

# Jacaranda FM and Panda create a #SafeSpace for men's mental wellness drive

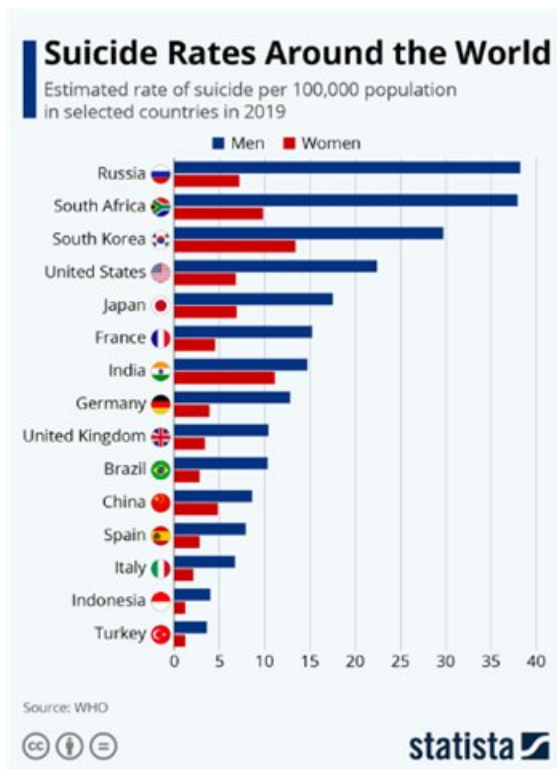
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This Men's Health Month, Jacaranda FM has partnered with Panda, a tech-based platform that aims to give everyone access to resources that provide mental health support.



80% of South Africans who need mental health support are unable to access it easily according to Cassey Chambers of the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG). The statistics are even more alarming when it comes to South African men. According to World Health Organisation, South Africa has the second highest rate of suicide in the world, just a fraction behind Russia.



Of the 13,774 suicides reported in South Africa in 2019, 10,861 were men, while 2,913 were women. These figures highlight South Africa's urgent need for intervention and resources to support everyone, but especially men.

"Jacaranda FM speaks to around 1,5 million listeners weekly, of those listeners, 50% are male. We wanted to develop a campaign that could create immediate impact for our male community and after much consideration, we asked Panda to partner with us," says Deirdre King, managing director of Jacaranda FM.

For men, the demonstration of emotion or seeking psychological or psychiatric help is considered 'unmanly'. 'Boys don't cry' is a phrase taught from a young age, and those who do, are often teased or bullied.

#SafeSpace aims to break the stigma attached to asking for help or support by empowering men with the tools offered in the Panda app.

As part of the Jacaranda FM and Panda partnership, users are invited to book up to three *free* 30-minute text-based chat sessions with mental

health professionals by using the promo code #SafeSpace.

"We believe that Panda can overcome so many barriers to seeking mental wellness help, whether it's the stigma attached, the often high costs associated, or the user journey of just not knowing where to start. Their tech and expertise, combined with our reach and engaging platforms, will get this app in as many hands as possible, and potentially help save a life,"

adds King.

Users of the Panda app have free access to the 'Bamboo Forest', which allows them to engage with a community of other app users who may be facing similar challenges. The app is built to eliminate any perceived shame as users remain anonymous with audio-only peer or expert-facilitated group discussions.

Men can also create communities within the Bamboo Forest, aligned with their individual interests or support needs, whether it be depression, financial stress, anxiety, or even guidance for families with loved ones facing mental health challenges.

Panda also offers scientifically validated assessment tools to enable users to objectively measure their mental wellbeing and a gamified tracking tool lets them document and monitor the progress they are making on their personal mental health journey.

A library of evidence-based content, based on key themes from dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) and positive psychology, is available to app users who can then participate in supporting activities designed to help them enhance their life skills.

"Panda was conceived and developed as a viable way of responding to the growing mental health crisis at scale, not only through the digital delivery of support and information, but also by helping to destigmatise mental issues. We're very excited to have a media partner like Jacaranda FM see the potential of our app, but more importantly help us in our goal of democratising mental health care in South Africa," says Allan Sweidan, clinical psychologist and co-founder of Panda.

Join The Drive with Rob & Roz every weekday from 4pm to 7pm on Jacaranda FM as Rob Forbes and Rozanne McKenzie speaks to various male celebrities throughout November about the challenges they faced and how prioritising their mental health has helped them.

The Panda app is available on the Apple and Android app stores. Search for 'Join Panda' to download the app, [click here to register for free](#), or visit [www.JacarandaFM.com](http://www.JacarandaFM.com) for more information.

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#### Jacaranda FM



Jacaranda FM broadcasts at 94.2FM from Midrand, Gauteng and is one of the most popular radio stations with a substantial footprint across Mzansi. The station has the only bilingual commercial license in the country; broadcasting regionally in English and Afrikaans across Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the North West Province.

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