

New NPO Hope Guardians to connect young South Africans with free therapy

Not-for-profit organisation Hope Guardians launched this week in South Africa and the UK with a mission to provide young people suffering from depression and other mental health issues free access to therapy.



Benjamin Tuttle, head of the Tuttle Foundation and creator of Hope Guardians. Source: Supplied

Hope Guardians offers mental health support in a number of ways, including via an online matching platform that connects people seeking support with mental health professionals in their own country for free weekly therapy sessions.

Therapy hours will be funded through donations, corporate sponsors and time donated by therapists. In this pilot phase, Hope Guardians is looking for therapists to sign up and offer one free hour a week of their time, which will be done via video conferences with young people.

Hope Guardians aims to assist particularly where institutionalised help is not available to give sufferers hope with free weekly therapy sessions. The NPO asks those in need to sign up on www.hopeguardians.com, where they are matched with a trained professional therapist for free virtual, weekly sessions.

Sign-up is anonymous, all that is asked for is a first name, email address, age, country, language and how the person is feeling. Each person will receive therapy from someone who speaks their language and understands their cultural context.



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Global ambitions

The NPO was created by Benjamin Tuttle, head of the Tuttle Foundation. “Hope Guardians plans to help increase awareness of the issue, dispel mental health myths, and remove the stigma associated with it by providing free therapy to all who need it, for those up to the age of 26,” he said.

Tuttle has lived with mental health issues for most of his life and now wants to help others in the same situation after being inspired by a newspaper article citing global statistics on mental health.

“Hundreds of millions of young people worldwide suffer from mental health issues, many with little to no way to get help. In South Africa alone, nearly three-quarters of these sufferers are not accessing any form of mental health care at all. Hope Guardians wants to change this,” he added.

“Our ambition is to go global,” Tuttle said, who plans to roll out the model out for local coordination in other countries in due course.

Visit www.hopeguardians.com for more information or to sign up, either as a person in need, or a therapist wanting to donate hours, or donate a small amount.

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