

# Help for those always helping others

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Usually the ones coming to the rescue of others, staff at non-profit organisations now have their own source of support with the launch of a national mental health support programme and helpline for NPOs.

NPower, the result of a partnership between the SA Depression and Anxiety Group (Sadag) and Tshikululu Social Investments, provides psychological first aid to NPO leaders, staff and volunteers, many of whom are experiencing unprecedented strain and burnout caused by Covid-19.

Sadag and Tshikululu have established a 24-hour, toll-free helpline where professionals offer counselling in all 11 official languages.

Alternatively, those seeking help can SMS or e-mail the organisation.

While the pandemic has had a significant impact on NPOs from an operations and funding perspective, it is the mental health of those involved in the sector that was particularly concerning, Tshikululu's social investment specialist, Dipalesa Mpye, said.

"Our research has shown that NPOs are struggling with a myriad of issues, including instability and uncertainty around financial support, challenges in retaining staff, as well as having to navigate the devastating impact of Covid-19 on the communities they serve," Mpye said.

**' There is definitely a need for our facilitators to share some of their personal experiences and struggles with someone'**

**Louise Olivier**

UWIWE CHILD AND YOUTH SERVICES DIRECTOR

Uviwe Child and Youth Services director Louise Olivier said NPower's services provided a safe space for NPO workers.

"This is a kind of service that is much-needed for NPO workers who are usually the ones taking care of other people.

"I think it is especially needed for us because at Uviwe we deal a lot with children and being there for someone else can take a lot of strain.

"There is definitely a need for our facilitators to share some of their personal experiences and struggles with someone," Olivier said.

Sadag operations director Cassey Chambers said many NPOs had been forced to close their doors at a time when their services were most needed in communities.

"There are so many aspects to the health of NPOs which we hope to assist with this initiative," Chambers said.

The NPower programme includes a dedicated 24-hour NPO mental health and psychosocial support helpline manned by a team of dedicated counsellors, capacity workshops on NPO-related issues, a website with multiple resources and the implementation of a support network between NPOs.

NPO staff can contact the NPower 24/7 helpline on 080-051-5515, the dedicated SMS line on 43010 or e-mail info@npowersa.org

Visit [www.npowersa.org](http://www.npowersa.org) for more information.

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