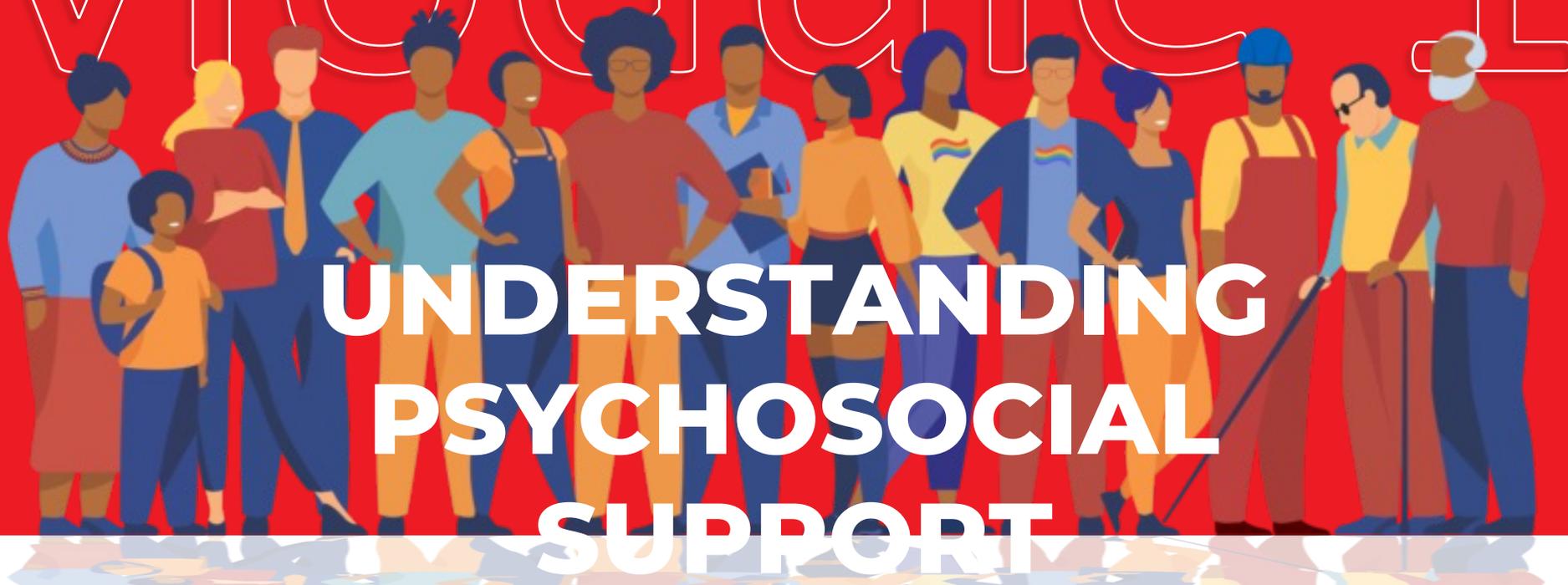
- In South Africa just under 80% of South Africans are Christian, 15% have no religious affiliation, and 5% are Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, or of other faiths: (2016 Census).
- Religious and faith communities have been providing means for coping, surviving, and raising hope during the era of pandemics.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, faith leaders' spiritual and psychosocial support to communities was critical. Communities struggled with social and movement restrictions, loss of livelihoods, alongside isolation, depression, grief, hopelessness, and sexual and gender-based violence (GBV) and turned to their faith leaders for support and guidance.
- Support changed from face-to-face engagements to safer means of providing spiritual and psychological support by phone, video, or private social media chat platforms.
- It became increasingly evident for the South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) Civil Society Forum's Faith sector leadership, that If faith leaders can better recognise the signs and symptoms of stress, fear, mental illness and suicidal thoughts and learn how to respond, they can serve as an expanded safety net for those in need.



PRAYERS PANDEMICS
PEERS TOOLKIT



Module 1



UNDERSTANDING PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

OBJECTIVES



At the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Identify different types of psychosocial issues and needs and understand what constitutes psychosocial support
- Understand their role as a faith leader in providing psychosocial support
- Identify ways in which they can take care of themselves on a regular basis.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

This module explores different types of psychosocial issues and introduces faith leaders to the concept of psychosocial support and what that looks like in practice. It also highlighted the role of faith leaders in providing psychosocial support, and how they can take care of themselves in doing so.

- Psychosocial support is about supporting people – particularly those in vulnerable circumstances - to feel better psychologically and emotionally, especially when things are really hard or they've been through a traumatic experience.
- Certain kinds of psychosocial support require help from experts for example psychologists, counsellors, social workers, doctors or specific community organisations.
- Faith leaders have a special role in giving psychosocial support to their community, even if they may not be trained counsellors or psychologists

HANDOUTS

Handout 1: Walking meditation

Handout 2: Art therapy and colouring in activity



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Module 2

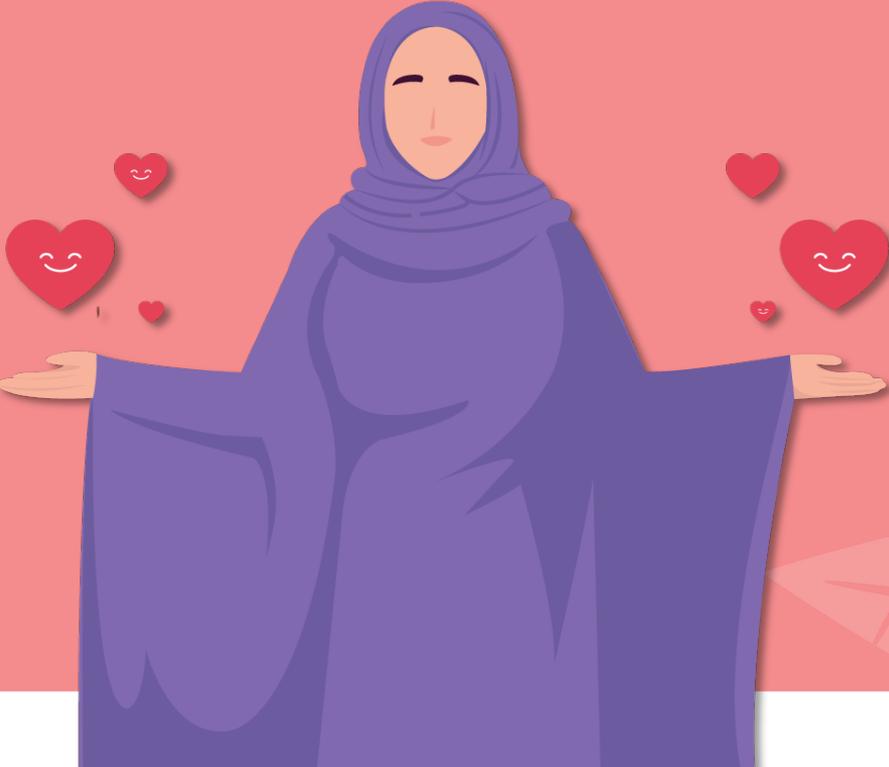


PROVIDING ONE-TO-ONE AND GROUP SUPPORT

OBJECTIVES



At the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- 
- Understand the importance of active listening and start to feel comfortable practising it.
 - Be familiar with the concept of holding a ‘safe container’.
 - Understand the why and how to set up support groups.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This module provides guidance on active listening – a critical skill for one-to-one and group support, how to create a safe container for individuals experiencing strong emotions, and provision of emotional support through support groups.

- Active listening is a type of communication skill where you really pay attention to what the other person is saying so that you can understand their message – both what they say out loud and what they don't say out loud.
- Other ways that support active listening and building empathy include the kinds of questions we ask.
- Community members may become very emotional during services, a one-to-one consultation or in support groups and it is important to hold the space for them as much as possible.

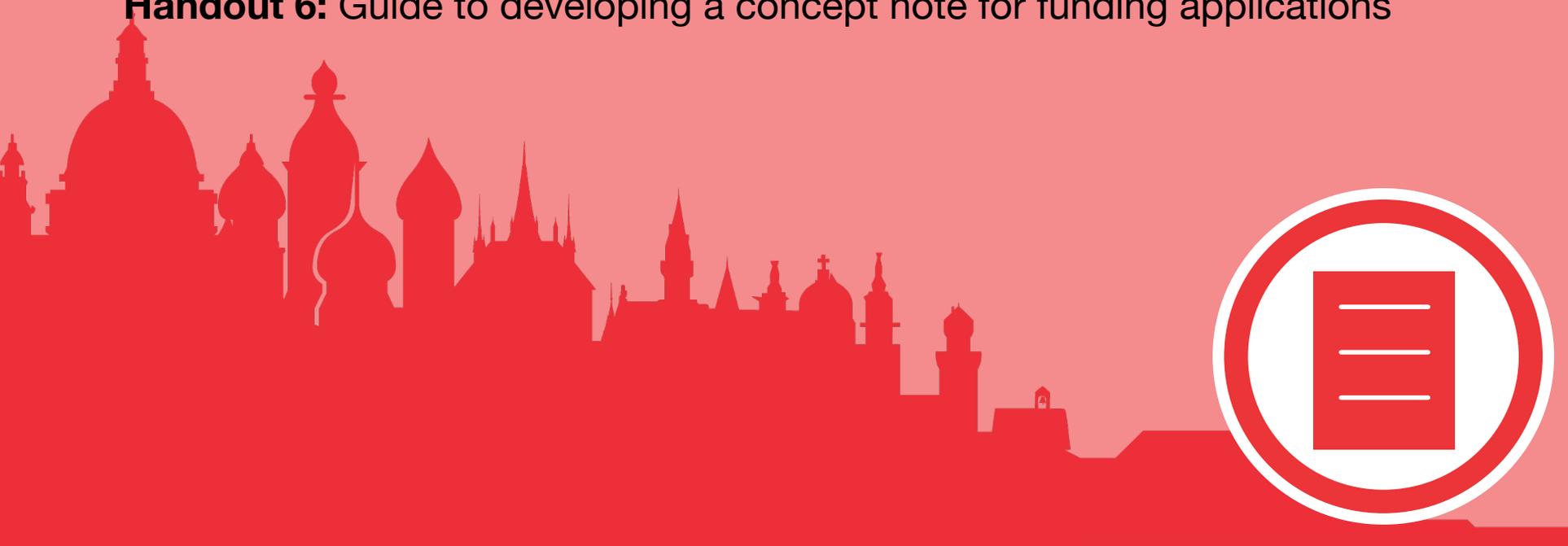
HANDOUTS

Handout 3: Practicing building empathy

Handout 4: Different kinds of exploratory questions

Handout 5: Reimagining support groups

Handout 6: Guide to developing a concept note for funding applications



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Module 3



THE REFERRAL PROCESS

MODULE 3 | THE REFERRAL PROCESS

OBJECTIVES



At the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Know when and how to refer individuals to healthcare professionals
- Understand how to build referral networks.



MODULE 3 | THE REFERRAL PROCESS

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This module gives an overview of when and how to send people for expert help.

- If you have the option, it's a good idea to present different possibilities of referral to the person concerned which could include government and NGO services.
- By developing a 'referral network', faith leaders can make sure that people in their community have access to the necessary psychosocial support when needed.

MODULE 3 | THE REFERRAL PROCESS

HANDOUTS

Handout 7: How to set up a referral system and sample referral letter



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Module 4



STRESS

MODULE 4 | STRESS

OBJECTIVES



At the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Understand what stress is and what the common reactions to stress are
- Identify various ways of coping
- know how to provide support and know when to refer someone.



MODULE 4 | STRESS

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This module looked at the meaning of stress and extreme stress, and how people usually react to it. It showed different ways to deal with stress and how faith leaders can help and when to send someone to a mental health expert.

- It's a natural reaction to challenges, both physical and emotional
- Everyone faces stress at some point, but some experience it more than others
- Healthy coping behaviour includes getting help from others, working hard to find solutions, or removing the source of stress
- Faith leaders can offer various healthy coping strategies and self-care suggestions to people experiencing stress.

MODULE 4 | STRESS

HANDOUTS

Handout 1: Walking meditation

Handout 2: Art therapy

Handout 7: Setting up effective referral networks

Handout 5: Reimagining support groups



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Module 5



GRIEF

MODULE 5 | GRIEF

OBJECTIVES



At the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Describe normal and complicated grieving processes
- Understand how to support people who are grieving.



MODULE 5 | GRIEF

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This module was about how people handle grief when someone they care about dies. It covered normal and complicated ways of grieving, how to help those who are grieving, and when to ask for professional help.

- Grief is about people cope with loss – a normal but painful process
- People going through normal grief will have a period of sorrow, numbness, guilt, or even anger
- Recognising when to refer a person suffering from complicated grief to a mental health professional is really important.

MODULE 5 | GRIEF

HANDOUTS

Handout 7: Setting up effective referral networks

Handout 5: Reimagining support groups



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Module 6

A diverse group of stylized human figures in various colors and outfits, representing different ages, ethnicities, and professions. Some are wearing hard hats, some are using a cane, and some are wearing backpacks. They are standing in a line against a red background.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MODULE 6 | GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

OBJECTIVES



At the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Have a basic understanding of the concepts of gender-based violence, sexual violence, consent and coercion
- Understand the causes, forms and effects of sexual and gender-based violence, who is most vulnerable, and how to offer psychosocial support to those who have experienced gender-based violence.



MODULE 6 | GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This module discussed the impact of sexual and gender-based violence on peoples' lives – an issue that is extremely prevalent in South Africa.

- Gender-based violence is defined as violence based on gender norms and unequal power relations
- A person's risks and vulnerabilities to HIV and other public health crises, violence and other rights abuses tends to increase based on their sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression
- Every kind of gender-based violence comes from unequal power between genders
- Gender-based discrimination and violence have various forms. These can include things like domestic violence, intimate partner violence, physical, emotional, and financial abuse, sexual assault, stalking, harassment, and not letting someone access resources and help they need.

MODULE 6 | GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

HANDOUTS

Handout 8: The Gingerbread person

Handout 9: Understanding LGBTI+ terminologies

Handout 5: Reimagining Support Groups

Handout 7: Setting up effective referral networks



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Module 7



DEPRESSION

MODULE 7 | DEPRESSION

OBJECTIVES



At the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Have a deeper understanding of what depression is and recognise signs and symptoms of depression.
- Understand how they can support people with depression and when to refer.



MODULE 7 | DEPRESSION

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This module provided an overview of what depression is, what causes depression, how to recognise signs and symptoms of depression and how you can support someone with depression.

- Depression is a mental health condition where people feel very sad for long periods of time, feel hopeless and/or feel a sense of emptiness. Everyone experiences changes in their mood from time to time but depression is more than just normal changes in mood and affects many aspects of a person's life, including emotions, thoughts, behaviours, and physical well-being.
- Depression is very complex – there is no one thing that causes it. Rather, it often emerges from various factors interacting and leading to its development.

MODULE 7 | DEPRESSION

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There are a number of strategies that individuals struggling with depression could try to implement. This can be shared with people who are depressed or someone who is a close friend or family member of someone with depression.
- There are many myths about depression. As a faith leader you can help increase understanding about what depression really is, by sharing accurate information about depression with your community at religious services or through educational workshops.
- While providing support and guidance within their capacity will be very helpful and supportive, it is important that faith leaders recognize their limitations and are able to know when professional help is necessary.

MODULE 7 | DEPRESSION

HANDOUTS

Handout 1: Walking Meditation

Handout 2: Art Therapy

Handout 7: Setting up effective referral networks

Handout 5: Reimagining Support Groups



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Module 8



ANXIETY

MODULE 8 | ANXIETY

OBJECTIVES



At the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Understand what anxiety is and recognise signs and symptoms.
- Understand how they can support people with anxiety and when to refer.



MODULE 8 | ANXIETY

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This module provides guidance on understanding anxiety and its impacts on the individual, as well as how faith leaders can provide assistance, and refer on as needed.

- Anxiety is a natural human emotion that everyone experiences from time to time.
- Anxiety can appear in different forms, showing physical, emotional, and cognitive symptoms.
- Anxiety can affect how people go about their daily lives, including their relationships, work or school performance, social interactions, and overall sense of well-being.
- Faith leaders can offer valuable self-care and coping tips to individuals suffering from anxiety.

MODULE 8 | ANXIETY

HANDOUTS

Handout 1: Walking Meditation

Handout 2: Art Therapy

Handout 7: Setting up effective referral networks

Handout 5: Reimagining Support Groups



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Module 9



TRAUMA

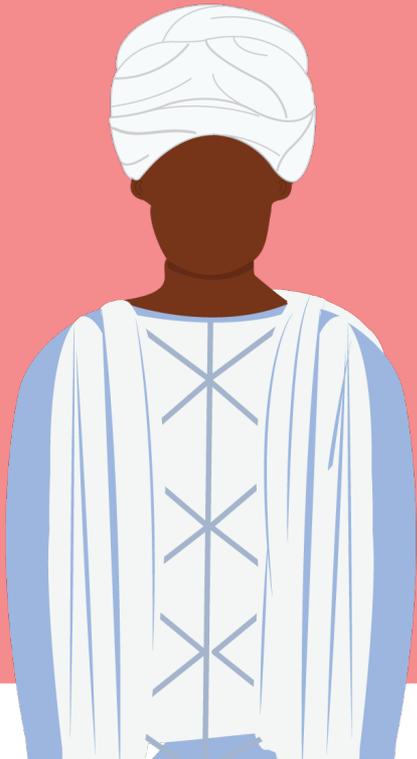
MODULE 9 | TRAUMA

OBJECTIVES



At the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Understand what trauma is and be able to identify different types of trauma
- Recognise signs and symptoms of trauma and know when to refer.



MODULE 9 | TRAUMA

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This module provides an overview of what trauma is, the different types, how to recognise signs and symptoms, and how and when to assist.

- Trauma refers to an extremely distressing experience that overwhelms a person's ability to manage and cope. There are a few different types of trauma.
- Trauma symptoms vary from person to person. They can show up immediately after an incident or take several years to show up.
- If someone comes to a faith leader for support after having experienced a trauma, the first thing they can do is provide a supportive, non-judgmental, empathetic listening space.
- Faith leaders can provide information about local resources such as helplines that offer specialised support and guidance for post-traumatic stress disorder.

MODULE 9 | TRAUMA

HANDOUTS

Handout 7: Setting up effective referral networks

Handout 5: Reimagining Support Groups



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Module 10



SUICIDE

MODULE 10 | SUICIDE

OBJECTIVES



At the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Understand the factors associated with suicide
- Recognise the warning signs of suicide
- Talk to someone who is contemplating suicide.



MODULE 10 | SUICIDE

KEY TAKEAWAYS

This module provides insight and information on the subject of suicide.

- Understanding why individuals may contemplate or commit suicide is a complex issue
- One of the most important ways you can help is learning how to talk to someone about suicide
- Faith leaders can provide information about local resources such as helplines, local support groups, counselling/therapy services, community-based organisations, NGOs, other local groups and/or government services that can offer specialised support and guidance.

MODULE 10 | SUICIDE

HANDOUTS

Handout 10: Identifying suicide warning signs and providing support (including crisis hotlines and other support)

Handout 7: Setting up effective referral networks

Handout 5: Reimagining Support Groups



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Module 1



FAITH LEADERS AS INFLUENCERS DURING A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

OBJECTIVES



At the end of this module, participants should be able to:

- Understand what influencing is
- Know which platforms can be used for effective influencing
- Have a basic understanding of how to use different platforms.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

This module focused on what ‘influencing’ is in the context of a public health crisis such as COVID-19 and the HIV response, and what platforms can effectively influence during such a crisis.

- Faith leaders often hold positions of authority and influence within their faith tradition, and they have the potential to shape the perspectives and actions of their community.
- Platforms for influencing can include the more traditional in-person approaches or the use of digital/online tools to reach a wider audience or access a faith community when social gathering restrictions occur due to a public health crisis.

HANDOUTS

Handout 11: Social media dictionary

Handout 12: Examples of influencing online

Handout 13: Sample social media content plan

Handout 6: Guide to developing a concept note for funding applications



TOOLKIT | REFERRAL DIRECTORY

HELPLINES



AKESO CRISIS HELPLINE

A nationwide 24/7 service to guide you through an immediate mental health emergency or crisis, and facilitate access to care. Provides information about mental health and care services.

Who can call: Anyone | Languages: English

Tollfree 0861 435 787 | <https://www.netcare.co.za/netcare-akeso/>

SUICIDE CRISIS HELPLINE

Assist patients and callers with mental health queries through a nationwide 16-line counselling and referral call centre.

Who can call: Anyone | Languages: English

Tollfree 0800 567 567 / 31393 What App | <https://www.sadag.org/>

STOP GENDER VIOLENCE HELPLINE

A nationwide 24/7, free, confidential support and information phone or Whats App service for anyone who may be looking for support with abuse and domestic violence or sexual abuse. They help everyone, regardless of age, gender, religious views, or nationality.

Who can call: Anyone | Languages: Afrikaans, English, Southern Sotho, Tsonga, Tswana, Xhosa, Zulu, and other languages

Tollfree 0800 150 150 | <https://lifelinesa.co.za/>

HIV AND AIDS HELPLINE

A nationwide 24/7 telephone or WhatsApp service (via the website) to talk about treatment, testing, types of transmission, prevention and living positively with the virus.

Who can call: Anyone | Languages: Afrikaans, English, Southern Sotho, Tsonga, Tswana, Xhosa, Zulu, and other languages

Tollfree 0800 012 322 | <https://lifelinesa.co.za/>

NATIONAL COUNSELLING LINE

A nationwide 24/7 service via phone to discuss a range of challenges from trauma and suicide to relationship issues.

Who can call: Anyone | Languages: Afrikaans, English, Southern Sotho, Tsonga, Tswana, Xhosa, Zulu, and other languages

Tollfree 0861 322 322 | <https://lifelinesa.co.za/>

STRESS	GRIEF	GBV	DEPRESSION	ANXIETY	TRAUMA	SUICIDE
★		★		★	★	★
						★
		★				
		★				
★	★				★	★