

ROLLING INSPIRATION

ISSUE 3 2024

The leading magazine for people with mobility

Paralympic win makes history

Donald Ramphadi and Lucas
Sithole wins bronze

View from both sides

Louisa Brown moves from
patient to practitioner

Self-kindness matters

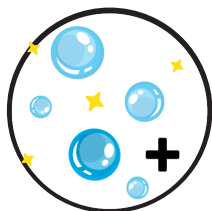
The key to a happier life

Slopes of Afriski

Adaptive skiing in Lesotho



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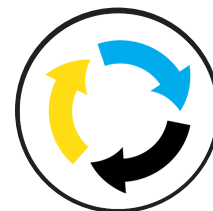
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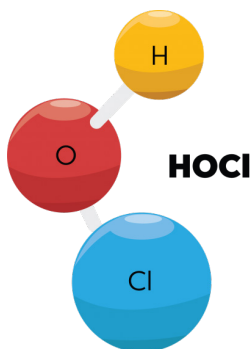
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Embracing resilience to become a better version

By building resilience when faced with a challenge, you can grow stronger and be better equipped to reach your goals and dreams

Dear members, in a world filled with uncertainties and socio-economic challenges, the journey to becoming the best versions of ourselves can seem daunting. Yet, it is within these very challenges that we can discover our greatest strengths. At QASA, we believe in the limitless potential of each member. Together, we can overcome obstacles and thrive, regardless of the socio-economic barriers we face. In my 25-year journey as a quadriplegic I learnt the following:

POWER OF RESILIENCE

Resilience is the ability to adapt and grow stronger in the face of adversity. It is a skill that we as a community must cultivate. Life's challenges, whether financial hardships, limited access to resources, or societal barriers, can be formidable. However, these hurdles also offer the opportunity to demonstrate our resilience. By embracing a positive mindset and focusing on what we can control, we empower ourselves to rise above difficulties.

INVESTING IN PERSONAL GROWTH

Personal growth is a continuous journey that requires dedication and self-awareness.

- **Set realistic goals:** Define what success means to you. Break down your aspirations into achievable steps and celebrate each milestone. Whether it's improving a skill, pursuing further education, or enhancing your health, setting clear goals will keep you motivated.
- **Seek support and build networks:** Surround yourself with individuals who uplift and inspire you. QASA offers a network of support through our various programmes and initiatives. Engage with fellow members, share experiences, and learn from each other's journeys. Together, we can create a strong community that fosters growth and mutual support.
- **Embrace life-long learning:** Knowledge is a powerful tool. Take advantage of educational opportunities, whether through formal courses, workshops, or self-study. Learning new skills not only enhances your capabilities, but boosts your confidence. QASA is committed to providing resources and opportunities for our members to expand their horizons.
- **Prioritise health and wellbeing:** Physical and mental wellbeing are crucial to



personal growth. Engage in activities that promote health, such as regular exercise, a balanced diet, and mindfulness practices. Remember that your wellbeing is the foundation upon which you build your aspirations.


- **Cultivate a positive mindset:** Positivity fuels resilience. Focus on your strengths and achievements rather than dwelling on setbacks. Practice gratitude and recognise the progress that you've made, no matter how small. A positive mindset will help you navigate challenges with grace and determination.

OVERCOMING SOCIO-ECONOMIC BARRIERS

While socio-economic challenges are real and impactful, they do not define our potential. At QASA, we advocate for the rights and support of our members, working towards a more inclusive and accessible society. We encourage you to leverage available resources and reach out for assistance when needed. Our shared value partnerships are designed to provide support in areas such as employment, education, access and healthcare.

INSPIRING EACH OTHER

Your journey of personal growth can inspire others. By sharing your experiences, you contribute to a culture of resilience and empowerment within our community. Your story may be the catalyst for someone else's transformation.

Becoming the best version of ourselves is not a solitary journey; it is a collective effort. Despite socio-economic challenges, we have the power to shape our destinies through resilience, support, and continuous growth. QASA is here to support you every step of the way. Together, let us embrace our potential, uplift each other, and thrive as a resilient community. 


About The Author

Richard Barron serves as the General Manager of QASA. His journey began as a member, where he actively engaged with the organisation's empowerment programmes. Over the years, he transitioned to serving on the board before assuming the role of General Manager.

Assistance with devices

Key to our pursuit of empowering our members to live their lives to the best of their ability is mobility. We want to ensure our members can move as independently as possible so that they can actively participate in their communities.

To achieve this, QASA supports members with securing assistive devices. Recently, we assisted Solomon Mhlanga with securing a chin controller for his wheelchair, we secured a new cushion for Patrick Mactobi and acquired a new wheelchair for Ashwill Adams.

Any QASA member in need of assistance can reach out to us on 031 767 0352 or info@qasa.co.za for assistance. 



ABOVE: Patrick Mactobi (top) with his new cushion, Ashwill Adams (bottom left) with his new wheelchair, and Solomon Mhlanga (bottom right) with his new chin control for his wheelchair.

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Paralympic win makes wheelchair tennis history

Donald Ramphadi and Lucas Sithole made history when they won bronze at the 2024 Paralympic Games

In just over two hours, the South African men's quad doubles team of Lucas Sithole and Donald Ramphadi made **history** as the first wheelchair tennis players from the African continent to win a medal at the Paralympic Games.

The duo secured **bronze** in their match against Brazil's Leandro Pena and Ymanitu Silva on September 4.

The win is particularly sweet for seasoned tennis player Lucas who narrowly missed a medal when he competed in the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Paralympic Games where he placed fourth in the quad singles division.

While a Paralympic medal has eluded the star player until now, the 37-year-old has already cemented his name in the wheelchair history books by winning the quad singles title at the 2013 US Opens.

For Donald, the win seems to be a successful career on the rise as it follows his 2023 French Open quad wheelchair doubles win with team mate Andy Lapthorne. Since his 2023 win, the 31-year-old has been placing runner up in several big tournaments.

LEFT: Lucas Sithole (left) and Donald Ramphadi (right) embrace after winning bronze in the men's quad doubles at the 2024 Paralympic Games.



ABOVE: Lucas Sithole and Donald Ramphadi made wheelchair tennis history with their bronze medal win becoming the first wheelchair tennis players from the African continent to win a Paralympic medal.

“Introduced to the sport via a wheelchair tennis grassroots programme while a learner at Letaba School,” Donald shares. “I was probably the last learner to try out on the day even though I never intended to. My teacher Mme Shikwambana took me to the courts and the rest is history.”

Initially, tennis was only a pastime for Donald. Slowly, over the years, it evolved into a career. He notes: “What it has done for me, family and life is something indescribable.”

“A boy from a child-headed family in Mogapeng (with no tennis court) taking part in a global sport and acing it is a perfect example of what this sport has done for me.”

“It will take a while for this to sink in, even though this is something we planned for, with my coach Siyabulela Nkachela, from 2021,” Donald comments on his Paralympic medal win.

“It is a fitting tribute to that vision. Being part of the Paralympics for first time was one thing, but winning a medal on debut? Come on, nothing tops that ...” he adds.

When asked what it feels like to represent South Africa on the world stage, Donald says: “I’m a patriot through and through. Donning the national colours is testament to the pride,

ambassadorship. We are called to execute as citizens of this beautiful country.”

Still early in his career, Donald already has plans to achieve even more with wheelchair tennis. He shares: “More grand slam titles, being number one, and many more healthy years on tour expressing myself.”

Finally, when asked what his advice is for other tennis players or athletes with disabilities, Donald share some sage wisdom: “The world is your playground. Limitations are not an obstruction, but should be seen as opportunities to be explored.”

Other medallist at the games include Mpumelelo Mhlongo who **won gold** in the men’s 100 metre, T44 division, with a perfect run. He torpedoed off the starting blocks and quickly took the lead.

Mpumelelo remained ahead of the pack with only Yamel Luis Vives Suares from Cuba creeping in to compete for first place. The final metres of the race was nail-biting as Yamel closed his distance on Mpumelelo. Fortunately, the 30-year old was sure footed and strong as he passed the finish line a full eight seconds ahead of Yamel. It was the first medal won for South Africa at the Games.

Mpumelelo would continue to perform throughout the Games with another medal and two world records. In both his long jump and 200 metre race, he competed in a higher category (T64), but still set world records for the T44 division. He jumped a whopping 7.12 metres in the long jump. He placed



ABOVE LEFT: Mpumelelo Mhlongo won two medals at the Paralympic Games and set two new world records.

RIGHT TOP: Simone Kruger won gold in the F38 division of the Women's Discus.

RIGHT MIDDLE: Louzanne Coetzee won bronze in the T11 division of the Women's 1 500m.


RIGHT BOTTOM: Pieter du Preez won bronze in the Men's H1 Individual Time Trial.

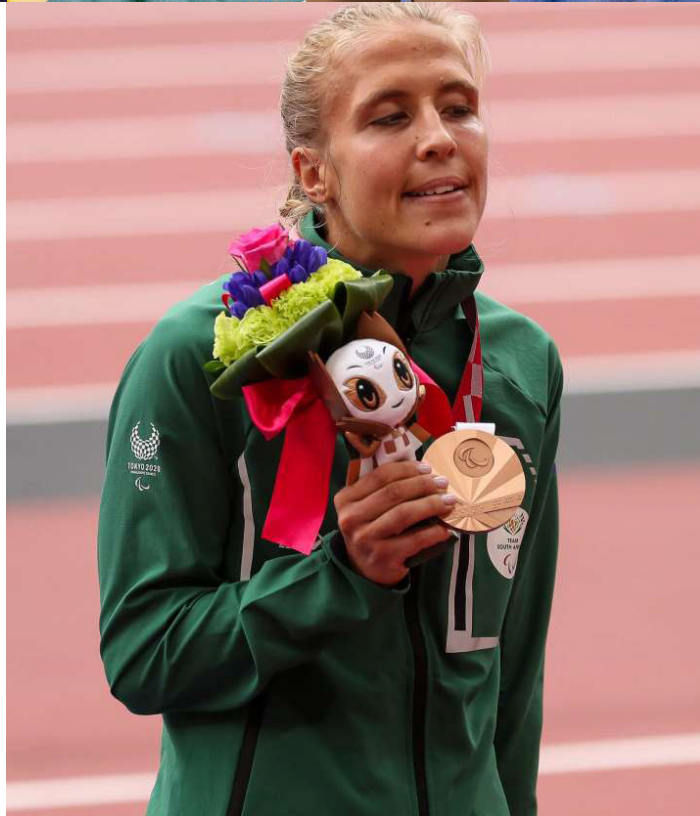
Photos from Team South Africa website.

fifth overall within the T64 category. In the 200 metres, he ran 22.62 – setting a world record for the T44 division – and placed third overall in the category, which secured him his second medal at the event.

Simone Kruger is our other gold medallist winning the F38 division of the **Women's Discus Throw**. She was a favourite for her event after banking gold and setting a world record at the 2023 World Championships, which was also held in France.

Our bronze medallists include Louzanne Coetzee who competed in the T11 division of the Women's 1 500m, and Pieter du Preez for the Men's H1 Individual Time Trial. In total, there were six medals won at the Paralympic Games. A big congratulations to all the athletes who performed incredibly on the world stage – particularly those who brought home medals.

Well done also to all the coaches, support staff, friends and family who ensured our athletes could perform at their best. What an incredible show of athleticism by these incredible South Africans! 





Exceptional wheelchair-liberated persons in history

George Louw explores the life of Mary Verghese who achieved excellence despite the challenges that her disability posed

A severe injury left Mary Verghese a wheelchair user and seemingly shattered her dreams of becoming a doctor. Unbeknownst to her, Mary would become one of the greatest doctors in Indian history and transform the lives of millions of patients with disabilities.

Born in rural southern India as one of eight children, Mary was described as shy, but purposeful and determined in her early life. In an age where girls were expected to settle for marriage and live a domestic life, she pursued education. Mary excelled at school and in tertiary education; starting with a Bachelor of

Arts course but switching to medicine after two years, graduating in 1952. Her aim was to continue her studies in gynaecology once she completed her residency.

However, in 1954, she was critically injured in a motorcar accident on her way to a picnic with fellow doctors and students. The accident left her with a badly damaged face and a severed spinal cord resulting in paraplegia.

The doctor who treated her during rehabilitation described her journey as a three-fold battle of survival: a battle for life; a battle to regain some mobility; and a



MAIN PHOTO, LEFT AND ABOVE: Mary Verghese was a wheelchair user and prominent surgeon in India. Her innovative work empowered many and continue to make an impact today. (Photo sourced from a [page dedicated to Dr Mary Verghese.](#))

battle in faith – questioning her religion and questioning what happened to her.

Fortunately, her faith prevailed. She persevered and overcame the darkness of despair at the loss of her dreams and aspirations. During this time, Mary met orthopaedic surgeon Paul Brand. He invited Mary to join him while he performed restorative surgery on patients with leprosy.

He encouraged her to consider specialising in surgery. With her hand function, she would still be able to operate while seated in her chair. This sparked Mary to continue her training and soon she started operating from a specially modified wheelchair.

Apart from being a successful surgeon, she also became an inspiration to her leprosy patients. She had achieved her dreams despite her disability or limitations. Many were inspired to take charge of their lives again. If she could do it, then so could they.

Mary had a very personal way of dealing with her patients. In an article about her life, the [Indian Association of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation](#) described Mary as follows: “Her presence was almost always a comfort to patients. Her own example of overcoming overwhelming odds was inspirational and gave many a new goal and a new spirit to face life.”

“Her efforts were aimed at making individuals with disabilities as independent as possible, whether in rural or urban areas. She insisted on their vocational training which made them useful citizens.”

“She encouraged them in word and deed. Just the sight of Mary in her wheelchair, full of patience and courage, showed them by example that life need not end for a person with disability.”

“

My disability is not a punishment by God. Rather, it is my greatest asset as a doctor.

Mary was quoted as saying: “My disability is not a punishment by God. Rather, it is my greatest asset as a doctor.”

In 1957, Mary travelled to Perth, Australia, where she underwent rehabilitation at the Rehabilitation Centre of Royal Perth Hospital. Here she learned new skills that improved her mobility and independence. These innovative ideas that included recreational skills and

training programmes for participating in Paralympics were a revelation to Mary. It triggered an ideal to create something similar in her home country.

In order to equip herself, Mary travelled to New York, United States (US) where she applied for a fellowship to be trained under Dr Howard Rusk – a leader in the field of physical medicine at the Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

During her two years of training, she also researched the various types of basic but (at times) ingenious self-help devices that could be put to use in India. She understood that many patients would not be able to afford standard appliances; therefore compromises needed to be made.

“

She understood that many patients would not be able to afford standard appliances.

After completing her course in the US, Mary spent some time in the United Kingdom, where she visited a number of rehabilitation centres, before returning to India. She got the rehabilitation-centre-ball rolling and in 1963, a Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation was opened in Vellore, India.

Three years later, Mary's dream of a centre of rehabilitation for persons with disabilities was realised with the official opening of the Rehabilitation Institute – the first of its kind in India. It was envisioned as a centre for healing, restoring, and reaching out to those with disabilities.

Working in the Institute, Mary applied her newly-developed knowledge of innovative appliances gained during her time in the US to design and development of cost-efficient, basic appliances such as long-handled “pickers”

that assisted patients with picking up objects, closing windows and turning off lights.

Assistive devices like wheelchairs were redesigned to be more affordable to lower income individuals. Her work was published in a landmark publication titled: “Investigation of methods suitable to village conditions for the rehabilitation of paraplegics and quadriplegics.”

“

Assistive devices were redesigned to be more affordable.

In 1976, Mary retired and returned to her birth-province of Kerala after struggling for more than two years with repeated bouts of fever. Only two years later, she returned to Vellore to continue her crusade for people with disabilities. In the 80s, she established a home for patients with disabilities, particularly for people with paraplegia, which was funded by the trust established in her name.

She would go on to win awards for her work; the prize money of which she would donate to the trust. With her death, Mary bequeathed all her properties to the Trust. She was awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award of the Republic of India, for her outstanding contribution. Her legacy lives on in the lives of all the people, families and communities that have been changed for the better. [R](#)

About The Author

Ida's Corner is a regular column by George Louw, who qualified as a medical doctor, but, due to a progressing spastic paralysis, chose a career in health administration. The column is named after Ida Hlongwa, who worked as caregiver for Ari Seirlis for 20 years. Her charm, smile, commitment, quality care and sacrifice set the bar incredibly high for the caregiving fraternity. email: yorslo@icloud.com



Disability Employment Equity remains stagnant

An analysis of the latest Commission on Employment Equity Report paints a bleak picture for the disability community as disability employment stagnates

Disability is a form of diversity that is often overlooked or ignored in the workplace. In South Africa, the Employment Equity Act of 1998 (EEA) sets a target of two percent representation of persons with disabilities in the workforce. However, the latest Commission on Employment Equity (CEE) report showed that the representation remained at 1,1 percent – far below the target.

CURRENT STATUS AND TRENDS

The latest CEE report showed that the representation of persons with disabilities varied significantly across different sectors, regions, and occupational levels, as well as among different disability types, races, and genders. The public sector had a higher representation of persons with disabilities.

Interestingly, the representation of persons with disabilities decreased as the occupational level increased, which indicated a lack of career progression opportunities for persons with disabilities.

WHAT HINDERS DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT

Some of the main factors and challenges that hinder the achievement of the two percent target for disability employment are a lack of awareness and understanding of disability and its implications for employment. This leads to discrimination, stigma, and the exclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace.

Additionally, employer's perceptions might result in a lack of reasonable accommodation and accessibility in the workplace, which pose barriers for persons with disabilities to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. People with disabilities in the

workplace might also be overlooked for skills development and training opportunities; thus limiting their employability and career prospects.

Another contributing factor is the lack of monitoring and enforcement of EEA and its regulations, which result in non-compliance, false or inaccurate reporting by employers and employees.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS AND STRATEGIES

The latest CEE report provided some recommendations and suggestions to improve the disability employment equity situation in South Africa. These included increasing awareness and understanding to promote a positive and inclusive culture and climate in the workspace; providing reasonable accommodation; and consulting and collaborating with people with disabilities to identify and address their needs and preferences. Employers can consider investing in the skill development and training for people with disabilities.

The CEE also noted the need for better enforcement of EEA regulations. A potential solution could be implementing efficient systems and mechanism to monitor and evaluate the progress and performance of companies when it comes to disability employment equity. **R**

About The Author

Rustim Ariefdien is a disability expert extraordinaire who assists businesses to "let the Ability of disAbility enAble their profitAbility" through BBBEE, skills development, employment equity and socio-economic development. His purpose is the economic empowerment of persons with disability in Africa. As a person with a disability himself, he has extensive experience in the development and empowerment of persons with disability.



Ensure ease of mind with insured travel

With all the things that can go wrong while travelling, travel insurance should be a priority

Everyone should take out some form of travel insurance before setting off on a trip whether local or international. This should include general cover cancellation, comprehensive medical cover, curtailment and delays as well as loss of items like your luggage or cash and documents, which can easily get stolen or lost.

I'm planning an overseas trip to Europe and one of the immediate "must haves" for me once I've paid for my air ticket is travel insurance. It is also essential for most visa applications for South Africans.

I like to have my insurance in place as soon as possible should there be any issue between the purchase of the air ticket and the actual travel date. If you have purchased the correct cover, you will be able to claim most expenses according to the cover on the policy if you have to cancel.

There are travel insurance companies that offer comprehensive policies. I always look at **TIC** for my cover. They offer cover for both leisure and business with options specifically tailored to youths, seniors and groups. They even have a Seniors Plus option!

Travel cover is offered up to a maximum of 365 days/one year for a traveller up to 69 years. Travellers over 70 to maximum 85 years of age can be covered up to 92 days. Local cover is for travellers up to age 79.

In doing my research, I wondered about the clause "pre-existing conditions" and what this means for persons with permanent disabilities. Does a permanent disability become a pre-existing condition? If so, how is it catered for? So, I contacted TIC and asked for some answers.

Their printed information on pre-existing illness cover states: "Emergency medical cover for pre-existing illnesses is available on selected products only for travellers up to the age of 69. This covers hospitalisation costs only."

For travellers over the age of 70, their policy is as follows: "Medical claims as a result of pre-existing illnesses, vascular, cardiovascular and cerebrovascular conditions are excluded

from cover for travellers aged 70 and over."

In my exchange with them, they explained the following: "At present there is no input for declaring your disabilities and no list of other conditions. The issue would be if you have ongoing treatment or if you have had treatment within the past six months prior to travel. However, what treatment has not been confirmed."

There is an Unspecified Events option that can assist for other conditions that are not terminal which offers up to R30 000 for travellers up to the age of 69. The Senior policy offers R20 000, which is good for pre-existing conditions, but must be taken at the time of issuing of the policy and cannot be added later. Remember that they will only pay out for pre-existing conditions if you are hospitalised.

Credit card payments for air tickets offer some free travel insurance cover, but this usually does not offer sufficient monetary cover, especially for medical and cancellation cover for International travel.



It is recommended to always "top up" your [medical] cover as our current exchange rate is not favourable.

It is recommended to always "top up" your cover as our current exchange rate is not favourable. Always ask the bank or your travel agent for these amounts that are covered within the purchase of the ticket as well as the top-up options. Some medical aid schemes offer additional medical cover for international travel, but it is not automatic.

You need to contact the medical aid and ask for a letter confirming that you are covered for the dates for your trip including their emergency contact numbers should you require assistance. Remember that these schemes will not cover cancellation and curtailment.

South African passport holders are required by many countries to apply for visas. Part of the visa requirements are that you have sufficient medical insurance cover. Please make sure that your travel insurance medical cover is sufficient for your visa requirements or they will reject your visa application.

These are the important cover benefits that you should be checking to have the sufficient cover (as recommended by TIC):

MEDICAL AND RELATED EXPENSES (ILLNESS OR INJURY)

- War and terrorism;
- Medical transportation, repatriation and evacuation;
- Repatriation of children and travel companion;
- Burial, cremation or return of mortal remains;
- Compassionate emergency visit;
- Daily hospital cash benefit during your journey;
- Daily hospital cash benefit in your country of residence; and
- Quarantine expenses.

PRE-EXISTING MEDICAL AND RELATED EXPENSES

- Medical transportation, repatriation and evacuation;
- Compassionate emergency visit;
- Repatriation of children and travel companion; and
- Burial, cremation or return of mortal remains.

ACCIDENTAL TOTAL PERMANENT DISABLEMENT INTERNATIONAL JOURNEY CANCELLATION

- International journey curtailment;
- International journey extension;
- International journey postponement;
- Missed connection;
- Travel delay;
- Weather conditions;
- Travel supplier insolvency; and
- Denied visa (SA passport holders only).

PERSONAL LIABILITY

- Hijack; hostage or wrongful detention; and
- Legal expenses.

LUGGAGE

- Cash and documents;
- Luggage delay;
- Car rental excess waiver.


FOR LOCAL POLICIES MEDICAL RELATED EXPENSES

- Medical transportation and evacuation;
- Burial expenses;
- Daily hospital cash benefit;
- Journey curtailment;
- Journey cancellation;
- Car hire;
- Accidental death;
- Accidental permanent total disablement;
- Car rental excess waiver;
- Personal liability;
- Luggage theft; and
- Travel delay.

Please remember that insurance is worked out on the length of stay with different rates for various cover periods and age groups. You can usually get group cover if there are a minimum of 10 persons travelling on the same itinerary.

Children up to the age of 21 years old can share cover with their parents if travelling with an adult they are related to. There is also Business Travel Cover options for those who need this option as well.

In order to make any claim you need to hold a departure and return air ticket. Whichever option you choose – ensure that you are covered so that, should your trip be disrupted in any way, you have recourse to assist yourself and your family financially; thus reducing the loss of either your holiday or personal items.

Lastly, while remembering to take out travel insurance, bear in mind that it does not cover every single inevitable situation that may arise, as it too has its limitations. However, having some comprehensive cover is always better than having no cover at all. Happy Travels! 

About The Author

Mandy Latimore is a consultant in the disability sector in the fields of travel and access. email: mandy@noveltravel.co.za



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View from both sides

As she moved from patient to practitioner, Louisa Brown learned a tremendous amount about rehabilitation after an amputation

I've been working at HG Prosthetics for the past nine months, and I'm truly thankful, as an amputee, for the opportunity to experience the rehabilitation process from a different perspective.

Having undergone the rehabilitation process personally, I now engage with other amputees at the Rehabilitation Hospital who are beginning their own journeys adjusting to life with new legs, arms, or both. For some, this is the darkest period of their lives.

Being part of a dedicated team committed to making this transition as smooth and successful as possible

makes every day at work rewarding beyond believe!

At times I see a reflection of my past struggles, facing the unknown, feeling confused and scared. However, this time, I can offer hope and reassurance that life does continue after amputation!

Although the journey is not easy, we strive to assist them through physical therapy, emotional support, and teaching them new ways to perform activities of daily living (ADL).

Witnessing patient growth, motivation increase and regaining of strength as they rediscover themselves, brings me immense joy and fulfillment.

“

Witnessing patient growth as they rediscover themselves brings me immense joy and fulfillment.

Together, we leave behind the old version of ourselves and embrace a stronger, more resilient self.

When amputees connect with one another, there's a noticeable shift in attitude and mindset.

Spending time with amputees at the rehabilitation hospital, it's clear that hope and motivation flourish as they envision their own future success and overcoming the challenges of adapting to a prosthesis.

Funding for prosthetics is crucial in the lives of amputees and can significantly impact the pace of their rehabilitation.

Whether it's through medical aid funds, workmen's compensation, the Road Accident Fund or private sources, delays in




MAIN PHOTO: Louisa Brown went from patient to practitioner; gaining tremendous insight in the process. **ABOVE:** Louisa Brown (far right) with the HG Prosthetics team.

securing funding can hinder progress and dampen spirits.

I believe that approval processes for these essential devices should be expedited and handled with compassion as they are vital for an amputee's successful reintegration into society and the workplace.

While public hospitals offer prosthetics at lower costs, the crucial variables needed for successful rehabilitation often differ significantly compared to private care.

Public services frequently provide minimal attention to the necessary adjustments and ongoing support needed for a well-fitting prosthesis, which can impact the overall effectiveness of the rehabilitation process.

Crossing over from patient to "carer" has opened my eyes to so many things! 



Why self-kindness matters

From boosting self-esteem to better connecting with others, showing yourself kindness is vital to a happy life

In the whirlwind of life, we often forget to extend kindness to the most crucial person: ourselves. But why does it matter? To illustrate the importance of being kind to oneself, I would like to borrow a phrase from Dr Wayne Dyer: “If you want to give someone six oranges one has to have six oranges. Equally, if you want to give love, kindness or compassion, you have to own it yourself.”

How can we give genuine love, care or compassion to our fellow man if we do not have these qualities ourself. Being kind to yourself is not selfish. It is a prerequisite for an authentic lifestyle and ultimately happiness. Apart from this very profound statement, there are many more benefits to our lives than meets the eye. Let’s explore these added benefits with a little poetic license...

BOOSTING SELF-WORTH

When you treat yourself kindly, it’s like a gentle pat on the back that says “you matter” – and that matters more than we realise. Self-kindness reinforces our self-worth and reminds us that we’re not just spectators in our own story. It’s the little nudge that says, “Hey, you’re enough”. That nudge accumulates, like coins in a piggy bank, building healthy self-esteem.

CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Self-kindness isn’t a solo act; it’s a duet. When you’re gentle with yourself, you become an open invitation for friendship. It’s like a sign reading, “friendships found here”. Being kind to yourself spills over, creating kindness in others as well. We were originally wired as community dependent, but as life has moved on at breakneck speed, this is getting lost. When you’re gentle with yourself, you become a magnet for kindred spirits. It’s like finding your tribe in a crowded room.

HANDLING LIFE’S CURVEBALLS

Life often throws curveballs – sometimes big Shot Puts. Self-kindness is your emotional umbrella. It’s not about dodging the meteors. It’s about standing tall, rain-soaked yet unyielding. When you practice self-kindness, you’re whispering to your own soul: “I’ve got your back”. That whisper echoes through the storm. Suddenly, you’re not just weathering difficulties; you’re dancing in the rain.

CURIOUS EMOTIONS AND MINDFULNESS

Being mindful is like turning on a light in your emotional house. You pause, curious, “What’s going on here?”. It’s not about chasing away the shadows; it’s about understanding them. Kindness, is like facing the light then your shadow falls behind you. It becomes your guide, a lantern in the dark. You navigate the stormy seas of feelings, acknowledging each wave. And guess what? You’re not lost; you’re exploring uncharted waters and you are the captain of your ship.

ACKNOWLEDGING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

We all have that inner critic – the one who critiques our dance moves, our life choices, and even our choice of breakfast cereal. But here’s the secret. Acknowledging negative thoughts is like turning on the bedroom lamp at night. Suddenly, the shadow retreats.

You say: “Ah, there is the thought that sometimes holds me back.” In that acknowledgment, you gain power. You’re not at the mercy of shadows; you’re the one holding the flashlight. Through self-kindness, you learn to tolerate your imperfections rather than scold yourself. You dance on even when your steps falter.

PERSONAL PEP TALK

When that inner critic cranks up the volume, you can use mantras as a way to practice your kindness. These are simple phrases that you should repeat to yourself like well-worn sneakers. They become your own personal pep talk. Maybe your is “I see with love and joy, I now create a life I love to look at”.

Mantras aren’t magic spells; they’re reminders. It’s your personal cheerleader. You repeat it like a soothing piece of music.

So, dear reader, remember this: Self-kindness isn’t a luxury; it’s oxygen for your soul. Make sure you have plenty of it. You deserve to breathe easy. **R**

About The Author

Len Davey is a qualified life coach. To book a session, contact him via his website: www.theworldwithin.co.za. A free “goal setting” session is offered without any obligation so that you can experience life coaching first hand.



Good role models to support community

Peer supporters can assist newly injured individuals, and those who have fallen through the cracks, with living full lives after a spinal cord injury

Aside from the physical changes and limitations, a spinal cord injury (SCI) has a tremendous impact on people's lives. It often impacts their relationships with friends, family and significant others. It impacts their engagement in society, their hobbies or job. There are also many **hidden consequences** like the lack of sleep.

While rehabilitation professionals try their best to prepare newly injured spinal cord injury patients for all that awaits them after they leave the rehabilitation facility, it isn't always possible to fully prepare the individuals.

This is where peer support can play a significant role. The aim of peer support is for seasoned wheelchair users to provide newly

injured individuals with the knowledge and insight that only experience can bring.

One such peer support, Sherwin Gerwell, shares: “Rehabilitation periods after a SCI are always being adjusted due to the availability of beds and funds. So, the injured individuals don’t get enough time to recover and adapt to their new way of life.”

“

Individuals don’t get enough time to recover and adapt to their new way of life.

“This is where peer support can fill the gap as an ongoing support structure; by training good role models in the local community to assist newly injured individuals and others who have fallen through the cracks, which will enable them to maintain a good quality of life.”

Sherwin sustained an SCI in 2008. Despite the shock of his new situation, he was quick to embrace his new reality and become active.

“I’ve adapted quickly to my new situation and reading through Rolling Inspiration magazines at the rehabilitation facility, I knew that there was more to learn about dealing with a spinal cord injury on a daily basis.”

“I was always up and ready for gym and to wheel around while in rehab. After my discharge, I started visiting the facility once a week to kill time and because I felt comfortable in that environment,” he recalls.

A year later, he was invited by his social worker to attend a five-day peer support training camp hosted by Motivation Africa at the Western Cape Rehabilitation Centre (WCRC).

“When I got the call from Gail, my social worker, I jumped at the opportunity to go on

the five-day training that was going to be facilitated by wheelchair users with SCIs. As she explained to me, they will be teaching us how to deal with daily routes and more detail on the effects of an SCI.”

Sherwin hasn’t looked back and remains passionate about supporting others in living a full life.

He notes: “At Afrique Rehabilitation and Research Consultants, peer support is a key activity. We partner with organisations and train their clients and members to become peer supporters.

“One should keep in mind that being a peer supporter is an ongoing process. It’s important to keep up with the changing times and be there for ongoing support,” Sherwin advises others who are considering becoming a peer supporter.


“As a peer supporter, your key priority is to take care of yourself first because, without your health, there’s no you.”

“

As a peer supporter, your key priority is to take care of yourself first.

“Get to know your community and the common services of which you and your clients make use. Further your education, follow your dreams, learn to drive and explore your city or town,” he continues.

In other words, live a full life and be a good role model so that you have the experience, knowledge and skills to help others live their lives to their full potential.

For more information on becoming a peer supporter, reach out to Sherwin at gerwellsherwin@gmail.com or contact QASA at info@qasa.co.za. 



Promise and perils of stem cell treatment

While stem cell treatment holds potential to assist with recovering from a spinal cord injury, Dr Robert Evans cautions that there is not a safe, reliable and regulated treatment available for people yet

One of the most talked-about potential treatments after a spinal cord injury (SCI) in recent years is stem cell therapy. Stem cells are special human cells with the ability to develop into many different cell types, such as muscle cells or brain cells. They also have the potential to repair damaged tissue, which makes them a promising avenue for SCI treatment. However, the current reality

of stem cell therapy is more complex and caution is advised.

THE HYPE AROUND STEM CELLS

Stem cell therapy has generated significant excitement, especially for those with an SCI, as it offers the tantalising possibility of partial or even full recovery. This optimism is not without basis. Several phase I and II clinical trials have shown positive results in animal

models, and safety has been demonstrated during these trials. However, despite these promising developments, clinical efficacy in human trials is still lacking. The translation from animal models to successful human treatments is a significant hurdle that has yet to be fully overcome.

RISE OF STEM CELL TOURISM

The excitement surrounding stem cell therapy has led to the phenomenon known as “stem cell tourism”. This term describes individuals traveling across borders to receive stem cell treatments, often in countries where medical regulations are less stringent. Unfortunately, these trips can involve large medical fees and take place in unregulated environments, where the safety and efficacy of the treatments are not guaranteed.

While it’s understandable to seek out every possible option in the face of a life-altering injury, it is crucial to approach stem cell therapy with caution. As of now, there is insufficient evidence to support stem cell therapy as a valid treatment for SCI outside of approved clinical studies. Many unscrupulous practitioners exploit the vulnerability of those desperate for a cure, offering unproven treatments at exorbitant prices.

IMPORTANCE OF ETHICAL AND REGULATED RESEARCH

Participation in clinical studies undertaken by reputable universities and medical institutions is highly encouraged. These studies adhere to strict ethical guidelines and regulatory standards, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of participants while contributing to the scientific understanding and development of potential treatments.

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR RECOVERY

While the allure of a quick fix through stem cell therapy can be strong, it’s important to focus on proven methods of recovery and rehabilitation. Here are some practical steps to consider:

- **Physical therapy:** Engaging in regular physical therapy is crucial for maintaining muscle strength and flexibility, improving mobility, and enhancing overall wellbeing. Work with a specialised therapist such as

a biokineticist or physiotherapist who can tailor exercises to your specific needs.

- **Occupational therapy:** This type of therapy helps you develop the skills needed for daily activities. It focuses on improving your ability to perform tasks such as dressing, eating, and using assistive devices.
- **Mental health support:** Life after a SCI can take a toll on your mental health. Seeking support from a psychologist or counsellor can help you cope with the emotional challenges and develop strategies to manage stress and anxiety.
- **Peer support groups:** Connecting with others who have similar experiences can provide invaluable emotional support and practical advice. These groups can offer a sense of community and understanding that is difficult to find elsewhere.
- **Healthy lifestyle choices:** Maintaining a healthy diet, staying hydrated, and avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption can improve your overall health and aid in your recovery process.
- **Education:** Stay informed about the latest developments in SCI research, be wary of catchy headlines and rather read up on treatments from reputable sources.

While the potential of stem cell therapy is exciting, it is essential to approach it with a critical eye and prioritise treatments proven to work. The journey to recovery from an SCI is challenging, but focusing on established rehabilitation methods and participating in ethical, regulated research studies can provide a safer and more effective path forward.

Remember, your health and wellbeing are the most valuable asset you own. The best approach to recovery is one grounded in evidence-based practices and support from trusted medical professionals. **R**

About The Enable Centre

The Enable Centre is an outpatient physical and cognitive rehabilitation centre with branches in Cape Town and Durban. It operates as a social enterprise, meaning it provides therapy to people from all socioeconomic backgrounds whilst incorporating innovative technology and evidence-based treatments.



Breaking barriers on the slopes of Afriski

Adaptive Sports Fund has its adaptive skis ready for the slopes in Lesotho

After a few years of uncertainty about whether Afriski in Lesotho would be open for business, we are thrilled to announce that the slopes are open. More importantly, the Adaptive Sports Fund (ASF) has its adaptive skis ready to go. With both beginner and novice skis suited for various disability levels, people with disabilities can now experience the adrenaline and freedom that skiing offers.

Mathys Roets initially started the ski programme with a ski he brought from Canada 12 years ago. Most beginners started on this ski, marking the beginning of ASF's adaptive skiing journey.

Furthermore, Mathys, along with his network of friends, worked tirelessly to make Afriski more wheelchair accessible. Their efforts led to improvements in accommodation, ramps,



and toilets, making the resort more inclusive. Together, Mathys and ASF made it possible to grow the adaptive programme significantly.

This opportunity is thanks to a partnership and collaboration established a few years back between ASF and Kobus Oeschger. Kobus was instrumental in designing, engineering, and fabricating all the locally manufactured sit-skis, which gave ASF the chance to create

the adaptive skiing program. This program ultimately allows people with disabilities to experience the thrilling sensation of being high up on a mountain, gliding down snow-covered slopes.

Sadly, Kobus passed away after a brave fight against cancer. However, his legacy lives on through his contributions to adaptive skiing. Recently, Mathys and Jacque paid tribute



TOP: The Adaptive Sports Fund is ready to hit the Afriski slopes with its adapted skis.

LEFT: Kobus Oeschger was instrumental in creating the locally manufactured sit-skis.

BOTTOM: Get in touch with the ASF to book your spot for next year's snow season, which typically runs from July to August.

to Kobus by revisiting the very slopes that cemented their bond and friendship.

In remembrance of Kobus, all ASF's sit-skis are branded with "Oeschger Mark 3" – a small tribute to an incredible individual who inspired others with his past accomplishments and will continue to inspire future generations. His memory is a cornerstone of the adaptive skiing program at Afriski.

The adaptive skiing programme at Afriski is more than just an opportunity for fun; it's a chance for individuals with disabilities to push their limits and experience the exhilaration of skiing.

Each year, participants of all skill levels come together to embrace the sport, supported by ASF's commitment to accessibility and inclusion.

If you're looking to experience the thrill of adaptive skiing, get in touch with us to book your spot for next year's snow season, which typically runs from July to August. Join us at Afriski to celebrate the spirit of adventure and the legacy of those who made it possible.

Donate to make a difference! Adaptive Sports Fund is a Section 18A tax-exempt organisation, and a certificate can be issued for donations. **R**

About The Author

Adaptive Sports Fund (ASF) is a non-profit company, committed to supporting individuals with disabilities and breaking down barriers and creating a more equitable and just world for all people, regardless of their abilities. and with the following objectives:

Supporting, enriching, encouraging, motivating and providing resources that empower individuals with disabilities to achieve their goals for them to live their best lives and creating a more accessible and equitable society for all.



ADAPTIVE SPORTS FUND

NO LIMITS. JUST LIFE!



OUR VISION: is to encourage people with disabilities to have equal opportunities to participate in sports and physical activity, and where their abilities are celebrated and embraced by all members of the sports community.



Never give up on life and love

Chris Labuschagné's journey is a testament
that one should never give up on
life and love

As a Grade 11 learner and lock at Postmasburg High School, Chris Labuschagné was left a quadriplegic after breaking his neck during a second-team training session in 1988. Chris recalls: "I caught the ball in the lineout and my teammates supported me in the maul. As I started going to the ground to release the ball, someone jumped over from the other side and landed on my neck."

"I remember the weight pushing down on my neck and the horrible sound of bone grinding and breaking. Everyone got up and I was lying on the ground unable to move. I struggled to breathe and one of the coaches got a few guys together and they very carefully turned me on my back."

Picking up the pieces, at just 16 years of age, was extremely challenging both physically and mentally, Chris admits. It started with a six-month stint at HF Verwoerd Hospital.

"During my hospital stay, everyone was so positive and supportive, but nothing prepares you when you finally have to go back into the 'real' world. Postmasburg was a small town and not wheelchair friendly. It was quite a big shock moving back home," he recalls.

"What saved me from being too negative was my family. My parents took on the role of looking after me and my brothers and sister were always around if I needed help. I'll always be grateful to my mother and father for everything they sacrificed," Chris shares.

"Most of my friends at the time were preparing for the year-end exams and very few came around to visit, so the first few months at home were really difficult as I had a lot of time on my hands to think and not sure what to do with my life."

Opting to prioritise education, he headed to Elizabeth Conradie, a school in Kimberley that catered for children with disabilities, where he had to redo Grade 11.

"I think what saved me was when I started school the year after my injury. My focus moved to studying and for the first time, I actually started excelling in school. I think this was the turning point where I felt I could still achieve something in life," Chris reflects. Upon matriculating in 1990, he moved back home and enrolled at Technikon SA where he obtained his national diploma in information technology.

"I also started doing IT support for a few businesses in town and became the local agent for a courier company, which kept me busy after I finished my studies as it took me around three years before I received an opportunity as a programmer at the Department of Land Affairs in Cape Town," Chris shares.

Now based in Milnerton, he's been a key member of the Old Mutual team since 2004. He explains: "I've moved between positions from disaster recovery and business continuity to implementing and managing the storage environments in the data centres."

Not only does he have a successful career, but he also found love, at a friend's 40th birthday party of all places. He recalls: "I always thought I'd grow old alone, but the hope of meeting someone was always there. A friend introduced me to Natasha and we talked for most of the night.

"I asked her for her number and she took my phone and added it. The next day, I had to work through my contacts because I couldn't remember her name. Eventually, I called and asked her if she would like to go for coffee and the rest is history." he recalls laughingly.




MAIN PHOTO AND ABOVE: Chris Labuschagné's met his wife, Natasha, in his late 30s. Very fittingly, he encourages others never to give up on life and love.

They got engaged in 2010 and tied the knot in March 2011.

"The energy that she's brought into my life is amazing. We like spending time with each other, we're very supportive of each other and our careers and she goes above and beyond what someone else would," he shares.

Another partner in life for Chris is the Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund. He notes: "The impact the Players' Fund has made in my life is quite significant. When I was still in hospital after my injury, they were talking about the cost of a motorised wheelchair and all the other equipment I'd need."

"I knew that my parents would never be able to afford it. The Fund stepped in and helped me with most of the equipment I needed and they never make you feel like you're begging for help the day you need them."

His message to others, fittingly, is to never give up: "You have to do whatever you can to better your life. Never say no to new opportunities; you have to move forward, and above all, do it in such a way that you inspire someone who might be looking at you." 

Donate to the Player's Fund

If you would like to support the Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund, visit their website at www.playersfund.org.za and select any number of the giving options available, which include EFT, payfast, Snapscan and Zapper.



Seasoned wheelchair rugby athlete shares his journey

South Africa Wheelchair Rugby chat to Ryan Guest about his eight years playing the sport

Ryan Guest has played wheelchair rugby for eight years with the Johannesburg-based team, Mandeville Wheelchair Rugby. We find out a bit more about him.

South Africa Wheelchair Rugby (SA WCR): What inspired you to take up wheelchair rugby, and how did you get started?

Ryan Guest (RG): Boredom is a big challenge for many people with disabilities. Wheelchair rugby offered an opportunity for something to do and get out of the house.

Sports are limited for people with disabilities, especially quadriplegics, so it was great to get

involved in an exciting and physical sport like wheelchair rugby.

I also wanted to meet new people and make new friends who could relate to my disability and some of the things that we go through as people with disabilities.

SA WCR: Can you share a bit about your background and how you acquired your disability?

RG: I've always been a bit of an adrenaline junkie. I love motorsports and motorbikes in particular and used to do motocross.

I was in a motorbike accident in 2004. My life changed in an instant, and the accident resulted in me becoming a quadriplegic.



SA WCR: How has wheelchair rugby impacted your life, both on and off the court?

RG: On the court, I've made a lot of new friends, both within my own team and across the South African wheelchair rugby community. Off the court, the sport has really helped a lot with improving my strength and fitness, making my daily routines and transfers much easier.

SA WCR: What position do you play, and what do you enjoy most about it?

RG: I am a "low-pointer" player with a defensive role on the court. It's my job to stop the other team from moving forward. I really enjoy the physicality of the sport. We get to "crash-and-bash" each other on court, which is a great release from the daily grind of having a disability.

SA WCR: What's your favourite memory or achievement in wheelchair rugby so far?

RG: Participating in the 2017 SA WCR Nationals Tournament in Cape Town. Travelling with the team was amazing. The tournament was intense and competitive. I was awarded best low-pointer of the season by SA WCR and given the nickname "Bulldog" by the committee. It was a great experience.

SA WCR: How do you prepare for matches and training sessions?

RG: I prepare for matches by attending weekly training sessions with my team. The sessions are a good balance of strength, fitness and tactics. I also gym at home three times a week.

SA WCR: What are some of the biggest challenges you've faced in wheelchair rugby, and how have you overcome them?

RG: Biggest challenge for me was reaching a level of fitness to compete on tournament days where many games are played on the same day. Also to come to grips with the tactics of a very fast-paced game. But these come quite quickly if you commit and apply yourself well.

SA WCR: Can you describe a particularly tough game or opponent, and how you handled it?

RG: Particularly tough opponents are our friends from Bloemfontein, Mustangs Wheelchair Club. They are a very talented and well-organised team who set the bar in many ways for the wheelchair rugby league. I like to keep them in mind when I'm training to inspire me to keep pushing for my best.

SA WCR: How do you balance your rugby career with other aspects of your life?

RG: It would be better to say that wheelchair rugby has brought some balance to my life.

SA WCR: Who are your rugby heroes or role models, and why?

RG: Firstly, the Australian wheelchair rugby athlete Riley Batt, for achieving his goals through adversity, and becoming one of the best in the world. As a low-pointer, I look up to Trevor Hirschfield from Team Canada. Trevor and I have the same classification level in the sport and he is one of the best.



SA WCR: How do you hope to inspire others through your own experiences and achievements?

RG: If I can do it, you can do it. I hope that people seeing the positive changes in me would inspire them to get involved in this great sport and community.

SA WCR: What advice would you give to someone new to wheelchair rugby?

RG: Don't give up on the first few sessions of training. The game might seem difficult and complicated in the beginning, but you quickly find your groove.

SA WCR: What are your short-term and long-term goals in wheelchair rugby?

RG: My short-term goal is to win the 2024 SA WCR League with my team. My long-term goal is to play for the South African National Wheelchair Rugby Team, the Wheelboks, and represent my country internationally.

SA WCR: Do you have your sights set on any major international competitions?

RG: It would be amazing if South Africa could qualify for the Paralympics. The sport is slowly growing in Africa as well, and it would be awesome to play against other African nations that are starting up their own leagues, like Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda.

SA WCR: How do you see yourself contributing to the growth and development of wheelchair rugby?

RG: I see myself introducing as many people

MAIN PHOTO, LEFT, ABOVE LEFT: Ryan Guest has been playing wheelchair rugby for eight years and found the sport has helped him tremendously.

ABOVE RIGHT: Wheelchair rugby has brought blance to Ryan's life.

to the sport as possible for them to get the same benefits that I have.


SA WCR: What's your favourite pre-game ritual or superstition?

RG: I must have a protein shake with a scoop of pre-workout before a tournament, and adjust my cushion even if I know it's already okay!

SA WCR: How do you like to celebrate a win?

RG: Going into a huddle with my team mates and singing a victory war-cry on court.

SA WCR: If you could play wheelchair rugby with any celebrity or historical figure, who would it be and why?

RG: Eben Etzebeth. He is an amazing rugby player with an incredible work ethic. It would be great to see how he handles himself in a rugby wheelchair. We just need to find one big enough! 

About South Africa Wheelchair Rugby

South Africa Wheelchair Rugby (SAWCR) is the official administrator of the wheelchair rugby in South Africa. The association is involved in all aspects from development and local club support to game officials and managing the national wheelchair rugby league. For more information, please contact admin@sawcr.co.za or visit the official Facebook page at [@SAWheelchairRugby](https://www.facebook.com/SAWheelchairRugby).



Balancing independence and support

It can be difficult for couples to balance their relationship with the responsibilities of caregiving, but prioritising independence can help

When a loved one sustains a spinal cord injury (SCI), both partners face profound challenges during the recovery process. While attention often focuses on the individual with the injury, the partner, who often assumes a caregiving role, encounters unique difficulties. It can be complex to balance the roles of partner and caregiver, but with the right strategies, it is possible to maintain a healthy, supportive, and intimate relationship.

Encouraging your partner's independence is essential. Assisting them in finding adaptive tools and strategies that enable them to perform daily tasks on their own can foster their sense of autonomy. Celebrating small victories and milestones reinforces their capability and builds this confidence. Additionally, clearly defining boundaries between caregiving and your personal relationship helps preserve the romantic and emotional aspects of your partnership. Establishing times when you focus solely on being partners, not caregiver and patient, can significantly contribute to maintaining your relationship's health.

Open and honest communication about needs, expectations, and feelings prevent misunderstandings and resentment from building up. Using "I" statements to express your feelings and needs without blaming can create a more supportive environment.

Couples therapy, especially with a psychologist that understands SCI, can provide a safe space to explore changes in your relationship dynamics. Therapists can offer tools and strategies for better communication and conflict resolution.


Building a support network of family, friends, and community resources can offer an occasional breather for the person with the injury and the partner. Allowing yourself time to recharge and maintain your well-being will help guard you against burnout or feeling despondent. Any opportunity to "outsource" all or part of the caring burden should be embraced as this will enable you to focus more on your role as a partner. Anyone can be a carer but only you can be the partner.

Prioritising intimacy is equally important. Just as you schedule medical appointments and therapies, make time for intimacy. This doesn't always have to mean sexual intimacy. Emotional closeness and physical affection are equally vital for maintaining a strong bond. Be open to exploring new ways to be intimate, as SCI might necessitate discovering different methods of physical closeness and sexual expression that accommodate your partner's capabilities and comfort levels. This could be a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with your partner. Recognising and acknowledging your own needs is essential for effective caregiving. Make time for activities that you enjoy, pursue hobbies, and ensure you have a healthy outlet for stress.

Joining support groups, whether in person or online, allows you to connect with other caregivers who understand your challenges, providing emotional support and practical advice. Sharing experiences with those in similar situations can be incredibly validating and empowering.

Staying informed about the latest advancements in SCI care and rehabilitation can empower you to advocate effectively for your partner's needs. Knowledge

about adaptive technologies, therapeutic practices, and legal rights ensures you are well-equipped to navigate the complexities of caregiving. Additionally, educating those around you about SCI can foster understanding and reduce the burden of unnecessary questions or misconceptions.

Whether it's family members, friends, or colleagues, providing them with information helps create a more supportive environment for both you and your partner. By focusing on these strategies, you can help ensure that the relationship remains strong and supportive, and that both partners feel valued and understood. Balancing the roles of caregiver and partner is challenging but not impossible, and with the right approach, it can lead to a deeper, more resilient relationship. 

About The Author

Dr Danie Breedt is a passionate scholar-practitioner in the field of psychology. He divides his time between training, research and clinical practice. Danie works from an integrative interactional approach in psychotherapy, dealing with a wide range of emotional difficulties and sexual rehabilitation for patients with disabilities. He is the co-owner of Charis Psychological Services, a psychology practice that specialises in physical rehabilitation across South Africa.






Online radio centres disability

Skills Village Radio is an online radio show hosted by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. While disability-related content is often included in mainstream media as a feature, Skills Village Radio centres disability.

It aims to provide people with disabilities, and the wider disability community, a platform to advocate, educate and share their stories. The ultimate goal is to create a more inclusive society. While based in Soweto, they broadcast nationally through their website.

Skills Village Radio has also partnered with QASA to provide the organisation with a weekly platform to discuss its programmes and services, as well as advocate, education and share the stories of its members. You can tune into the Health and Wellness show with Princess Sibanda every Tuesday from 10 AM to catch the interview with QASA.

You can reach out to Skills Village Radio on e-mail at info@skillsvillageradio.co.za, phone 064 504 0411 or visit their website at www.skillsvillageradio.co.za. 

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Find accessible cafes with Wheel Good

Wheel Good Coffee is an Instagram page dedicated to rating the accessibility of coffee shops. Founder and occupational therapist Lesanne de Jager started the initiative to address the apprehension many people with disabilities feel about the accessibility of spaces. By visiting different venues with wheelchair users, she provides others with a clear idea of what to expect from the venue beforehand. Find and follow the Wheel Good Coffee Instagram page [here](#). 



2024 Events Calendar

AFRICA HEALTH CONGRESS

22 – 24 October

The Africa Health Congress will take place from 22 to 24 October in Cape Town. There are tiered registrations available. For more information, visit the [official website](#).

DRAM

3 November – 3 December

In South Africa, Disability Rights Awareness Month (DRAM) is held from 3 November to 3 December, which is International Day for People with Disabilities and National Disability Rights Awareness Day. This year, the theme or main topic is “Consolidating and Accelerating Rights of Persons with Disabilities into the Future”.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

3 December

Commemorated each year on 3 December, the International Day for People with Disabilities aims to promote the rights and wellbeing of people with disabilities. This year’s theme is “Transformative Solutions for Inclusive Development: the role of Innovation in Fuelling an Accessible and Equitable World “.



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