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**Recommended Psychiatrists:**

Dr. Clementine Chawane (Specialist Psychiatrist) • [reception-b@global.co.za](mailto:reception-b@global.co.za)

Dr. B.L. Letlotlo (Specialist Psychiatrist) • [letlotlo12@gmail.com](mailto:letlotlo12@gmail.com)

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# "The cost of sanity"

When living with a mental illness, the price of remaining mentally stable is expensive. This matter is quite sensitive to me at a personal level, as I know the full might of this unfortunate reality.



Dr. Samke J. Ngcobo

The most glaring challenge is the financial impact of attending to one's mental health along with the difficulty in ease of access.

Despite a paradigm shift with regards to who is eligible for mental healthcare services, major misconceptions remain. There remains a belief that mental healthcare is limited to a particular demographic group of people that is affluent or is suited to a specific racial group only.

Mental healthcare should not exist as a status symbol as it is an essential commodity in ensuring our holistic wellbeing.

What does one do when they realise that they would like intervention related to their mental wellbeing? What quality of care does one receive when they do not have medical aid? Do they know where to go or who to approach? When they do have medical aid, to what extent are they supported by their medical aid regarding their specific diagnosis?

I have lived with a mental illness for 2 decades and have only found my compass in remaining stable, in recent years. Establishing my rhythm with it is still a work in progress.

Without downplaying my struggle related to affording my mental healthcare, I am often humbled and drawn to empathise with those who live in poverty concurrently with a mental illness. Once the mental healthcare worker has advocated for them, who listens and subsequently acts on their behalf?

I have worked in community health clinics in various districts during my 6 month rotations both as a medical officer and as a registrar in psychiatry and am well acquainted with the frustration and pain of both my colleagues and consultants alike at the limited resources. Having important medication out of stock has been a redundant sad song, the long waiting lists and the long queues are enough to discourage any

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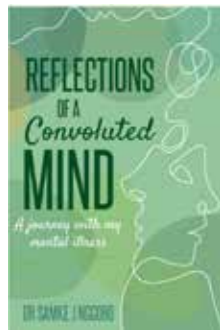
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dedicated mental healthcare worker, yet one perseveres.

Difficulties remain within the private sector as well. My own mental healthcare is incredibly expensive and does not feel like a luxury at all. I remain grateful to have access to it, nonetheless. Despite this, I am angered by the fact that many medical aid services do not fully cater to the various important aspects related to mental healthcare if at all. Seeing a psychologist, psychiatrist or occupational therapist should not be deemed a luxury. The benefits are capped and are not tailor made to the existing problem.

One sincerely looks forward to the day when mental healthcare is prioritised and is taken as seriously as other diseases.



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## Finding Help

As provided by SADAG, please make use of the following contact details if requiring emergency assistance:

If you are needing a referral to a psychologist, psychiatrist or support group, please call The **South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)** on 011 234 4837 or 0800 20 50 26 and speak to a trained counselor who can assist you further.

Offices are open 7 days a week, 8am - 8pm.  
 Fax number 011 234 8182

**Substance Abuse Line**  
 0800 12 13 14 is available 24hrs.

**Dr Reddy's Help Line**  
 0800 21 22 23

**Cipla 24hr Mental Health Helpline**  
 0800 456 789

**Pharmadynamics Police & Trauma Line**  
 0800 20 50 26

**Adcock Ingram Depression and Anxiety Helpline**  
 0800 70 80 90

**ADHD Helpline**  
 0800 55 44 33

**Department of Social Development Substance Abuse Line 24hr helpline**  
 0800 12 13 14  
 SMS 32312

**Suicide Crisis Line**  
 0800 567 567

**SADAG Mental Health Line**  
 011 234 4837

**Akeso Psychiatric Response Unit 24 Hour**  
 0861 435 787

**Cipla Whatsapp Chat Line**  
 076 882 2775

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