

ROLLING INSPIRATION

The leading magazine for people with mobility impairments

Embracing Life's Challenges

Theo Mgodana shares his story

4

Top Travel Tips

Make festive travelling easier

10

Till Your Last Breath

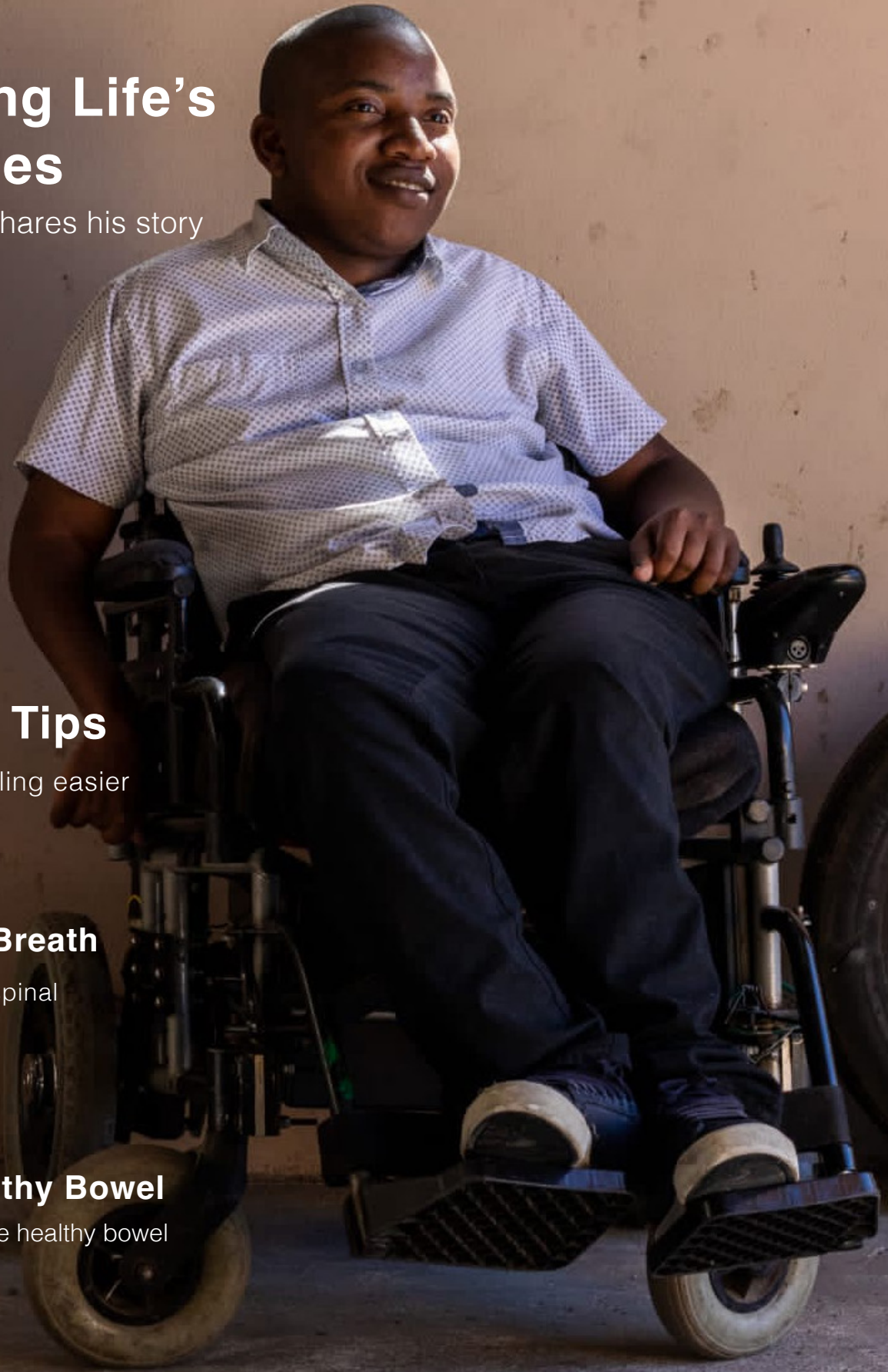
There is life after a spinal
cord injury

12

Battle for Healthy Bowel

Simply ways to ensure healthy bowel

16





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.

CONTENTS

REHABILITATION

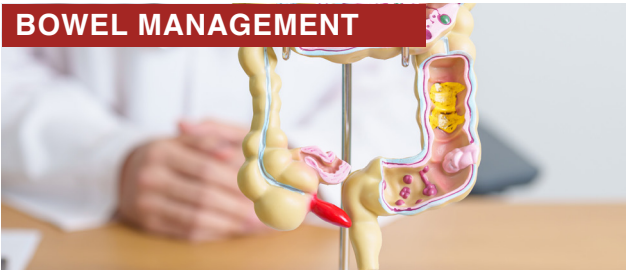


Flying High on Green and Gold

Rehab patients joined the celebrations at the Union Buildings for the Springbok's victory tour.

PAGE 6

BOWEL MANAGEMENT



Winning the Battle for a Healthy Bowel

It can be a battle to obtain and maintain healthy, regular bowel movement.

PAGE 16

SPORT



Home of heroes

Rising Phoenix takes viewers on an emotional and inspiring journey.

PAGE 32

REGULARS

“
Has the present government given you the rights that you believe you deserve?”

QASA NEWS

PAGE 3

IDA'S CORNER

PAGE 8

TRAVEL



EMPLOYMENT

PAGE 14

LIFE COACH

PAGE 15

PLAYERS' FUND

PAGE 20

ROLLING KIDS

PAGE 28

UPFRONT



“
It is your right to stay in your own wheelchair up to the aircraft.”

30

SEXUALITY

PAGE 34

HOTSPOT NEWS

PAGE 36

CLASSIFIEDS

PAGE 37

ADAPTIVE SPORTS FUND



CONTACT US

MARISKA MORRIS

Editor

rollinginspiration@qasa.co.za



Rolling Inspiration is published by the QuadPara Association of South Africa (QASA). Articles and photographs may not be reproduced without the consent of the editor.



Make Your Vote Count

In the run up to the 2024 election year, Ari Seirlis poses a few questions for voters to consider

Let's look ahead. The next national election is near. I guess in May 2024. This article might seem too soon for its agenda, but it's not. The time is now to assess. Ask yourselves a few questions.

Has the present government given you the rights that you believe, as a person with a disability, you deserve? What I mean by that is not whether the legislation is in place, but whether the implementation of the legislation, the policing of legislation and the freedom that the legislation should be giving you has happened.

Do you feel we live our lives on an equal footing? Has the [White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) been implemented and do you feel the benefit? Has universal design been implemented to allow you to access opportunities in all structures?

These are critical questions to ask ourselves 30 years since the new democracy. Evaluate your answer. Has the ANC done for you, as a person with a disability, what you expected? If yes, then continue to support them.

If not, then choose another party to vote for under the following criteria.

- Do they have a person with a disability or more than one on the candidate list?
- Have they included references to the disability rights in their manifesto?

- Do they speak about the rights of people with disabilities when addressing public forums looking for support?
- Have political parties formally engaged the disability sector, shown their manifesto and indicated that they understand the significance of the White Paper on the Rights of People with Disabilities?



These are critical questions to ask ourselves.

I've said this before and it's worth saying again. Is this not the right time to start a [Disability Party](#)? I personally think so. But that would need to have the support of all people with disabilities and a big wallet. That time will come, I'm sure, if we are not granted the wishes and promises made by politicians. **R**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ari Seirlis is the former CEO of the QuadPara Association of South Africa and, presently, a member of the Presidential Working Group on Disability. He is a wheelchair user and disability activist. Ari has recently published his biography, which can be found at www.wheelsoffire.co.za.



A continent in the same boat

The 2023 AfriNEAD Conference was held at the Artscape in Cape Town from 30 November to 3 December. General Manager of the QuadPara Association of the Western Cape, Anthony Ghillino attended the event and was given the task of chairing the opening session.

The conference was well attended, hosting delegates from across the world, many of whom had come especially to present the findings of their research into various disability-related topics.

When asked for his impressions on the conference, Anthony said that he was struck

by the similarities in the challenges people with disabilities in various countries across the continent face.

Transport, education and employment were re-occurring and common themes, as was the positive role that appropriate assistive devices and technology can play in the lives of persons with disabilities.

Healthy discussions and debates took place away from the formal presentations with many ideas and solutions shared among delegates. All in all, the 7th AfriNEAD Conference appeared to be an overwhelming success.

Buckle Up! We don't want new members

With the festive season upon us, we would like to remind road users that we don't want new members. So, please be safe and vigilant on the road.

When travelling long distances, be sure to take frequent break (roughly every two to three hours) and stay over if you are feeling tired.

Keep a safe following distance and drive at slower speeds. Accidents that occur at slower speeds are less likely to result in serious harm or death.

Under no circumstances should you drink and drive or get into a vehicle with a driver

who has been drinking! Rather call a sober friend or family to collect you, book an Uber (with a sober driver) or make use of safe public transport.

Most importantly, buckle up! A seatbelt can be crucial in saving your life and avoiding serious harm if an accident occurs. It only takes a second for your life to be changed.

FOLLOW QASA ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Embracing Life's Challenges

Theo Mgodana overcame his disability with determination and by embracing life's challenges. He shares his story



Life often presents us with unexpected challenges. How we respond to them can define our journey. For me, the path took an unexpected turn when, at the age of six, a speeding vehicle forever changed the course of my life. The accident left me with a spinal cord injury, specifically a C5 spinal cord injury, resulting in paraplegia.

While it was a daunting and life-altering moment, it became the catalyst for a journey of resilience, self-discovery, and personal growth.

The initial days following my injury were filled with uncertainty and countless questions. Adapting to a new way of life was a daunting task. With the support of my family and friends, I slowly began to navigate the uncharted territory of living with a disability. Their unwavering encouragement provided me with the strength to accept the challenges ahead.

One of the most significant hurdles I encountered was the physical limitations that my spinal cord injury imposed. Simple tasks that were once taken for granted became daily obstacles. Mobility, independence, and accessibility became paramount concerns. However, I was determined not to let my disability define me or dictate the boundaries of my aspirations.

My love for music had always burned brightly within me and I was determined to transform it into a driving force for my life. With sheer determination and a laptop, I embarked on a journey of self-discovery.

I downloaded music mixing software, Virtual DJ, and began practicing the art of DJing. It was a way for me to connect with the world, express myself and pursue my dream of making people dance.

As I honed my skills, I realised that my passion for music extended beyond the turntables. I yearned to create my own unique sound and share my artistic vision with the world. This realisation led me to take the bold step of enrolling at the School of Audio Engineering (SAE) Institute in Woodstock, Cape Town, to further my music education.

It was a decision that would transform my life once again.

The nightlife and club scene, where many DJs find their calling, presented its own set of accessibility challenges. Most venues were not wheelchair-friendly, featuring stairs that seemed insurmountable. These physical barriers could have easily discouraged me, but I chose a different path.

I decided to shift my focus towards music production – a field that allowed me to craft my signature sound and bring my creative ideas to life without the constraints of physical accessibility.

Bridges for Music, an organisation committed to supporting aspiring musicians, opened doors to a new chapter in my journey. It provided me with the platform and resources to hone my skills as a music producer. The ability to create music became my sanctuary – a place where I could pour my heart and soul into every beat and melody.

Through the ups and downs of my journey, I've learned that the human spirit is remarkably resilient. It's not about avoiding adversity, but rather about confronting it head-on with unwavering determination. While moments of doubt have occasionally crept into my mind, I've never let them overshadow my outlook on life.

Gabriela Corral's words, "You can do anything you set your mind to", have become my guiding light. I may be limited by physical challenges, but I am boundlessly inspired by the opportunities that have come my way. I am grateful for the support that has surrounded me throughout this journey, for it has fuelled my determination to overcome every obstacle.


My story serves as a reminder that disability does not equate to inability. It's a testament to the power of perseverance, the strength of passion, and the belief that, with the right mindset, we can conquer any adversity. Today, as I continue to create music, I stand as living proof that life's challenges can be transformed into stepping stones towards a brighter and more fulfilling future. 



PHOTO BY LIESL BARNARD

Flying High on Green and Gold

Rehabilitation patients joined the festivities at the Union Buildings, Pretoria, during the Springbok rugby team's victory tour

To celebrate the 2023 Rugby World Cup win, the Springbok rugby team toured the country with crowds gathering to cheer them on. The rehabilitation team at Mediclinic Muelmed, Pretoria, wanted patients to join in on this historic event and arranged for them to travel to the Union Buildings to celebrate with the nation.

"Taking the Rehab at Muelmed patients out to see the Springboks victory parade served as a motivational and morale-boosting activity," says Madalein Greyling, senior marketing and public relations manager at Rita Henn and Partners Rehab. "Events, especially ones as significant as this, can be incredibly uplifting and inspiring."

"For patients undergoing physical rehabilitation, being part of such a celebratory event can provide a sense of joy, community, and connection, which are vital for their mental and emotional well-being during their recovery. Being involved in an event that celebrates teamwork, dedication, and

success might resonate with the patients' own rehabilitation journey," she adds.

While this outing was unique, there are several initiatives at Muelmed to encourage patients. Madalein shares: "We offer peer support training where our past patients become peer supporters to the facility and people in their local communities. Peer support addresses the emotional, social, and motivational aspects of the recovery process. It creates a network of individuals who uplift, inspire, and guide each other through the challenges of rehabilitation."

In addition to more personal support, there are also group support for patients. Madalein explains: "Support groups play a multifaceted role during physical rehabilitation by offering emotional, informational, motivational, and practical support to aid in the recovery process and improve the overall well-being of people undergoing physical rehabilitation."

We hope that the outing did encourage patients, and we wish them the best in their rehabilitation. **R**



PHOTO BY LIESL BARNARD



PHOTO BY LIESL BARNARD



PHOTO BY LIESL BARNARD



PHOTO BY LIESL BARNARD



PHOTO BY LIESL BARNARD



Overcoming hardship

A tale of the courage, resilience and love of life that helped Dejané de Bruin overcome hardship

It is rare but it happens. When it happens, it lifts the states of mind of all that share in the circumstance. It happens when a terrible event is met with courageous positivity and an upbeat joy of life regardless of circumstance. Helen Keller, born deaf and blind, stated that the source of her life-optimism was founded in the realisation that the world was full of hardship, but that it was equally full of the overcoming of hardship.

This is the story of Dejané de Bruin who grew from a scared youngster into a courageous young woman because she chose to overcome her hardship with a spirit of joy, courage, and resilient perseverance.

Dejané's hardship started on 28 October 2022 when the then twelve-year-old suddenly developed back pain while playing with friends. She laid down for a while, decided to go for a shower and experienced an onset of intense fear when she collapsed and found that she suddenly became paralysed from the waist down.

She was rushed to the George Mediclinic where she was initially diagnosed with Gillian

Barre syndrome, but following a second MRI scan, a final diagnosis of Transverse Myelitis (TM) was made. TM is caused by the inflammation of the spinal cord. It damages the fatty myelin sheath around the nerves. (The myelin sheath acts like the plastic insulation around the copper wires of an electric cord.) As a result, the nerves stop working.

The exact reason why TM occurs in some (unfortunate) people is uncertain, but TM inflammation can result as a side effect of underlying conditions such as various infective conditions, trauma, or lack of oxygen to the spinal cord. Full or partial recovery occurs in most cases, but about a third of cases remain with serious disabilities, including paralysis and incontinence of the bladder and/or bowel. In all instances the major management of the condition includes physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Medication includes high doses of steroids and anti-inflammatory medicines.

Dejané spent four weeks in George Mediclinic followed by another eight weeks in the Aurora Rehabilitation hospital in East London after which she was discharged to continue

rehabilitation as an outpatient; physiotherapy, fitness training and occupational therapy. All of which is still ongoing.

Initially things were very scary and rough for Dejané and her mother, Delanie, who supported her throughout the hospitalisation as well as the in- and outpatient rehabilitation.

They suddenly found themselves in uncharted territory; a life-altering paralysis with horrible additional effects – incontinence, intense pain, shattering heartache, and a debilitating fear of the unknown, to name but a few. All of this in, for the two of them, a foreign, intimidating hospital environment.

They missed their home, their dogs and Dejané's netball; the normal routines of their lives were upended. However, when Delanie became overwhelmed and the tears flowed, Dejané would reach out to her, saying with a smile: "Don't worry mommy, we've got this". But Dejané's pain was noticeable in her eyes and her most frequent question to the doctors was when she would be able to play netball again.

Dejané's most difficult time was rehab at Aurora with new doctors, physios, occupation therapists and nursing staff. Witnessing damage to other patients affected her deeply. To top it all, she was the only child in the hospital...

However, this was also where her positivity and courage came to the fore, soon making her the darling of the hospital, patients and staff alike. Always ready with a laugh and an upbeat mindset. She had to relearn how to dress herself, how to "talk" to her legs, how to transfer; from bed, chair, and floor – tipping her out of her chair and guiding her with techniques to get back in. When she failed, it was always, "Let's try again, I will get it right".


When the two of them, trapped in a hospital ward, became home sick, missing their family and pets, silly videos became an escape. They took a decision of will together; to remain positive and upbeat. No matter what "lemons" were thrown at them, they would

"turn it into lemonade". An aunt encapsulated it: "I am so glad that the two of you can laugh together and cry together about what you are going through. One day you will look back on this and realise how you have grown together and be proud of it. I thank the Lord that he gave you the gift of humour even during times of heartache. Without Him you would not have come this far. God is there with you, every step of the way."

Dejané missed out on her primary school farewell and saying goodbye to teachers and friends. Her highschool start at Outeniqua High School was delayed so she missed out on the initiation camp and arrived later in the term, alone and afraid – the only pupil in a wheelchair.

However, she (wo)manned up and accepted the challenge, again with smiles and laughter. Although the school did a lot to accommodate her, there were events that she could not attend, especially the sport grounds were out of bounds for this sport-loving child. What she misses most is going to the beach and playing in the sea.

Her mom, Delanie, tells how proud her family is of Dejané. Of how she tackles life by the horns despite her many challenges and her upbeat mindset. Her greatest aim is to walk again and to be able to play netball again.

It is now a year later. Dejané is back in school full time and after school it is a succession of physiotherapy, fitness training and occupational therapy. Only her weekends are free. Throughout this, she inspires and enthuses those that cross her path. For Delanie she remains her laughing, wacky, lovable *meisiekind*. 

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



Top travel tips

As the holiday season descends, Mandy Latimore shares her top tips for road and air travel

The annual summer holiday season is upon us and as we ready ourselves to join the onslaught to various holiday destinations or just to make our way home to visit family, we should look at various important factors to ensure a smooth journey.

For local trips, always make sure that your driver's licence is valid. Should you be travelling outside of our borders, check that your passport is valid for at least six months after your return date. All visas and permits should be in order.

Travel insurance is highly recommended, and there are several policy options available, even for local travel. So, contact your local travel agent or me for advice!

Accessible accommodation may be found on various websites – the best local ones being www.disabledtravel.co.za and www.booking.com. Be sure to put in your filters when searching for accommodation, for example a step-free shower.

Look carefully at the various pictures for the facilities that you may need. Always call the accommodation directly to discuss your individual needs. You can always access our regular accessible accommodation articles off the *Rolling Inspiration website*.

QASA will also assist with information on the centres that have mobility items for hire (for example, transfer boards or commode wheelchairs), and the beaches with accessible beach wheelchairs for hire.

Here are my top 10 tips for road and air travel.

ROAD TRAVEL

- At least two weeks before travel check that your vehicle is not due for a service during the time that you are away. Some manufacturers are quite sticky with regards to maintenance plans, and if you overstep the mileage markers for service, you will have to pay for the service. Rather book the car in early and have the service done before you travel. Also get your hand control checked to make sure that all is in order.
- A breakdown service card is a must. Your insurance company may have roadside assist, but you can also get an AA membership and card.
- The day before travel be sure to fill the car and have the oil and tyre pressures checked. Clean the windscreen and make sure that the washer water container is full.
- Check the weather conditions for the day of travel and dress accordingly. Have a jersey handy in case it's cool, or sunglasses and short sleeves if warm.
- Plan your route and stops ahead of time. Most major brand petrol stations have accessible washrooms.
- Get enough rest before you leave.
- Have toll money, a garage or credit card handy.
- Drive within your own capabilities. Rather stay in the slower lane than feel pressured to travel fast in the other lanes.
- Eat and drink sufficient fluids. If you feel tired, find a petrol station, stop and get out of the car.
- Carry a water spray bottle within the car to cool down should the day be hot.
- Don't forget to buckle up!

AIR TRAVEL TIPS

- When making an online flight reservation, check that the dates and times are correct. Check if there are any forms to complete for assistance.
- Immediately contact the airline and confirm assistance with the call centre agent. Make sure that they know what type of mobility aid you use. It is your right to stay in your own wheelchair up

to the aircraft when embarking and from the aircraft when disembarking. You may insist that the staff fetch your chair if they have sent it through to the terminal in error.

“

It is your right to stay in your own wheelchair up to the aircraft when embarking and from the aircraft when disembarking.

- If you are driving to the airport, contact Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) for discounted parking as most long-term parking areas are not serviced by accessible busses. Another option is to use a parking service that collects your car, store it and meets you with it on your return.
- Mark your check-in luggage with a coloured ribbon or tag for easy identification.
- Ensure that you arrive at the airport to check in 90 minutes before a domestic flight and three hours before an international flight.
- Ask to be taken through to the airside and stay near your boarding gate or at the allocated area for passenger aid unit (PAU) boarding.
- Leave enough time for a visit to the loo before boarding.
- Always keep your boarding pass with you. Don't let assistive staff keep it as they may go off with it!
- Communication is the key.

Remember that forward planning makes the journey more enjoyable, and ensures that the holiday starts when you leave your home!

Happy holidays and 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



It isn't over till your last breath

Even after his spinal cord injury, Cheyne Hoareau is living his passion of cars and bikes by running his auto repair shop

Eight years into opening his own auto repair shop, at the age of 32, Cheyne Hoareau was in a motorbike accident that resulted in a spinal cord injury. The accident nearly cost Cheyne his life, but this self-confessed natural born fighter pushed himself to the limits to rebuild his life and his business, C&G Auto Tune in Durban.

As a member of the Motor Industry Workshop Association (MIWA) for 15 years, Cheyne's passion from a young age was cars and bikes – or as he puts it, “fast cars and fast bikes”.

“I grew up with an eagerness to learn about cars and motorbikes and knew I had an insane passion for speed and power. Eventually, I was able to feed this passion with every

machine I owned. None of my vehicles or motorbikes escaped modification,” he shares. “I’ve owned many machines, from V8s to turbocharged six cylinders, modified four cylinders and even super cars, like my Nissan GTR.”

By 2003 when Cheyne opened his business, he was racing motorbikes competitively. After he was involved in a serious motorbike accident in 2011, specialists told Cheyne he would be bedridden for the rest of his life.

“I’m a natural born fighter. I wasn’t going to accept that prognosis. Breaking your neck is a traumatic experience to go through; I can’t even put it into words. However, once you accept your fate for what it is, you can move forward and rebuild your life,” he says.

“My rehabilitation wasn’t easy and I’m incredibly proud that with determination and willpower I was able to prove those specialists wrong,” Cheyne adds. “There was a lot to do after I returned to work to ensure the workshop was successful. I’m forever grateful to my father, Gustave, who stood by my side and encouraged me all the way through this incredibly traumatic and emotional time in my life.”

“

I’m incredibly proud that with determination and willpower I was able to prove those specialists wrong.

“Simple everyday tasks we all take for granted, like driving a car or getting ready for work, were massive challenges for me. My emotional and physical strength while being in a wheelchair for the first time in my life was the greatest challenge of all,” he continues.

“My dad motivated me to be the best man that I could and inspired me with his wisdom and business integrity. He is still my rock in hard times; pushing me to follow my dreams and passion by taking it one day at a time,” Cheyne says.

MIWA chairperson Dewald Ranft says people like Cheyne are excellent role models. He explains that MIWA, a proud affiliate of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI), has taken significant steps towards inclusivity by initiating a job shadowing programme for students with disabilities.

“We recently opened up some of their accredited workshops to learners from a special needs school in the Eastern Cape. This initiative is not just about providing opportunities for these students; it’s about ensuring the longevity of our industry and addressing the skills shortage by igniting

a love for our industry in our youth,” Dewald notes.

“Hopefully, we will be able to partner with other schools in different regions and expand the programme so that any learner, regardless of their disability, who has a passion and love for the sector, can succeed. Inspirational stories such as Cheyne’s must be told as they play an important part in our awareness of opportunities in the sector,” he adds.

Cheyne’s passion now is repairing vehicles and keeping customers satisfied by offering them the best advice and workmanship. He is fully involved in his workshop.

“I may not be able to do what I used to be able to do, but nothing gets past me at work – big or small!” he says. Although he still struggles to walk without support, Cheyne is able to drive manual and automatic cars, bakkies and small trucks unassisted.

C&G Auto Tune specialises in the German car market and services small trucks and bakkies, performing engine overhauling, upgrades and more. Cheyne is supported by a staff of 10 who he handpicked, mentored and trained to ensure they carry out the best quality work.

“We work by my motto of always put in 150 percent effort no matter what,” he says.

He believes aspiring entrepreneurs should possess the following qualities to succeed - good business ethics, reliability, integrity and honesty.

“You have to honour your workmanship and strive to please regular customers so that you can attract new customers. Good housekeeping is also important, especially in our environment. First impressions last, so make sure yours is a good one,” Cheyne advises.

“Also, keep your head strong, stay focused. Don’t give up. Do the best you can and remember that life isn’t over until you breathe your last breath – so, you need to make it happen,” he concludes. **R**



What's happening to learnerships?

There are major changes coming to learnerships that will affect the way we know it

Learnerships have become a good way for persons with disabilities to get a qualification and work experience while earning a stipend over a 12-month period. Companies have found that persons with disabilities on learnerships provide them with valuable B-BBEE Scorecard Points. These learnerships could be on an NQF level, primarily at the lower levels, where learners spend time in theoretical training and gaining work experience in a workplace.

Learnerships are quality assured by a SETA. This process has been transitioning to the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). As of 1 July 2024, SETAs will no longer register learners on their systems. In fact, many SETAs have brought this deadline forward by a few months. Furthermore, the tax allowance for learnerships falls away on 29 February 2024. This was a huge benefit to businesses, particularly those employing learners with disabilities. With these no longer available, the attraction of doing learnerships with people with disabilities is hugely disadvantaged.

To compound this challenge, the QCTO has not registered many qualifications at the lower NQF levels, which are more suited to many persons with disabilities. If businesses are not able to register learners on lower NQF levels, then they might not be engaging persons with disabilities on learnerships. Yet another challenge is that the Disability Employment Equity target that is going to be set to two percent, which is much lower than the last census. Thus, the disparity in Disability Employment Equity just keeps growing.

These challenges will result in opportunities for persons with disabilities not being easily available as has been in the past. What options are persons with disabilities going to have? Who is going to lobby for them?

For business, this situation is going to affect their B-BBEE Scorecards as the value of learnerships for persons with disabilities is lost. They are going to be deterred by the difficulty of earning the disability points on the B-BBEE Scorecard for Black Disability Employment Equity and Disability Skills Development, and the termination of the tax allowances.

When speaking to the relevant authorities, they are at a loss for words. As organisations and activists in the field of disability, this is a huge threat. Who do we speak to to address these challenges? What is our plan of action? How are we going to go about it?

We need to engage the relevant government authorities on these matters, including the Department of Higher Education (in terms of SETAs), South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), QCTO and Business Chambers. This situation is extremely dire. We cannot afford to not address these challenges. Disability Economic Empowerment is at risk. **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.



Grappling with beliefs and values

Our beliefs and values inform our view of the world and ourselves. To change, we need to consider our beliefs and values

Core to our worldview is our beliefs and values. While different, they impact on each other. For example, our belief that family is important will impact on the value we put on spending time with our family. Understanding what our beliefs and values are, and how they are formed, are the first steps in reviewing them.

BUILDING BELIEFS

Beliefs are convictions we generally accept to be true, often in the absence of actual proof. They are the assumptions we have about our world. Our values, attitudes and behaviour are greatly influenced by these beliefs.

Our beliefs emanate from various sources. They can stem from what we see, hear, read and experience. They can also arise from what we are taught. An example of this is our religious beliefs, which we are not born with. These are generally implanted in us from our early childhood, by word, instruction and behaviour.

In fact, most of our beliefs are related to culture and religion. A belief is usually a generalisation, for example, a person may believe that killing a living being is detestable or consuming alcohol is disgusting, but not every religion or culture may support these

beliefs. These beliefs are often so strongly ingrained in us that they influence our behaviour, thoughts and attitudes in very powerful ways.

FINDING VALUE

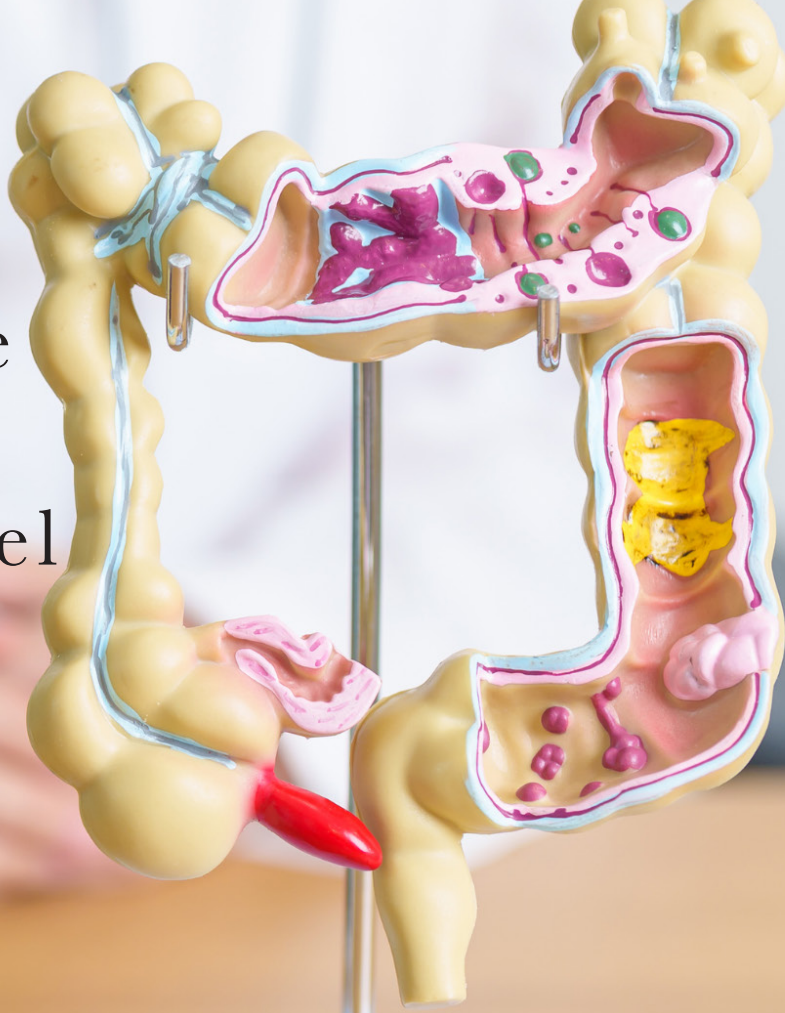
Values are principles or standards of behaviour that are considered valuable or important. They shape our individual character and behaviour. Individuals may all have different values. They constitute the basic foundation of a person's personality, behaviour, attitudes and perceptions. We should always make decisions about right and wrong based on our values.

They can emerge from a combination of background experiences and an evolving sense of self. A person's values may be influenced by various factors, such as religion, culture or society. However, it is possible for a person to change his or her values over time. Examples of values are honesty, integrity, fairness, compassion, respect and similar qualities. **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.

Winning the Battle for a Healthy Bowel



It can be a battle to obtain and maintain healthy, regular bowel movement.

Fortunately, there are some simple things that can help

It is common for people with spinal cord injuries to battle with bowel movement. Often, they are constipated and require laxatives to encourage movement. While, for some, their dependence on laxatives might be a life-long requirement, there are ways for everyone to improve their bowel movement and reduce the amount of laxatives taken. Dr Virginia Wilson, during a [webinar](#) hosted by QASA in September, shared her tips for a healthy bowel.

It starts with knowing “what you produce”. Referring to the Bristol Stool Form Scale, Dr Wilson noted the various consistencies to be found from hard pebble-like stool to watery, nearly entirely liquid, faeces. The consistency of your stool indicates whether there is enough liquid and fibre in your diet.

Both pebble-like or watery faeces are on the ends of the spectrum indicating constipation. In the case of watery stool, this could indicate a blockage in the bowel that only allows liquid

to pass through. Constipation for people with spinal cord injuries is dangerous as it could lead to [Autonomic Dysreflexia](#). The ideal stool is Type 4 on the chart, which is a smooth and soft snake-like or sausage-like faeces.

Unsurprisingly, Dr Wilson highlighted diet as the key to creating a healthy bowel. First up, she advised people to eat fruit and vegetables “as much as possible, as often as possible”.

“This is critical. If you are going to look after your bowel for the rest of your life, you have got to eat plenty of vegetables,” Dr Wilson said. She added that it was important to eat a range of fruit and vegetables: “Variety is the spice of life.”

“If you can transition to a plant-based diet, that is even better,” she encouraged. Dr Wilson compared 100 grams of beef with 100 grams of beans (or plant-based protein). Both provided the same amount of protein, but the beans provided a lot more fibre to the

diet. It also ranked higher in the amount of iron, calcium and magnesium provided.

Additionally, the plant-based protein is much cheaper than beef; making it a budget-friendly source of meat and fibre. It can be used in various ways. Dr Wilson suggested: "Try and include beans in your diet. You can use them cold as in salad or add them to a soup, stew or casserole." She does caution against eating too much beans as it could result in a more water-like stool.

Another key element to a healthy diet is yogurt. It is an important provider of good bacteria for your gut, which impacts on your general health. The gut microbiome (the variety of bacteria that lives in your gut) plays a role in helping control digestion and benefits your immune system. An imbalance in the gut can contribute to weight gain, high blood sugar, high cholesterol and other disorders.

Along with yogurt, a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grain and fermented foods can help build a healthy gut. Dr Wilson recommended eating a "brown" diet of grain including brown bread, brown rice, brown porridge, bran and "brown" potatoes, which is simply regular potatoes, but with the skin left on as the skin is the source of fibre.

"Try and have yogurt every day. Try and avoid the sweetened ones because they contain too much sugar and are not really that good," Dr Wilson advised.

When it comes to fluids, Dr Wilson recommended at least two litres of water drunk daily. She warned against soda: "Fizzy drinks are a problem because of the gas. It can affect your bowel function. It can cause distention (enlarge) of the bowel, make you uncomfortable and make you pass more gas than is necessary."

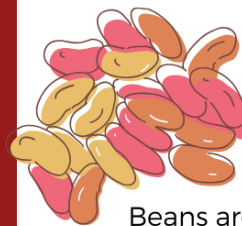
While these tips are a good place to start, it is highly recommended for people with spinal cord injuries to consult their doctor when making changes to their diet. With enough healthy fluids, a variety in your diets, and lots of fibre, you can win the battle for a healthy bowel. **R**

BETTER BOWEL MOVEMENT

The right diet can improve your diet

Fruits and vegetables

Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables.



Beans

Beans are a great source of fibre and nutrients. It can be a substitute for protein.

Just be careful how much you eat.

Yogurt

Yogurt is an important source of healthy bacteria, which, in turn, is important for a healthy gut microbiome.



Fermented foods

Fermented foods, like kimchi, kombucha or sauerkraut, also assist with a healthy gut microbiome.

Whole grain

Eat brown bread, brown rice, brown porridge, bran, and potatoes with their skin on.



Getting the Basics of Bladder Health Right

There are some very easy ways to improve your bladder health and it starts with drinking enough water

To improve bowel movement, people with spinal cord injuries are encouraged to take better care of their gut health through a healthy high-fibre diet. For better bladder health, it is important to take care of the kidneys. This is done mainly by ensuring you consume enough water.

Speaking during a [webinar](#) on bladder management hosted by QASA in September, Dr Virginia Wilson explained the role of the kidneys: “To keep your kidneys in good health is very, very important when you have a spinal cord injury.”

“Just as the gut is a processing system for the food we eat, the kidneys are smaller factories that take the blood coming from the heart [and] clear out toxins or products in your blood stream that come from what you’ve eaten, what you breathe in and what medicines you take.”

As the kidneys filter your blood, they produce urine. To boost your kidney health, Dr Wilson recommended drinking at least two litres of water a day and taking a vitamin C supplement.

“Water should be your primary drink with a minimum of two litres from the time of waking up to early evening. Then you should drink only if you are thirsty,” she explained; adding that the body is not designed to process large quantities of water while asleep and thus the majority of the water consumed should be during waking hours.

Dr Wilson suggested drinking water in a way that is easy and will help you keep track of how much you have consumed. She advised against glasses that are forgotten or knocked over and instead recommended a water bottle of about 500 millilitres that is easy to open and close.

While the kidney is the filtration system, the urine still needs to travel through the ureter, bladder and urethra before it exits the body. It is just as important to keep the rest of the urinary tract system healthy. This is where pH levels can be important.

Contrary to what some might believe, this does not refer to blood pH as Dr Wilson clarified: “Some people believe they can alter the pH levels in their body; in their blood. You

can't do that unless something dangerous happens to you. You can't voluntarily alter the pH levels in your blood."

Rather, the pH levels that people should consider is that of their urine. Dr Wilson explained: "You might have been advised to make your urine more acidic. The reason we do that is because there is some evidence that an acidic urine prohibits the growth of bacteria."

This can be done by consuming cranberry juice, diluting apple cider vinegar in water or even drinking coffee. Dr Wilson does warn against too much juice and coffee.

“

Water should be your primary drink with a minimum of two litres from the time of waking up to early evening.

"Coffee is a bit of a diuretic (a substance that promotes the production of urine). It can make you pass more urine," she noted. Fruit juices on the other hand is high in sugar, which can be harmful to your overall health. She encouraged people to dilute their juice with water.

Dr Wilson also warned people with spinal cord injuries away from fizzy drinks and alcohol. Fizzy drinks or soda can be harmful to the bowel while alcohol can be harmful when drunk in excess or in combination with certain medications.

"Many spinal cord injured persons are taking medications. Quite a few of those medications work on the brain. So, the combination of those medications and the alcohol is a big no," Dr Wilson warned. For tea, she recommended Rooibos and warned against black tea, which she said can contribute to bladder infection.

With so many liquids not recommended, it can feel like options are limited. However, there are many ways to make a more interesting drink with water. Fruits, lemon, cucumber and even herbs can be added to flavour the water in interesting ways.

While more acidity in urine can help prevent bacterial infections, it cannot cure an existing infection. If you suspect that you have a urinary tract infection, consult your doctor or urologist.

Dr Wilson also noted that there has been evidence to show a healthy bowel can contribute to a healthy bladder. She explained: "If you have a sluggish bowel, which most people with spinal cord injuries do, and you are not doing anything to assist, you are more prone to urinary tract infections."

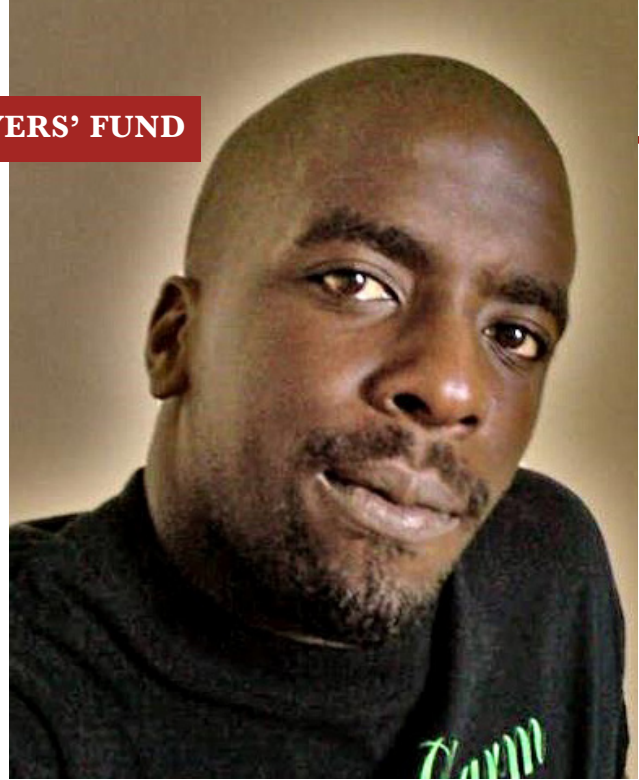
For intermittent catheter users, it is important to avoid reusing their catheters as this can lead to **infection**. There are many reasons why a person might decide to reuse their catheters. A common reason is because of the cost of catheters.

For those on medical aid, it is possible to have their catheters **funded in full**. The **QASA Reimbursement Toolkit** can offer some advice on how best to approach your funder about having your medication and medical devices funded in full. **R**





Remarkable remix of chart-topper in life



In changing the tune from suffering a tragic injury on the rugby field to becoming a music producer of note, Anthony Kasirivu has emerged as a chart-topper in life

A promising rugby player while at the University of Johannesburg, Anthony Kasirivu broke his neck when a scrum collapsed during a koshuis game on 28 July 2008, leaving the hooker and second-year marketing student paralysed at the age of 21.

“I was clear on it happening, but focused on the fact that I was still alive,” Anthony recalls. Two tumultuous years of recovering in hospital and rehabilitation followed before Anthony could ultimately return to his family home in Mafikeng.

There, a new, uncertain life awaited. Those days were dark, Anthony remembers, but he found light in those closest to him and additional inspiration and strength from above.

“In hindsight, my focus was on healing. It’s the anxiety of having to engage with society again that was the most challenging,” he says. “Seeing how my family came together so powerfully and stood by me was the initial shift. Later, my spiritual journey shifted me into being more energetically conscious of my reality.”

The catastrophic injury had robbed him of so much. But, rugby’s loss turned into the South African music industry’s gain.

Music had always been a passion of his and he took the next crucial step that would eventually lead him to his high standing in the industry today.

Anthony shares: “My initial desire to make music came in high school where I first learnt to DJ. It was great to play other people’s music, but I always wondered what it would be like to actually make a song myself.

“I started officially playing music at gigs in Johannesburg while at Varsity, and I took production on after my injury. I started self-teaching myself to produce and compose while I was finishing off my degree at Unibo.”

“Working in an office wasn’t appealing to me, so I studied my degree in marketing my music and understanding business-building concepts I could apply to my own company.”

That venture is Kasirivu Productions, a publishing company that incorporates two digital house record labels in We Go Deep

and The Bliss Beyond, which he started in 2012 and 2020 respectively. Better known as Luka, his productions are a fusion of lounge, jazz, soulful hip hop, deep dub and techno.

"Music is a great way for me to express myself and serves as an emotional outlet for those listening," Anthony says, adding: "I'd describe my music as something you can sit and listen to, or dance to on top a table."

His top-class compositions have featured on several compilations and his projects have landed with record labels like Fomp, Dark Energy, Shine Records, Stilnovo, Fused Records, Jus Vibe and Faint Frequency while he's worked with artists such as Sio, The Rurals, Andy Compton, Joseph Hines, Shur-i-Kan, Steve Paradise and DJ Ankletap.

An extremely hard worker and the total package, he's a composer of commercial and library music, sound designer, mixer, remixer and does mastering on top of being the highly successful house music producer that he is.

"I've done well over 50 different music projects. My most recent one is a joint album called Beyond Heaven & Earth," Anthony shares. His music also features on several library albums with different publishers and on popular shows such as Being Bonang and Skeem Saam.

Highly regarded by music lovers and his peers, he's received high praise, but remains humble and appreciative of his place in the industry. He notes, "being regarded highly is great, but not my goal. Being able to make a living doing what I love is what I requested to the Almighty and it is happening."

His incredible work ethic, he says, is from the example his parents set, and he puts his success down to "absolute faith in my oneness with the Almighty". As for what he's currently working on, he says: "Focusing on my journey of healing, breaking generational curses, growing in my oneness with the Almighty and making music when clients require it."

Aside from his family and faith, a pivotal pillar



ABOVE: Anthony Kasirivu shared his journey on eNCA's Against All Odds segment hosted by Mpho Lakaje. The full interview can be viewed [here](#).

of support for him since that life-changing day 15 years ago has been the Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players' Fund, which has assisted over 500 players who sustained catastrophic head, neck and spinal injuries since its inception in 1980.

"I'm extremely grateful to the Fund. They assisted us with what to expect after an injury like mine and helped me with essential equipment. They also help with medical supplies, which are costly," Anthony says.

With all the success he's had, his greatest remix is the remarkable way in which he's pivoted from heartbreak to forging a bright future for himself not only in the music industry, but life in general.

In terms of what he hopes others take out of his story, Anthony concludes, "Do the best you can with what you have, knowing your faith opens the way for the impossible to become possible." **R**

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.



A Need for Informed and Empowered Patients

When patients actively participate in their healthcare, they contribute to their overall health and safety

To commemorate World Patient Safety Day (17 September), Innovative Pharmaceutical Association of South Africa (IPASA) hosted a panel discussion with representative from the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) and the South African Medical Association (SAMA) to discuss patient safety – a global problem.

An estimated three million people are affected by compromised patient safety. The biggest contributor is medication errors, which account for roughly 50 percent and include the incorrect medication and/or dose.

Speaking at the webinar, Dr Ziyanda Mngugudo-Sello noted: “Healthcare workers come into the industry to help patients. The question then is what goes wrong?”

She added that safety relies on systems. When these are disrupted, errors can occur. Quality

assurance tools can assist, but another key to success is educating patients.

They should have all the necessary information on their medication and dosage, as well as be empowered to speak to the healthcare workers about their treatment.

PATIENT EDUCATION

Medical practitioners should encourage their patients and caregivers to be more involved in their care.

This could include asking questions about their medication and reporting allergic reactions or adverse events. Healthcare practitioners could encourage the patient’s participation by better informing them about their treatment including the kind of medication and the dosage.

If the medication type, colour or dosage changes, it is helpful to inform the patient.

When speaking to patients about their care, it is important for medical staff to consider the education level and language of the individual to ensure they understand fully what is required.

For more “old school” patients who are happy to simply take whatever medication is provided, it is important to follow up to ensure the medication is taken correctly and any reactions to the medication are reported.



Medical practitioners should encourage their patients and caregivers to be more involved in their health.

“Patients are the primary caretaker of their health. They need to get involved on a community level and family level to teach parents and children to be advocates for their health,” said Dr Mgugudo-Sello.

At a community level, patients can serve on hospital boards or be part of community education initiatives.

In a family context, it is important to encourage family members to become educated in their health, take their medications correctly and report reactions to the medication.

This could also include women, wives or mothers encouraging the men in their lives (father, husband, brother) to seek medical care as men are less likely to pursue assistance.

Dr Mgugudo-Sello warned against members of a household sharing medication, especially when it is specifically prescribed to them, as

the medication and dosage is specifically chosen for the body, weight and health. Mixing medication can be damaging to the body.

REPORTING MEDICATION

“Non-serious” reactions to medication include anything that doesn’t pose a serious risk to the person such as headaches, dizziness and rashes.

A serious reaction is anything that is considered a medical emergency or leads to hospitalisation, disability, birth defects, loss of pregnancy, or death. Regardless of the reaction to the medication, patients are encouraged to report it.

“There is an under reporting of adverse events and reactions,” Dr Mgugudo-Sello explained. “Rather report it and we can categorise it. If there was an event, we want to avoid future events from happening.”

Aside from under reporting events, patients will also delay reporting an event. They might wait until their next consultation to mention something to their doctor. Dr Mgugudo-Sello encourages patients to report a reaction or event immediately.

The SAPHRA [Med Safety App](#) can be helpful as it simplifies and promotes the reporting of suspected adverse drug reactions, including adverse events following immunisation by both the public and healthcare providers.

It also allows the public and healthcare providers to learn about medicine safety news from SAHPRA.

Mafora Matlala, who represented SAHPRA at the webinar, noted that informed and empowered patients will also improve reporting on medication. SAHPRA uses the reports from patients to look for any patterns that could indicate an issue with the medication.

This helps them to update the medical packaging information leaflet, provide media statements or education, and remove medicines in serious situations.

Support Group Calls for Better Inclusion

To bring greater awareness to their community, a support group hosted a Disability Awareness Day

The Garden Route Stroke Support Group hosted a Disability Awareness and Wellness Day at the Groenkloof Retirement Village in George in September.

Organised by occupational therapists and founding members of the support group, Christi Gresse and Semona Diener, the event coincided with the 2023 Occupational Therapy Week hosted by the Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa.

Several other members of the group spoke at the event. Speech therapists Lindie Stander and Dilys Jones presented a talk on Aphasia and communication difficulties.

Wiehahn de Wet, a stroke survivor with Aphasia, shared the identification cards for clients with speech difficulties to carry in their purses or vehicles; as well as communication booklets that he finds meaningful in his own life.

Georgina Els, the group's physiotherapist demonstrated the importance of functional exercises, while narrative therapist, Rachelle Wilson, talked about the importance of



TOP: Ari Seirlis spoke about his autobiography at the Disability Awareness and Wellness Day.

BOTTOM LEFT: Johan le Grange, medical orthotist and prosthetist, exhibits different prosthetics at the Awareness Day.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Elmine Voster from George Library exhibited some information on the resources available at the library for people with visual impairments.

mental health when facing challenges after injury or disease. Gustav Putter and JC Brits, both stroke survivors, shared their journeys on stage.

Ari Seirlis, former CEO of the QuadPara Association of South Africa and disability activist, was also among the speakers. He

shared some insights from his autobiography *Wheels of Fire*. Patrick Botto, a George-based artist from the Foot and Mouth Painters painted on stage and displayed some of his beautiful artwork.

Delanie de Bruin shared some insight into her daughter's journey with Transverse Myelitis. In October 2022, this family's life was drastically affected, when their 13-year-old daughter suddenly complained of back pain and was paralysed minutes later.

The mom-and-daughter team works hard in therapy and handles hurdles with a great sense of humour.

Other professionals who participated were De Jager & van Zyl Audiologists with Anel de Jager discussing the hearing difficulties resulting in a hidden disability. During the event, hearing screenings were offered to attendees. Torga Optical did vision screenings.

Johan le Grange, medical orthotist and prosthetist, exhibited different prosthetics, while Dr Van der Watt, an orthopaedic surgeon, gave a very interesting talk on new technology regarding knee and hip surgeries.

TJ Witteveen exhibited mobility devices from CE Mobility and AdaptAbility, a businesses founded by Christi and Semona, demonstrated assistive devices developed to help people with various abilities participate in functional tasks.

Elmine Voster from George Library shared resources available from the library for people with visual impairments. CAW Biokineticists evaluated people's balance and advised them on exercises needed.

Diapercare exhibited Clements' incontinence products and Lancet Pathologists monitored blood pressure and glucose tests.

While George and the Garden Route comprises of a variety of people with various abilities and hosts the annual Outeniqua Chair Challenge, there are still



FAR LEFT: Delanie de Bruin with her daughter at the Disability Awareness and Wellness Day.

CENTRE: Painter Patrick Botto did a demonstration and showcased his art at the event.

FAR RIGHT: Stroke survivor Wiehahn de Wet shared identification cards for clients with speech difficulty.

some ways to go with regards to knowledge around accessibility.

There is still a long road ahead in terms of disability awareness and accessibility in the area.

Fortunately, there are organisations like Garden Route Stroke Support Group, which is run by a group of passionate therapists, including two speech therapists, occupational therapists, a dietitian, a physiotherapist, and a narrative therapist.

The need for awareness around disabilities and accessibility in the environment is close to all of these therapists' hearts.

The Group now challenges their community to become more inclusive, to make businesses accessible, and to learn more about different abilities and hidden and obvious disabilities:

“Let us have difficult conversations with people taking up wheelchair parking spaces. Let us take hands and work together to make sure that we give space to each other, even with different abilities. Let us collaborate and multiply our resources and reach.” **R**



Made to empower

Founded by two occupational therapists, AdaptAbility sources and sells assistive devices that provide people with disabilities with more independence

Occupational therapists Christi Gresse and Semona Diener, co-owners of AdaptAbility, understand the importance of independence and participation in activities that are meaningful to individuals, but also that participation is not always straightforward for everyone.

Working in the field of physical and neurological rehabilitation, they have had the opportunity to work with people from all walks of life with a variety of challenges. These challenges highlighted the desire for people to be active members of society and participate in daily activities as independently as possible while maintaining their dignity and living a life of quality.

Many of them only need a small device or minor change to overcome their obstacles and provide them with the confidence and the means to participate. When thinking about assistive devices, one tends to think big ... wheelchair, rollator, or commode. However,



MAIN PHOTO: Occupational therapists Christi Gresse and Semona Diener are the founders of AdaptAbility.

ABOVE LEFT: AdaptAbility offers cross-body phone straps, which is secured to your phone with a small device placed between the phone and its cover.

RIGHT TOP: The thimbles on offer can assist the user with paging independently.

RIGHT BOTTOM: AdaptAbility offers adapted cutlery.

there are a variety of smaller items that can be used in everyday activities, whether you have a disability or not.

Some very useful items or devices are

available, but not always easy to source. Often, the individual must rely on several suppliers, which comes with a hefty price tag.

AdaptAbility was formed with a dream to make assistive devices accessible to people in their community and country. Christi and Semona are driven by practical, affordable thinking to come up with the just right solutions to their client's challenges. They source, make, and adapt different products specifically for individual client's needs.

They make use of local knowledge and skills from people within their community. Their dream is to empower members of their local community (protective workshops, retired community members seeking additional income, family members) to be part of something bigger and to make a change.

Occupational therapy is not just about helping people physically, it is about promoting independence, confidence, and a sense of purpose. Occupational therapists have the unique privilege and opportunity to get close to their clients and to understand (as best they can) with what the client struggles in their daily lives. They have the responsibility to advocate for their clients' rights and educate the greater community about the challenges faced by people with disabilities.

AdaptAbility looked for solutions to provide hands-free options for people with limited hand use and those making use of mobility aids such as wheelchairs, rollators and canes. Some of the products include gadgets that help with carrying cell phones around the neck or arms, bottles around the waist, and keys to clips.

They also sell standard assistive devices to assist with daily activities such as bottom wipers, suction scoop plates, plate guards, adapted cutlery, and universal cuffs.

Safety is very important to them, and they have solutions for showering and washing, such as long-handled sponges and bath gloves. They promote good body mechanics, by encouraging good posture and limiting bending and twisting, by using long-handled



TOP LEFT: AdaptAbility provides suction plates.

TOP RIGHT: The hand strap on offer can assist with holding a variety of objects including a water bottle.

BOTTOM: With the phone strap, the user can more securely hold their cell phone.

tools such as the easy reach – manufactured by a local supplier.

As their market is mostly adults and older people at this stage, they feel that the devices should not be too visible, easy to apply, and light to carry.

They are constantly developing new tools, as the need arises. They are also in the process of developing information and educational videos for specific diagnoses, such as strokes and dementia, to assist families and caregivers in their roles.

To the owners, AdaptAbility is not just a business. It is a vehicle that can be used to promote, advocate, and educate. It is a way for the silent voices to be heard in a world where 'different' isn't always celebrated or received with open arms. The dream continues to grow daily and they are excited about what the future holds. **R**



Integrating into higher education

Emma McKinney shares more tips for prospective students with disabilities around pursuing higher education

While there is a strong drive for universities and colleges to include more students with disabilities, we know that the process is often not easy. This month we look at some tips that you might want to think about if you decide to further your studies.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Research the university or college carefully before applying to study. Be careful about registering for online courses. Look at whether they are registered with official bodies or your qualification might be worthless and cost you a lot of money. For example, ask friends and family if they have heard about them, look at reviews on the internet, see who they are affiliated with.

Don't just go with what they say on their adverts or webpages. Think carefully about your end goal. What do you want to do with your qualification? Will it be recognised if you want to study further or use it in another country?

DISABILITY DISCLOSURE

Students are always torn about whether they should disclose their disability on their

application form or rather wait to see if they get in first. The choice is yours to make. My advice is to make contact with the institution and see if they have a disability unit or service. You can look at their website or call or e-mail them.

Let them know that you are thinking of applying and ask for any advice. Some institutions can assist you with the application process, others only once you register, while some do not provide any support at all. If you require financial support, ask them if they know of any bursaries that are available to students with disabilities.

UNDERSTAND YOUR NEEDS

For some of us, we do not need reasonable accommodations while others of us do. I encourage you to be honest with your needs and jot them down. They may be structural accommodations such as wheelchair ramps or grabrails for balance in the bathrooms. For others of us, we might need a scribe/note taker, or extra time.

You know your body best, and know what you need. Many of us come up with creative coping strategies on a daily basis. It is about

identifying what we need so that other people understand and can accommodate us in the most suitable way that we need.

COMMUNICATE YOUR NEEDS

I encourage you to contact your department and ask for the contact details of your course coordinator before lectures start. Some institutions that have disability units or services can assist you with this, while other do not and you will be required to co-ordinate this.

Try set up a meeting with them and ideally your lecturers/tutors. It is important that when we communicate our needs, we are clear and solutions-focussed. For example, sharing "I have cerebral palsy and my fine-motor control is affected so I find holding a pen

and taking notes during lectures difficult. What works best for me is recording my lectures and taking notes at home later on my laptop. Are you happy with me recording your lectures?"

It is also important that if you are struggling, that you communicate how you are doing, as lecturers are often open to students communicating their difficulties earlier rather than later. They may be able to provide you with additional support or resources, or refer you to services that can help you. **R**

ABOUT AUTHOR

Dr Emma McKinney owner of Disability Included Consultancy, a company providing disability employment and educational research, training, support, and resources. email: emma@disabilityincluded.co.za

Disability Units Contact Information

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

Telephone: 021 808 4707
E-mail: disability@sun.ac.za

TSHWANE UNIVERSITY OF TECH.

Telephone: 012 382 4130
E-mail: OosthuysenMD@tut.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Telephone: 021 650 2427
E-mail: Pearl.Tukwayo@uct.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

Telephone: 040 602 2011
Mail: SVanMusschenbroek@ufh.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Telephone: 011 559 3745
E-mail: disabilityunit@uj.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Telephone: 011 260 3665
E-mail: Subrayen@ukzn.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

Telephone: 015 268 2495
E-mail: pauschiatm@ul.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF MPUMALANGA

Telephone: 013 002 0001
E-mail: info@ump.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Telephone: 012 420 2064
E-mail: du@up.ac.za

CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Telephone: 021 953 8438
E-mail: disabilityunit@cput.ac.za

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECH.

Telephone: 051 507 3154
E-mail: jbosch@cut.ac.za

DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECH.

Telephone: 033 845 8835
E-mail: sibongile@dut.ac.za

MANGOSUTHU UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Telephone: 031 907 7185
E-mail: nmbhele@mut.ac.za

NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

Telephone: 041 504 4652
E-mail: Nosiphiwo.Delubom@mandela.ac.za

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY

Telephone: 016 910 3192
E-mail: sydney.vos@nwu.ac.za

RHODES UNIVERSITY

Telephone: 046 603 8181
E-mail: s.mtshali@nwu.ac.za

SOL PLAATJE UNIVERSITY

SEFAKO MAKGATHO HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Telephone: 011 471 3196
E-mail: Irakhomo@unisa.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE

Telephone: 051 401 3713
E-mail: mirandamh@ufs.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

Telephone: 021 959 4170
E-mail: oswd@uwc.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

Telephone: 011 717 9151
E-mail: Anlia.Pretorius@wits.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

Telephone: 015 962 8018
E-mail: Tshifiwa.Mbuva@univen.ac.za

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

Telephone: 035 902 6346
E-mail: MnisiT@unizulu.ac.za

VAAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Telephone: 016 950 9584
E-mail: mziwoxolon@vut.ac.za

WALTER SISULU UNIVERSITY

Telephone: 043 708 5370
E-mail: ngqwabaza@wsu.ac.za



Revvng up success

Jeffrey Yates shares the highlights from the adaptive go-karting event hosted by the Adaptive Sports Fund

In an adrenaline filled day of speed and racing, the Adaptive Sports Fund (ASF) hosted an adaptive go-karting event at K1 Karting in Boksburg, which left a memorable mark on the lives of participants from previously disadvantaged communities and individuals with disabilities. The event proved to be a resounding success, demonstrating the transformative power of adaptive sports.

The day was filled with heart-warming moments as participants, many of whom had never experienced the thrill of go-karting before, took to the track. For those with disabilities, adaptive hand-controls were provided to ensure they could fully engage in the experience. The sight of individuals with various impairments cruising around the circuit was nothing short of inspirational.

The event aimed to bridge the gap between those with and without disabilities, enriching an environment of inclusivity, support, and empowerment.

Sandile, a participant in the event, encapsulated the spirit of the day when he shared his personal milestone: “The go-karting event was truly a personal milestone for me. This was the first time I’ve been in control of a vehicle of any kind since my accident, which happened 10 years ago. It gave me the confidence to take that next step and start driving again soon.”

The event was about more than just racing; it was a day of empowerment. Participants, regardless of their backgrounds, were able to showcase their capabilities, proving that their disabilities were not limitations. The event instilled a sense of confidence, self-belief,

and camaraderie among the participants, as they encouraged one another to push their limits.

Moreover, the event served as a platform to raise awareness about the importance of adaptive sports in promoting inclusivity and breaking down societal barriers. It showcased the impressive potential of individuals with disabilities and the need for more accessible opportunities.

“The go-karting was my second ASF event that I attended,” shared Jené Frost. “It is right up my ally ... full of speed, adrenaline, and lots of laughs. It was fantastic to participate in the event, and having the karts adapted was phenomenal. Being able to zip around the track was a thrilling experience, and I even got a top four fastest lap time.”

Nick Eaton said: “When I lost the use of my legs, I thought the world was over. I withdrew from the world and was in a very dark place. ASF makes a point of showing us that there is a life after you become disabled.”

In the end, the success of the adaptive go-karting event went beyond the chequered flag. It was a triumph of the human spirit, demonstrating the transformative power of sports in breaking down barriers and empowering individuals. The event’s positive impact extended beyond the racetrack, leaving participants with newfound confidence and a renewed sense of purpose.

ASF’s commitment to inclusivity and empowerment continues to drive positive change in the lives of those it serves, and the adaptive go-karting event was yet another testament to their dedication. **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.



Home of heroes



Rising Phoenix takes viewers on an emotional and inspiring journey to see what the human spirit can do when reaching for greatness

The 2020 sports documentary, *Rising Phoenix*, follows the Paralympic journey of several athletes and explores the history of the Games. It takes a closer look at the struggles faced by both athletes and organisers of the Games.

For the athletes, the battle is navigating life with a disability and prepping for the Games, while organisers fought for the Paralympic Games and athletes who compete to receive the respect and recognition it and they deserve.

The Paralympic Games were started by Dr Ludwig Guttmann who incorporated sports into his rehabilitation of patients with spinal cord injuries. In 1948, he hosted the Stoke Mandeville Games with patients competing in several sporting events. Each year the event grew. Eventually even international athletes joined to compete.

In 1960, the first Paralympic Games (or “parallel” to the Olympic Games) were held in Rome. Since then, the Games have been

a mixed bag. Some were well attended and well organised while others were disasters or cancelled completely.

The athletes featured in the documentary, including local champion Ntando Mahlangu, share their personal and professional battles from being accepted in greater society, or coming to terms with their disability, to having to navigate competing in empty stadiums or facing the risk of having a Paralympic event cancelled. Mostly, they share what sport has meant to them and why they compete.

SPOILERS

What really stands out in the documentary is the incredible things that can be achieved by the determination of the human spirit. Much of the inspiration comes from the athletes who worked incredibly hard and showed great determination to achieve their goals despite the challenges they might have faced personally and professionally.

Former CEO of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), Xav Conzaves summed it

up in a beautiful quote at the start of the film: “The Olympics are where heroes are created. The Paralympics are where heroes come.”

“In the Paralympic sport, everybody has a story. It comes from them breaking barriers to achieve what they wanted to achieve. Move on. And live life even if others may think that you cannot,” he added.

However, some of the determination is also shown by the organisers who fought tooth and nail to the very end to ensure the success of the Paralympic Games for they understand what it means to the world. While the Games can change the lives of the athletes competing, it also changes the world and the perception that people might have of people with disabilities.

“

The Olympics are where heroes are created. The Paralympics are where heroes come.

Since its inception, the Games have put a spotlight on a community that is often hidden away. It challenged outdated or harmful perceptions around people with disabilities, and instead shows the world how much the community has to offer.

Powerlifter Cui Zhe shared how her life changed after she competed in the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games. Prior to the event, her family expected very little from her. When she was approached by the government to compete at the event, a door was opened. She said that after the Games: “My life and my family’s life improved a lot after that.”

Sir Philip Craven, former president of the IPC, noted: “Before the Paralympics, China



MAIN PHOTO: Wheelchair fencing champion and gold medallist Beatrice Vio shares her story in the 2020 documentary now available on [Netflix](#).

ABOVE: Tatyana McFadden also features in *Rising Phoenix* to share her journey and passion for sport. (All photos taken from the documentary.)

had a very low impression of people with an impairment, but that has been the same in every country of the world.”

It is not only the public opinion and the lives of athletes that changed, but the conversations being held. Gold medallist Jonnie Peacock shared: “In 2011, any interview I did pretty much the first question was how did you lose your leg. In the months leading up to [the London 2012 Paralympic Games] and constantly after London, it was all about the sport. There was a huge shift from story to sport. That was incredible for me to see.

THOUGHTS

Rising Phoenix takes the audience on a true rollercoaster of emotions. The documentary touches on the heart ache and challenges, but leaves you hopeful of the future.

You are moved by the stories of the athletes, inspired by the determination shown, and angered by the lack of inclusion. However, in the end, there is only joy.

If you aren’t already, you are sure to be truly enthused for the 2024 Paralympic Games – excited to see the athletes perform, and hopeful that the stadiums will be packed with crowds to cheer them on. May Paris only take the Paralympic Games to new heights! **R**



DANIE BREEDT • SEXUALITY

Identity and Sexuality

A journey after spinal cord injury

A spinal cord injury can profoundly transform our self-perception and identity related to sexuality. A journey of self-discovery is needed to regain confidence

Intimacy and sexuality are significant pillars of human relationships, crucial for emotional bonding and physical expression. Yet, the aftermath of a spinal cord injury (SCI) can cast a shadow over these dimensions, necessitating a journey of rediscovery for both the individual with the injury and their partner. There exists an intricate interplay of identity and sexuality in the context of SCI, psychological factors that extend beyond the physical challenges.

An SCI is not merely a physical alteration; it causes a profound transformation in self-perception and identity related to sexuality. It disrupts beliefs about yourself and triggers an internal journey filled with questions about self-worth, attractiveness, and desirability as it relates to one's sexual self.

This change demands the shedding of old beliefs about your identity and embracing who one has become post-injury. It's about looking beyond limitations of your body, recognising what makes you unique, and redefining what sexuality means within this new context. The process often requires a revitalised sense of self-empowerment and sexual identity.

As identity transforms, so does sexuality. Individuals grappling with this shift often find themselves navigating uncharted territory when it comes to sexual intimacy. SCI can alter physical function and sensation, challenging how you use to express yourself sexually. This transition calls for exploration and adaptation in the realm of intimacy, alone and with a partner.

Partners too may need to navigate this landscape, balancing their roles as caregivers and lovers while exploring new paths to physical and emotional connection. In the same way that you are getting reacquainted with your body, your partner will go through a similar journey, rediscovering your sexual identity and their identity in relation to yours.

The journey of rediscovering one's sexual identity after an SCI is fraught with emotional ups and downs, moments of self-doubt, and empowering breakthroughs. This is not

intended to scare you off from the process but rather to encourage you that some struggling along the way is normal. A light-hearted approach could be helpful in this regard to remove some of the pressure to perform.

Beyond the internal journey, individuals with SCIs often face external societal challenges as well. Prejudices and stigma can add a layer of complexity to the journey of sexual identity transformation. Society's attitudes and biases about disability can affect self-esteem and body image, exacerbating the challenges individuals face.

Addressing these external challenges requires collective efforts to promote understanding, empathy, and inclusion.

It demands challenging and changing stereotypes about sexuality and disability, educating society about the realities of SCI. By addressing these societal influences, individuals can regain a sense of belonging and acceptance, fostering a more positive sexual self-perception in the face of prejudices.

In conclusion, the journey of reclaiming one's sexual identity after a SCI is an intricate and deeply significant process. It transcends the physical and psychological challenges, delving into the realm of sexuality. This journey reshapes how individuals perceive their sexual selves and how they engage in intimate relationships.

The challenges of this transformation are undeniably daunting, yet the result is a testament to the remarkable capacity of individuals to adapt, grow, and redefine what it means to experience sexuality and intimacy. **R**

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.

Setting goals you'll actually achieve

Pretty soon we will all be setting our resolutions for the new year. Everything we hope to change or achieve. Often, these goals are abandoned or forgotten by February. We want 2024 to be different for you!

Join us on Tuesday, 23 January 2024, for our Goals Webinar. Life coach Len Davey will take you through the dos and don'ts of setting goals, and answer some of your questions.

Save the date and look out for more information on the event. For any queries or comments, contact us at rollinginspiration@qasa.co.za. 



FOLLOW QASA ON SOCIAL MEDIA

 @RollingInspirationMag

 @rolling_inspiration_magazine

 @RollingMag

2024 Events Calendar

ROLLING INSPIRATION GOALS WEBINAR 23 January 2024

Life coach Len Davey discusses the dos and don'ts of setting goals to ensure that you actually achieve them.

OUTENIQUE CHAIR CHALLENGE RACE 23 February 2024

The annual Outenique Chair Challenge returns to George in February. Visit the official website for more information: www.outeniquachairchallenge.co.za

WINGS FOR LIFE WORLD RUN (WFLWR) 5 May 2024

The annual WFLWR returns to raise money for research into a cure for spinal cord injuries. Entries are open. You can purchase your entry through the official website here: www.wingsforlifeworldrun.com/en

INCLUSIVE AFRICA CONFERENCE 14 - 16 May 2024

The 2024 Inclusive Africa Conference can be attended virtually or in person. Visit the official website: <https://inclusiveafrica.org/>

PARIS 2024 PARALYMPIC GAMES 28 August - 8 September 2024

The 2024 Paralympic Games will be held in Paris in August and September. Keep an eye on our website and magazine for more information on where to view the event.

SASAPD NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP 20 - 24 March

The SASAPD National Championship will be held in Bloemfontein in March 2024 to give athletes an opportunity to improve their world ranking. For more information, visit the official SASAPD website here: www.sasapd.org.za



**Heinrich Grimsehl
Prosthetic
Rehabilitation
Services**

Pretoria & Johannesburg
Cell: 0837784665
Work: (011) 4891313



QASA HEAD OFFICE



QASA HEAD OFFICE

Website: www.qasa.co.za
Telephone: 031 767 0352
E-mail: info@qasa.co.za
Address: 17 Hamilton Crescent,
Gillitts, KwaZulu-Natal, 3610



**Build your
DREAM LIFE**

ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS BY ADDRESSING LIMITING BELIEFS

The World Within life coaching services is offering a discounted rate to Rolling Inspiration readers at **R350 per session** (the programme runs for 13 sessions) with the first session (on Goal Setting) completely **FREE!**

For more information, contact Len Davey on len@theworldwithin.co.za.



QASA REGIONAL OFFICE



WESTERN CAPE

Telephone: 021 975 6078
E-mail: info@qawc.org
Address: 5 Newhaven Street,
Durbanville, 7550

Charis is a psychology practice that specialises in the physical rehabilitation field.



We have numerous practices across Gauteng and we're here to help.

Contact us at michaela@charispsychology.co.za



ACCESS UNIVERSAL SOLUTIONS
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING WITHIN THE DISABILITY SECTOR

- Universal access assessment of the built environment.
- Facilitation sessions on disability sensitisation and awareness for employers and companies.
- Accessible travel consultant for travel advice.

MANDY LATIMORE
Improving access and attitudes for all
CELL: +27 (0)83 283 9370
E-MAIL: mandy@universalsolutions.co.za
or mandy@noveltravel.co.za



GAUTENG SOUTH

Telephone: 011 782 7511
E-mail: quadgs@icon.co.za
Address: NG Church,
Brakenhurst, Alberton, 1147

GAUTENG NORTH

Telephone: 012 320 2572
E-mail: manager@qagn.co.za
Address: 10 Bloem Street, Pretoria
Central, 0002



NORTH WEST PROVINCE

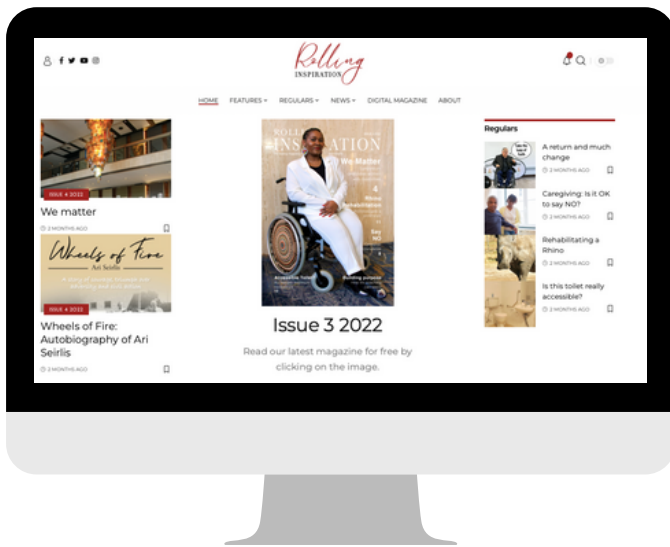
Telephone: 018 468 8303
E-mail: huisservaas@telkomsa.net
Address: 16 Rothman Street,
Wilkoppies, Klerksdorp, 2571

Advertise in Rolling Inspiration



Advertise your goods, services or events in the *Rolling Inspiration* magazine or on our website.

Contact us at rollinginspiration.co.za with any enquiries.



ROLLING INSPIRATION

The leading lifestyle publication for people with mobility impairments