

# ROLLING INSPIRATION

ISSUE 2 2020


The leading magazine for people with mobility impairments

LIFE IN LOCKDOWN  
Fending off boredom

COVID-19 FACTS  
Everything you need to know

HOME OFFICES  
The future of work?

KEEPING FINANCES AFLOAT  
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# BRAVING THE COVID-19 STORM AND BEYOND

**People with disabilities run the risk of being left behind amid the COVID-19 pandemic with a lack of adequate healthcare. Raven Benny calls on people with disabilities to be brave**

**O**n May 6, at the launch of the Policy Brief on Persons with Disabilities and COVID-19, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres said: “We must guarantee the equal rights of people with disabilities to access healthcare and life-saving procedures during the pandemic.

“I urge governments to place people with disabilities at the centre of COVID-19 response, recovery efforts and to consult and engage people with disabilities,” he continued.

These are two very important and significant statements made in the interest of the one billion persons with disabilities in the world.

In South Africa, we are as affected by the coronavirus as everyone else on the planet. However, as persons with disabilities, are we worse off than most. We make up 15 percent of the population but are deemed less eligible than others when it comes to access to healthcare.

As a country we are very fortunate to have sound legislation like the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (WPRPD), which conforms to the international instrument such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). However, we

struggle with the implementation of policies.

This is why we must lobby for a Disability Act that will allow recourse for any rights violation. It will hold government accountable for the non-delivery of services.

The WPRPD reiterates that the primary responsibility for disability equity lies with national, provincial, and local government as well as other sectors of society. It allocates responsibilities to persons with disabilities and their families. The vision of the WPRPD is to create a free and just society that is inclusive of all persons with disabilities as equals.

Yet, this vision becomes blurred when referencing services, like healthcare, in response to the plight of the many people with disabilities.

In the WPRPD, disability is described as a complex and evolving concept with services that cut across sectors and programmes. Disability and poverty are closely linked and often the latter is the cause of the former and vice versa.

Without addressing the multiple, and often specific, needs of people with disabilities and their families at community level, poverty in this specific group will remain unaddressed.

There is a general absence of sensitivity about and awareness of issues faced by people with disabilities and their families by policy makers – particularly in rural and underserved communities.

“ We must guarantee the equal rights of people with disabilities to access healthcare. ”

We need to be prepared to be considered unfavourably when it comes to equitable healthcare for all. Many of us are immunosuppressed and some even have co-morbidities that will place us lower on the rung of priorities in a hospital waiting room or triage area. It is a sad but true reality. Our chances might be slim when it comes to accessing adequate healthcare or ventilators, but we must be brave.

Brave enough to speak up and out at any human rights violations. Brave enough to endure and prepare for the world after the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to be courageous enough to adapt and change with the new way of the world even when others are not.

The government and healthcare system might not be able to cope with the influx of new COVID-19 cases. They might not have enough protective equipment or adequate facilities for patients – let alone people with disabilities. We are in for a tough situation as the world is unprepared for all of us.

The problem with preparedness is often that administrators and officials do not think about including people with disabilities in their deliberations and planning. This is exactly to what the UN secretary general alludes.


People with disabilities run the risk of being left behind once again. We will be deemed as ill with multi-morbidities and have a poor prognosis. But we are in this world and cannot be wished away. People with disabilities have fought hard for decades to be included in all spheres of society. The sacrifices and gains made by many before us is not in vain.

The struggle continues. Here we are faced with the greatest test of them all. How do we survive in a post COVID-19 dispensation?

The good news is that we already know what works for us. We have survived what many are facing today. Many of us have been in this very situation for most of our lives: isolated, faced with difficulties with transport, employment, access to healthcare, limited opportunities for entertainment, socialising, worshipping, and so much more.

As a marginalised group, we have done very well for ourselves. There are many ingenious inventions and gadgets specifically designed to make our lives easier from which everyone benefits. This might just be one of those moments through which we can emerge with new lessons and victories.

But as in every battle there will be fatalities, losses of life and the world as we know it will never be the same. Those of us who will make it, will live to tell the tale. Those who do not, will be remembered as victims of a society that was ill-prepared for everyone with some left behind.

Fundamentally, we need social justice, effective inclusion, equal opportunities and decent work. To advance, we need to be bold. We need to be innovative. And we must act together during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. 

The way in which people with disabilities are viewed by the rest of society plays a huge role in the awareness of their contribution to community life. Even the WPRPD's definition of disability makes reference to how extraordinary this group is:

*It is important to note that persons with disabilities should be defined within the context of defining the beneficiary group for purposes such as affirmative action, protection against discrimination, service delivery, reasonable accommodation support measures, social security, etc.*

This does not deem us as needy. We are a group with special features who needs to benefit equally from services.

The COVID-19 crisis is new to us all and requires everyone to act, interact and communicate in different ways. It is indeed an uncertain time for all involved from patients in a hospital to the staff of the local shopping centre. The most important aspect is to be prepared and to prepare our "constituents" with the correct information.



Raven Benny has been a C5, 6 and 7 quadriplegic since 2000. He is married and has five children, is mad about wheelchair rugby and represented South Africa in 2003 and 2005. He relocated from Cape Town to Durban, where he was appointed the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of QASA from August 1, 2019. email: [coo@qasa.co.za](mailto:coo@qasa.co.za).

COVER STORY

# LIFE IN LOCKDOWN

EVERYONE TOOK THEIR OWN UNIQUE APPROACH TO FENDING OFF BOREDOM AND LONELINESS DURING THE NATIONAL LOCKDOWN FROM TRYING NEW THINGS TO RECONNECTING WITH FAMILY

**F**rom make-shift home offices and new hobbies to trying to exercise in a tiny apartment, the nationwide lockdown has resulted in great changes for South Africans. There were suddenly no more visits to friends or family, no more movie dates at the mall or team sports to stay fit. Instead, everyone rushed to keep safe and stay indoors.

If nothing else, this was an opportunity for many to learn more about themselves, reconnect with loved ones and get creative in an attempt to stay sane while staying home for more than two months.

## AT HOME

For most, lockdown meant staying home as much as possible. Ricardo Lodewyk only left his home to seek medical assistance. "I developed a pressure sore just before the lockdown, so I only left my home to go to the clinic for my dressing," he says.

Similarly, Nokulunga Mdingi left home three times – once to renew a prescription. Danyal Salmon left his house once to drive around.

For many, it was easy to stay home with friends or family to assist with shopping. Nosipho Ngcobo, for example, had aunts and uncles to assist: "If we happened to need other things my uncle or aunt would go buy the items as they had the correct permits."

Others, like Mohammed Khan, had to leave the house more often to buy the essentials: "Honestly, I leave my home at least every second day just to buy the basics like bread and milk."

## LOCKDOWN CHALLENGES

The national lockdown was not without its challenges. For everyone this meant something else whether it was battling loneliness or getting around with limited transport options. Lodewyk struggled with the isolation.

"I'm part of an exercise group for people with disabilities that comes together weekly and a support group. It was kind of lonely not being part of something and just staying home," he says. He also lost a friend during this time and was unable to attend the funeral.

While many agreed that it was difficult to be separated from friend and family, Rashied Abrahams also pointed to the challenge of not being able to work. Elda Radebe missed not being able to attend classes.

The early days of the lockdown also meant giving up some non-essentially luxury items. For Khan, the cigarette ban was difficult. "I would say the cigarette ban was the most challenging – even though it came as a blessing in disguise!"

For Jemina Maotoe, using public transport was a big obstacle, while Ngcobo struggled with the waiting times as some retailers only allowed a limited number of customers into stores. With so many job losses, pay cuts and businesses closing, many had very little or no income during the lockdown.

For Nokuzola Rantso, lockdown meant making do with little. Maotoe is in a similar position: "I have to stretch limited resources to accommodate extra expenses such as buying more sanitiser and a mask."

## STAYING ENTERTAINED

Undoubtedly, a big challenge for everyone was staying

entertained. For some, this time presented an opportunity to reconnect or try new things. Mdingi says: "I played games on my phone, which I'm not used to, and engage more with my caregiver." Radebe spent more time with her son and Ricardo Mateus played basketball with his nephew and sister or cards with his family.

Most turned to traditional forms of entertainment like watching TV. Others were more creative. Salmon listened to audiobooks and music, read and even joined a birthday celebration over Zoom – a virtual meeting tool. Ngcobo tried new recipes while Rantso kept her mind active with puzzles, games and riddles.

Lodewyk highlights how quickly it became important to maintain some sort of routine. "I did spend a lot of time in bed at first, but that got boring real fast. You can't just eat 'til you're tired, then go to sleep 'til you're hungry," he says.

"I have cleaned and repaired my wheelchair, spent some time on social media and WhatsApp groups, and worked with my design software as this was an ideal time to learn a new skill and do tutorials."

Lodewyk wasn't alone in his planning and daily routine. Khan shares: "I had a lot of free time, but I still had to plan my days accordingly. Studying and planning how to achieve my goals took up most of my time. This lockdown came at a good time to get some much needed mental and physical relaxation."

For parents, the lockdown also meant suddenly being a teacher. Maotoe, for example, assisted her children with basic schooling. She also wrote and shared her life stories with her children.



**ABOVE:** Ricardo Mateus shoots some hoops during lockdown.

**LEFT:** Danyal Salmon, equipped with his mask, took a drive to get out of the house.

## KEEPING UP NEW HABITS

A few months in lockdown definitely led to some new habits, whether it is quitting alcohol, exercising at home or simply checking in with friends and family more often.

Lodewyk's new habit to keep up after lockdown is drinking more water. "I hated drinking water," he explains. "I also realised that smoking is not a must and, without it, you actually have a lot more money." He can also now brew his own beer.

For Mdingi, the lockdown meant spending less time on her phone and rather connecting more with others. Mateus will keep playing with his nephew and make time to exercise. Ngcobo too will keep exercising: "I got into exercises to keep fit. I will keep up with the gym as I found it very interesting."

Maotie plans to focus on her body and mind: "Hygiene will be the first habit I plan to keep up along with physically and mental exercises to stay healthy. Definitely eating healthy too."

For others, the global regulations for preventing COVID-19 will remain essential. Khan says: "Social distancing is definitely a new habit. I think of it as a good thing, but, in some ways, it can be bad too. Our immune systems are so fragile that it can contract the smallest of viruses from anybody or anything. Yet, we enjoy being around others. This makes things difficult going forward."

## ALL THINGS WORK

For a fortunate few, lockdown included working from home, which didn't come without its challenges. Lodewyk, for example, admittedly struggled to stay motivated. He shares: "I did work from home for a while. I did not like it very much as I'm a people's person. I need to be among people. That's where I'm most helpful."

For Mdingi, productivity was also a challenge: "I did work from home, but I was not as productive as in the office."

Some enjoyed the challenges that came with working from home. Salmon, for example, enjoyed all the new virtual meeting software. "I was able to work during lockdown with Microsoft Teams and Zoom for product presentations and video conference meetings. I enjoyed using the new technology," he says.

Lockdown also meant getting creative with work. "I definitely found a new way of sourcing clients," Khan says. "I usually go to different companies and malls to source new clients. However, that had to change due to the lockdown. Now I spend my time searching various different sites online to look for suitable clients."

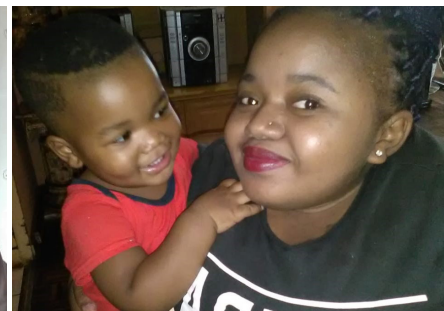
## LESSONS LEARNED

As the lockdown seemingly comes to an end, some have high hopes for what people will take away from it. Businesses might see the value in remote work and encourage employees to work from home while others might see the value in social distancing to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.

Lodewyk hopes people will value family more: "I really hope that the world has learned the importance of family. It was a time that families could eat together and play games at home to pass the time." He adds that the lockdown illustrated that, with the right technology, people with disabilities can work from home just as well as anyone else.



**ABOVE:** Ricardo Mateus spent some of his time in lockdown studying.



**TOP RIGHT:** Elda Radebe could enjoy even more time with her son.



**BOTTOM LEFT:** Many, like Nokulunga Mdingi, enjoyed watching movies.



**LEFT:** Rashied Abrahams had to celebrate his birthday in lockdown. Fortunately, he had a lot of time to upgrade his music systems complete with speakers and amplifiers.

Salmon hopes the pandemic will bring everyone together. He points out: "I hope that people will realise that we, as a human race, are all affected by such a virus regardless of our race, gender or creed. I hope that it leads to us being a bit more compassionate to one another."

For Abrahams, the lesson lies in the value of practicing good hygiene. "People should always clean their hands so that they don't infect their peers and other people that are using the same things, such as door handles or lift buttons," he says.

Radebe hopes that people will abide by the rules, while Ngcobo, more philosophically, hopes that people will value their time more and use it wisely.

For Maotie, the lockdown reiterated how quickly life can change. "People have learned that life plans can change quickly, in a blink of an eye, without any notice. I hope that people learn to appreciate, care and tolerate one another," she says. Maotie adds that she has learned the importance of saving up for a rainy day.

At least some good came from the lockdown. Hopefully, South Africa will emerge on the other side stronger with her people a little more enriched. **R**



# QASA CELEBRATES MOTHERS



In celebration of Mother's Day on Sunday, May 10, QASA asked its members to share why their mothers were so important to them. You voted and here is the winner. Congratulations to mother Ntombi Mlambo. This is what Mthobeli Mlambo wrote:

"I grew up with a permanent disability (known as osteogenesis imperfecta or brittle bones). This means that I could not walk since birth as my bones were extremely fragile. The doctors and physiotherapists advised my mother to be [my sole caregiver] as she is trained on how to assist me on a daily basis.

"She had to quit her job to be a full-time care taker. This during a difficult period when my dad had just passed away and there was no source of income. She managed to enroll me in school until matric through doing odd jobs.

"Today I am a young adult thanks to her. Winning a voucher will be a great Mother's Day gift as she's still struggling."

## QASA LAUNCHES RELIEF FUND

To assist its members, QASA has launched a COVID-19 Relief Fund aimed at providing financial relief to those most affected by the national lockdown. QASA Chief Operating Officer, Raven Benny, says: "QASA is cautious of the effect the national lockdown will have on its members.

"Many rely solely on the meagre R1 860 per month disability grant from SASSA, while others have lost the chance of earning income from not being able to return to work," he adds.

While QASA will be committing some of its own money to the fund, the organisation is calling on all South Africans, with a little to spare, to donate. Donations can be made on the QASA BackaBuddy campaign page at [www.backabuddy.co.za/champion/project/qasa-covid-19-relief](http://www.backabuddy.co.za/champion/project/qasa-covid-19-relief) or via EFT to:

Bank: ABSA

Account holder: QASA

Account number: 730570406

Branch code: 632 005

Reference: COVID-19



QASA members who require assistance, can contact the QASA head office during office hours (08h00 to 16h00) at 031 767 0348 or at [info@qasa.co.za](mailto:info@qasa.co.za).

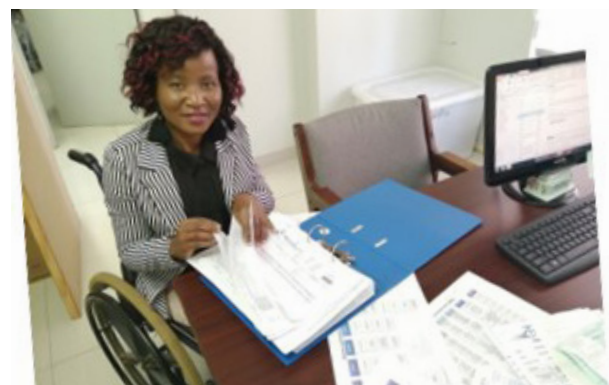
## WORK READINESS PROGRAMME NOW ONLINE

Following the announcement of a national lockdown by President Cyril Ramaphosa on Monday, March 23, QASA reviewed its operational plan and the steps needed to mitigate against the spread of COVID-19.

Among the revisions made to operations is the introduction of the QASA Work Readiness Programme to an online platform.

Social distancing is encouraged as a way to limit the spread of the coronavirus. With an online platform, the programme will be able to continue providing QASA members with invaluable skills while reaching a wider audience.

For more information on this award-winning programme as well as its migration to an online platform, contact [projectcoordinator@qasa.co.za](mailto:projectcoordinator@qasa.co.za).



# HOPE

GEORGE LOUW EXPLAINS WHY HOPE IN A TIME  
OF PANIC AND FEAR IS SO IMPORTANT AND  
WHERE HE PUTS HIS HOPE





We live in times of doubt. COVID-19 has moved the whole world out of its comfort zone, and we do not know what the future holds. We are concerned. We are afraid. In some instances, we are without hope. For many of us, the virus has become a lesser concern: My sources of income are drying up. How am I going to pay my caregiver? What do I have to eat today? My loved ones are suffering and I can do nothing about it.

Take heart. Doubt is the fertile ground from which hope germinates. Helen Keller once said of optimism: "It let's us into the soul of things and teaches us that although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it". She could just as well have said this of hope.

Without doubt, all that remains is certainty. And certainty is rigid. It does not allow for hope because it is what it is. It cannot change. But the moment we doubt, we also start hoping. And when we hope we become creative. The most creative times in the world were times of great hardship. If everything is hunky dory, we relax.

When we are threatened, when we are rattled out of our comfort zones, when we say in doubt and despair "how can this be?", it just takes a shift of mind to say, "this cannot be". And that is the point when hope germinates in the soil of doubt. That is when hope generates a new focus of creativity, of resilience, of perseverance.

Hope against all odds. Hope even when there appears to be no hope like a tree that grows from a crack in a cliff. But there is a caveat: What is the foundation of our hope? On what or on whom do we base our hope? Because hope can be misplaced, it can be irrational, it can be false. Hope can be selfish. It can disappoint. Then doubt sets in.

When doubt is constructive, it urges us to question the basis of our hope. It urges us to search for a new foundation on which to build our hope. Hope is the very essence of our survival. Without hope, we wither and die. Yet, inspirational hope allows us to soar above ourselves, to become a source of inspiration to others. To become the architect and the chief executive of the realisation of our hope.

So, this brings me to the true essence of hope. It isn't an emotion. It is an action – a driving force that motivates me to achieve what I am hoping for. Thus, hope is so creative, but also why misplaced hope is so dangerous. Hence, the basis of our hope is fundamental.

We can base our hope on the evidence of history: The Plague of 1346 to 1353 came and went, smallpox came and went, the Spanish flu came and went. History is a consolation, but not without consequences. All three those pandemics killed millions before they went. So, history tells us that COVID-19 too, will pass. But at what cost? Is history a good foundation on which to base our hopes for today? I think not.

Could we base our hope on immunity? On the development of a vaccine, or on herd immunity? Certainly, but again, at what cost? Do we ignore the virus and place our hope on the restoration of the economy so that at least we can eat while we wait to fall ill? Yes, we can but again, at what cost? So, it becomes apparent that we cannot base our hopes on things or events. They are bound to disappoint.

What then is the true foundation of hope? For me, it is the knowledge that our Creator empowers us. He blesses us so that we can go out and be a blessing to others in times of need. To become extensions of His grace. This is our true function in life. It is also the one function that we fail in dismally, but that is where forgiveness kicks in.

There is no greater service than to be extensions of the grace of God. There is no greater hope than to be good stewards of God's grace. But there is one hurdle to overcome. To illustrate this, let me share a fable from India that I came across recently.

“The moment we doubt, we also start hoping. And when we hope we become creative.”

The spirit of the plague passed an old man sitting under a tree.

Old man: "Where are you going?"

Spirit: "To Benares, to kill 100 people."

Later, the old man heard that, in Benares, 10 000 had died.

Then, the spirit of the plague passed again on his return journey.

Old man: "You lied. You said you would kill 100."

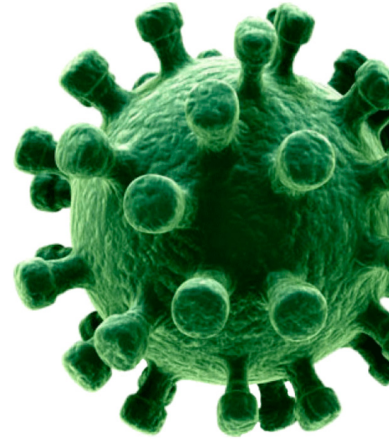
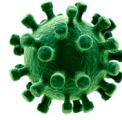
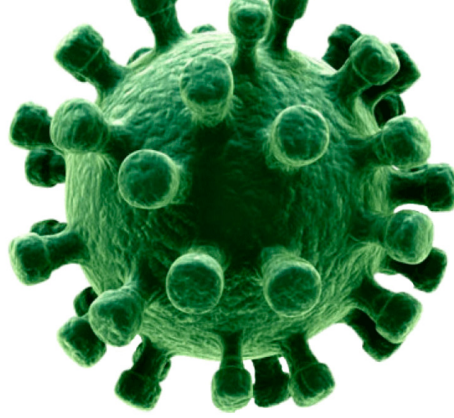
Spirit: "I killed 100. FEAR killed the rest."

The hurdle to overcome is fear. To serve in the grace of God is to serve with love. There is no place for fear. So, let us place our hope in our Creator in the knowledge that COVID-19 too, will eventually pass. <sup>R</sup>

*Disclaimer: ROLLING INSPIRATION does not promote or support any specific religious belief. The views expressed in this article is that of 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



# COVID-19

# FACTS

**FROM WASHING YOUR HANDS AND DISINFECTING FREQUENTLY TOUCHED SURFACES TO CORRECTLY WEARING YOUR MASK, THERE ARE SOME BASIC COVID-19 FACTS THAT EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW TO STAY SAFE**



As South Africa creeps even closer to its third month in lockdown, the number of people infected with COVID-19 increases. It is, arguably, more important than ever to ensure all the guidelines are followed to keep ourselves and others safe. It all starts with knowing what we are up against.

## KNOW THE VIRUS

The Coronavirus Disease 2019, commonly known as COVID-19, is a new strain of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). It attacks the respiratory system, which can cause difficulty breathing. People over 50, with a respiratory illness or an underlying disease that is cardiovascular-related, such as high blood pressure, are more likely to fall severely ill with the coronavirus. This might lead to hospitalisation or the need for a ventilator.

Similar to influenza or the common cold, COVID-19 mainly spreads through droplets, or contaminated objects and surfaces. In most cases, this requires coming into close contact with someone who is ill.

COVID-19 is less contagious than influenza but presents an unique challenge for healthcare workers as the symptoms can take up to a week to show. This means that infected people can unknowingly spread the virus.

## WHAT SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR?

The most common symptoms are fatigue, a dry cough and fever. Although less common, other symptoms that could point to COVID-19 include:

- Aches and pains;
- Sore throat;
- Diarrhoea;
- Conjunctivitis;
- Headache;
- Loss of taste or smell; and
- A rash on the skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes.



Serious symptoms of the virus include difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, chest pains or pressure and a loss of speech. If you experience any of these serious symptoms, you should contact your doctor or a hospital immediately.

Be sure to phone your doctor, clinic or hospital in advance so that they can take the necessary precautionary measures.

### WHAT CAN I DO TO SLOW THE SPREAD?

As there is no cure or vaccine currently for COVID-19, it is important to follow the guidelines to help prevent the spread of the disease. It starts with washing your hands regularly with hot water and soap for at least 30 seconds. Ideally, you should follow the World Health Organization (WHO)'s guidelines.



If water and soap is not available, sanitise your hands and frequently touches surfaces or items, such as your assistive device and cell phone, with a hand sanitiser that is at least 70 percent alcohol based. It is also important to avoid touching your face with unwashed hands – particularly your mouth, nose and eyes.

It is important to cough or sneeze into your elbow. If you are sick, this will prevent the further spread of the virus through your hands as you touch other surfaces.



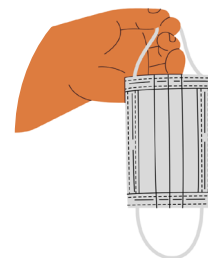
Of course, it is also important to avoid close contact with a sick person. If you are ill and need a caregiver to assist, be sure to provide them with the necessarily protective equipment to limit the possibility of them falling ill as well.

When in public, be sure to practice social distancing by standing between 1,5 to two metres from anyone who is not in the same household. All South Africans are also required to wear a mask when in any public space, which includes the street, shops or clinics. Even when exercising, it is best to keep your mask on.



### HOW SHOULD I WEAR AND CARE FOR MY MASK?

First, make sure you have the correct mask. All cloth masks should be at least three layers, which includes a filter. The mask should fit snugly over your mouth and nose to prevent the spread of any droplets.



Wash your hands before putting on your mask. Only touch the straps when tying it behind your head or fitting it over your ears. While it is tempting to remove your mask when others are not around, DON'T!

If you remove your mask, droplets can spread to nearby surfaces. It is also recommended by the WHO to not touch the front of your mask as this could spread the virus to your hands. Make sure the mask covers both your mouth and nose all the time or it will be less effective.



Wash your hands again before removing the mask. Only hold onto the straps. Immediately sanitise the mask after you have removed it by soaking it in boiling water. If you are unsure of how to correctly sanitise your mask, check the manufacturer's instructions.

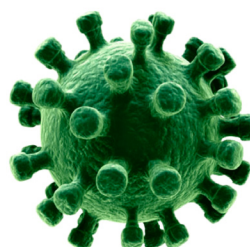
### WHEN CAN WE EXPECT A VACCINE?

There are fortunately numerous vaccines currently being tested. The British pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca expects to roll out two billion doses of its vaccine in September if the trials are successful. This is the earliest expected vaccine after experts estimated the first roll outs to take place only next year. <sup>[R]</sup>

“

It is important to only touch the straps when putting on your mask and ensure it covers your nose and mouth.

”



# TRAVELLING AMID COVID-19

MANDY LATIMORE TAKES A LOOK AT WHAT TRAVEL AFTER THE LOCKDOWN MIGHT LOOK LIKE AS THE TOURISM INDUSTRY TAKES STEPS TO KEEP ITS CUSTOMERS SAFE



You all must be feeling as trapped and hemmed in as myself. This is the most time I've spent in my home without a break. It has been 53 days and counting! For those of you who are longing for some beautiful views (other than your own garden) and have access to the internet or social media, virtual

tours might be your rescue.

Try virtual game drives that many lodges are offering – some on a daily basis. There are also virtual travel clips for venues, cities and countries on websites and Youtube. Happy internet couch surfing!

However, for those lucky few who have the relevant permits and will travel as soon as the lockdown allows, here are some protocols by the Tourism Business Council of South Africa to ensure the safety of staff and consumers.

These standards were developed in consultation with various industry stakeholders so that they are achievable and realistic. They are aligned with guidelines and advice from the World Health Organization, the National Institute for Communicable Diseases and Department of Health. They discuss customer information, personal protective equipment (PPE), physical distancing, sanitisation and hygiene practices, among others, for staff and customers.

These protocols ensure that the crucial areas of concern for government are addressed. These are:

## PERSONS WITH HIGHER RISK

1. Persons above 65 years of age may be asked not to visit establishments.
2. Persons between 60 to 65 are recommended not to travel and visit establishments.
3. Persons with high-risk health issues are recommended not travel and visit these establishments.
4. Self-catering establishments can operate for high-risk guests travelling by private car or a car hire.
5. High-risk staff will be allocated to smaller shifts and lower risk areas, be given additional PPE (such as visors) and will work from home where possible.

## LIMITING THE RISK OF TRANSMISSION BETWEEN DISTRICTS AND PROVINCES

1. To travel from home to and from an accommodation

establishment, proof of booking must be carried. Directions or a map of the route is also recommended.

2. Customers should stop only to purchase fuel or other items at a petrol station or permitted retail operation enroute.
3. Only people visiting accommodation establishments in private vehicles or car hire vehicles may cross provincial borders.



## ABILITY TO TRACE CONTACT WITH COVID-19

1. All operating businesses will obtain and keep guest/visitor/passenger/client details plus recent and planned travel information.
2. Staff contact details will be up-to-date and all work information, for example, shifts and drivers of vehicles, will be meticulously recorded.

## COMMITMENT TO THE PROTOCOLS

All owners, directors and/or managers of businesses, premises or transport services will sign a pledge to adhere to industry protocols. The Tourism Business Council of South Africa and sector leaders will provide support and guidance to smaller establishments.

## CLIENT REQUIREMENTS

All guests, visitors, passengers and clients must complete a declaration, including passengers in hired vehicles or people sharing hotel bedrooms. The industry will develop a standard form and ensure it is compliant with the Protection of Personal Information Act. The completion and acceptance of the form acts as acceptance into a facility or vehicle.

Where loyalty cards operate, the medical and travel status of the guest can be linked to the loyalty card, and access may be limited to loyalty card holders only. Casinos, for example, will limit access to only loyalty card holders. This will facilitate reduced numbers and keeping guest records to ensure traceability. Only updates to information and temperature needs to be taken on arrival.

While the declaration must be signed on arrival, check-in, boarding or pick-up, businesses may opt to ask some or all of the questions on booking or reservation. Businesses may suggest that high-risk individuals postpone their trip or decline a reservation. Industry operators may develop the form as an app, which customers complete on a

device, before or on arrival, with electronic submission on arrival indicating sign-off. The declaration form will include the following:

- General health, chronic or other conditions and medication;
- Physical impairments;
- Symptoms in the previous 30 days;
- Smoker status and fitness level;
- COVID-19 history;
- COVID-19 status disclosure signed-off;
- Record of trip, which includes a full, current trip itinerary (past and future) for tracing;
- Recent travel history other the last month;
- Next-of-kin or a friend's name and contact details, who is not travelling with you;
- Nationality;
- ID or passport number;
- Travel insurance declaration and proof.



Temperature of all customers will be taken on arrival, boarding, pick-up or check-in. For multiple-day stays, daily temperature should be recorded, for example, when arriving for breakfast or departing the hotel each day. For all experiences longer than two hours, on rental drop-offs, leaving a facility, disembarking and so on, temperature should be retaken.

As far as possible any subsequent readings during a stay, and the check-out, drop-off or disembarking, reading should be noted on the same record. All temperatures will be taken with a non-contact thermometer.

Guests will receive extensive information and briefings on the COVID-19 protocols. This will include information on:

- Hand sanitising and hand washing;
- Footwear sanitising where applicable;
- Surface sanitising;
- Physical distancing – spacing and queues;
- Use of masks – details on the proper use and specifically what is expected when eating and drinking;
- Brief explanation of procedures if someone has a high temperature or COVID-19 symptoms;
- Access to medical services and pharmacies;
- Other details per business and sub-sector, such as room cleaning and linen change frequency; food service options and if restaurant reservations are required; dedicated vehicle seat and vehicle entry or exit procedures (which entrance/exit to use, not to touch doors or seats except one seat and seatbelt).



Customers will be required to wear masks except when in their bedroom, in a small group in a vehicle, while eating or drinking. Acceptable masks are cloth masks, surgical masks and N95 respirators. It is expected that most customers will have their own cloth masks.

All facilities and businesses should have a spare supply of surgical or cloth masks, which can be provided to customers should they not have their own mask(s). If a guest does not have their own masks for a multiple-day stay, then multiple masks should be provided.

Hotels may offer a specialised cloth mask laundry service. This will require small sealable bags in which used masks can be submitted for laundry and then a new sterile bag to return the clean mask.

## SANITISING AND HYGIENE PRACTICES

Frequent customer and staff hand sanitising and/or hand washing along with frequent proper sanitising of surfaces are the key defence against COVID-19.

## LUGGAGE

All luggage should either be sprayed with a disinfection spray after off-loading, or wiped, with a minimum of all handles and corners carefully wiped with surface sanitiser. Staff handling luggage should sanitise or wash hands immediately before and after touching luggage. If the guest handles their own luggage to move it into or out of the vehicle or room, and it is not touched by staff, then wiping or spraying is not required.



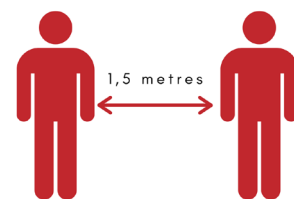
## CASH HANDLING


Cash handling should be minimised or eliminated. Pre-payments, EFTs, credit and debit cards, SnapScan, Zapper, and signing to accounts should be maximised. If a guest or staff member handles cash, hand sanitising should happen immediately afterwards.

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING

The space between any persons in public and back of house areas should be a minimum of 1,5 metres at all times with two metres preferred.

Exceptions are when one person, for example, a receptionist or cashier, is wearing a visor, or if there is a Perspex or similar shield between the people concerned. Businesses must maximise the use of online reservations, electronic check-in and check-out, and any types of non-contact processing to reduce the need for proximity of people.



As my column space is limited, and there are many sectors to cover, I will be looking at the other sections in the next issue, hopefully the travel restrictions will have been lifted somewhat and we can actually make use of the info from these protocols. In the meantime, stay home and stay safe. 



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## SECTOR CALLS FOR MORE INCLUSION AMID LOCKDOWN

**IN MARCH, THE DISABILITY SECTOR CALLED ON GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES RECEIVE THE REQUIRED SUPPORT DURING LOCKDOWN AND ARE INCLUDED IN POST-LOCKDOWN RECOVERY PLANS. BUT HAS THIS BEEN IN VAIN?**



It is no secret that people with disabilities are among the most marginalised groups. They have less access to important services, schooling and employment. The outbreak of the global coronavirus pandemic and the national lockdown has highlighted these

gaps in access even more.

Many people with disabilities are even further marginalised. While businesses close and joblessness increases, many people with disabilities have little to no income. In addition, those with compromised immune systems or underlying illnesses are even more isolated as they stay home in an attempt to prevent infection. If infected, these individuals run the risk of falling severely ill.

As the number of infected rise in South Africa and the economy suffers, there are many concerns over the continued wellbeing of people with disabilities.

To address these concerns, the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities, in partnership with disabilities organisations and researchers, hosted a webinar on Friday, May 22. The session started with various government departments reassuring delegates that inclusion is a top priority.

Hlengiwe Mkhize (above), deputy minister of the Presidency for Women, Youth and People with Disabilities, stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the inequalities in society. To address this, she pointed out that

there is a need to provide skills and economic opportunity for people with disabilities.

After the opening address, various stakeholders from the industry had an opportunity to share some of their concerns.

### ADDRESSING HEALTHCARE

Innocentia Mgjijima, project manager at the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria, spoke about the centre's COVID-19 Disability Rights Monitor (DRM) initiative, which aims to gather information on the experiences of people with disabilities during the global pandemic through surveys. She shared some of the findings.

One of which was the challenge of accessing certain services and ensuring quality. People with disabilities, reportedly, struggled to access certain healthcare services that were not deemed as essential during lockdown, which included physical and occupational therapy. This was especially the case for people without medical aid.

Services related to assistive devices were also hard to come by, such as purchasing, replacing or repairing assistive devices.

While Mgjijima didn't speak directly to any cases of abuse or neglect, she did note the concern for people with disabilities in care facilities. As friends and family were unable to visit during the lockdown, the industry called on government to ensure a quality service was being provided



and that residents were receiving the correct care.

In addition, there was a concern about whether important information was being communicated to residents and staff as, according to Mgjijima's findings, some facilities only received communication through its management.

Looks Matoto, representing the Disabled People of South Africa (DPSA), raised concern over correctly sanitising assistive devices during the COVID-19 pandemic. "Assistive devices come in contact with the various surfaces that puts the user at a greater risk of contracting the virus," he noted.

While there are recommendations that encourage the regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces, it is important to ensure that this is common knowledge and people with disabilities have access to the resources to clean their equipment frequently.

## ON BEHALF OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

There were also some concerns raised about the health and safety of children with disabilities during the lockdown. Mgjijima pointed to those essential workers who care for children with a disability. In some instances, there might be no place for the parent to leave the child. This might result in an older child taking care of their younger sibling – a dangerous scenario as the older might not be equipped for the responsibility.

There were also various concerns about the safety of students with disabilities when schools reopened. While the government did, towards the end of the webinar, express that measures would be put in place to assist students with disabilities, they were vague about the exact actions that will be taken.

Lisa Aziz, a member of the Presidency for Women, Youth and People with Disabilities, pointed out that students with disabilities run the risk of being left even further behind when schools close. Online classrooms or virtual learning might not be accessible to children with disabilities. She also highlighted that children with disabilities are at a greater risk of being abused.

## AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH TO THE ECONOMY

Another very important topic of discussion was the financial wellbeing of people with disabilities during and post lockdown with a call to ensure that people with disabilities were included in the economy. As Aziz noted, people with disabilities are more vulnerable to poverty as the cost of a disability is high.

Those in the informal economy struggled to survive on their disability grant while people in the formal sector don't have access to governmental support.

Matoto pointed out that people with disabilities, to a large extent, were completely overlooked with the special interventions such as government food relief schemes. "The people with disabilities who receive grants have been excluded," he said. "A grant is not enough to curb the poverty of people with disabilities."

To prevent further exclusion, the sector called on government to include people with disabilities in the recovery of the economy. According to Matoto, a big obstacle in this inclusion is the belief that people with disabilities are only consumers.

"People with disabilities are seen as consumers and not as providers. We have people with disabilities who can be providers of mask, for example," he said.

The dismal economic situation of many people with disabilities was not the only concern. The sector also highlighted the financial impact of the lockdown on non-profit organisations.

Jace Nair, who represented the South African Disability Alliance (SADA) – including the QuadPara Association of South Africa (QASA), pointed out: "The financial sustainability of disability organisations is worsening. Corporate funding is declining as companies try to save themselves. Organisations also can't provide direct services." According to him, it was challenging for NPOs or NGOs to access relief funding.

## LEGISLATION

To ensure better inclusion for people with disabilities during and post lockdown, the community suggested fast tracking a Disability Act, which would provide accountability when disability rights were ignored. Matoto used a striking image in which he compared the response to the pandemic with a plane crash.

"The response to the pandemic was a scramble," Matoto said in his address. "Everyone rushed to safety but forgot about the people with disability." He pointed out that on a flight, it is the crew who will assist the people with disabilities.

"Who is the crew member in our instance that will come to their help? That crew member would be an Act. All responses to the pandemic would have been in relation to that Act," Matoto said.

He continued, that post lockdown, there will be another scramble for resources as the economy begins to restore itself. When this happens, it will be important to ensure that people with disabilities are included.

"Without an Act, how do you ensure equity? In that scramble, not a thought will be left for people with disabilities. To ensure that this happens systematically, an Act is needed," Matoto said.

The call for a Disability Act was second by Nair, who called the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic "uncoordinated" and "fragmented". This, he argued, impacted on people with disabilities and could have been prevented with a Disability Act.


He also called for a task team with experts from the sector to assist the ministry with implementing practical measures to assist people with disabilities.

## A DISAPPOINTING RESPONSE

Following all the presentations, the Presidency held a questions-and-answer session. Although the Department of Education and the Department of Social Development tried to answer some of the questions, most of the responses were vague or incomplete as the officials struggled with connectivity issues.

In the end, the Presidency promised to provide the sector with a report on the webinar. On the date of publishing, the ROLLING INSPIRATION team had not seen any such report.

In the end, Mkhize concluded the webinar by asking for a concrete briefing from each department. She stated that the Presidency had learned a lot from the report delivered by the United Nations on disability inclusion.

Although the conclusion to the webinar was somewhat disappointing, it did offer the industry an opportunity to voice their challenges and highlight some areas where improvements are needed desperately. Whether the government will step in to help is an entirely separate matter. 

# I LOST MY LEG, PLEASE TREAT ME PROPERLY (PART 2)

**IN THE SECOND PART OF THE SERIES, HEINRICH GRIMSEHL INVESTIGATES THE IDEAL SOCKET FITMENT PROTOCOL**

**P**lease be informed that this article is a follow up from my article in the previous edition of ROLLING INSPIRATION. The same disclaimer applies. This is simply my opinion. Also, this article should only be interpreted if you have read part one.

We continue the possible treatment protocol presuming that your stump has healed, has been coned and you have had time to wear the silicone liner. Wearing the liner prior to the prosthesis will give you a good idea of how your skin will react to its new environment.

If it seems that your stump volume has settled (measurements should have been taken from day one), it is time to cast your stump with the liner, on so that a test socket can be manufactured. These usually are made from a clear polymer (plastic) material. It looks like a glass socket.

Test sockets can easily be adjusted with a heat gun. They are rock hard, but if you warm them up, the heated area becomes soft and pliable like bubble gum.

This is very handy if you have to make adjustments. For instance, if there is a pressure point on a prominent bony structure, the test socket can be adjusted to relieve pain.

Test sockets can be strengthened so that you can wear them for several weeks. This gives the patient and the prosthetist time to make the prosthesis as comfortable as possible. Personally, I feel that this is the most crucial part of the prosthetic fitting and should not be neglected.

Because you have got a working prosthesis, you are able to get back on your feet and there is no need to rush. The comfort of the residual limb is the most important aspect of the entire prosthetic fitting.

Excessive pressure and pain will cause the skin to break down, which will lead to infection and ultimately to stump revision surgery. This will set you back and delay your progress for several weeks. This must be avoided at all costs.

During this process of fitting a test socket, it is important to also check the alignment – the second most important aspect of your prosthesis. Incorrect alignment and leg length could cause the following:

- Lower back and neck pain;

- Excessive pressure on your stump;
- Skin breakdown;
- Excessive pain and pressure on your sound leg and foot;
- Balance difficulties and instability;
- Difficulty walking up or down hill;
- Toe scuffing on the floor and ultimately injuries due to falling.


Because you are born with natural balance, your body will accommodate a leg that is not 100 percent aligned. You might be able to walk, but, somewhere in the near future, a complication will surface. Experienced prosthetists can visually pick up alignment deviations, but they cannot feel the pressure underneath your feet.

Professional, computerised, real-time alignment equipment with pressure plates to stand on and multiple cameras throwing images of virtual weight, load and torque bearing lines on a computer screen is highly recommended and the only way to accurately assess alignment.

During your rehabilitation you should receive a certain amount of gait training. Physiotherapy with a therapist who specialises in the field is highly recommended. A patient should not be sent home with a prosthesis if this aspect has not been addressed. It is a recipe for disaster.

When your final prosthesis is being manufactured, please enquire whether the socket is fully adjustable. There are ways to manufacture a socket so that it will accommodate future pressure points and volume fluctuations.

Regarding leg components, the most expensive don't guarantee the most functional prosthesis. Components are but a small part of the entire prosthetic experience. You can always upgrade components later. Rather focus on socket comfort first.

Last, pain is usually an indication that something is wrong. The stump has to desensitise a bit and a certain amount of pressure is to be expected. However, if pain is the main theme of your prosthetic experience, something definitely is wrong. Prosthesis shouldn't hurt! 



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# HOME OFFICES THE FUTURE OF WORK?

**AS SOUTH AFRICANS RETREATED TO THEIR HOMES AMID THE LOCKDOWN, BUSINESSES HAD TO ADAPT TO A NEW WORLD OF WORK WITH HOME OFFICES AS THE PLACE OF BUSINESS**



While there are few silver linings amid the global COVID-19 pandemic, remote work is definitely one. The nationwide lockdown forced many businesses to suddenly enable its workforce to work from home or remotely.

Although it has been around for some time, the concept wasn't widely adopted in South Africa.

Suddenly, a nation was keeping the economy afloat from the comfort of a study, living or bedroom. For some it was easier than others, but regardless, businesses had no choice but to adopt this new practice.

Why should you care? Well, for two reasons. First, the world of work will surely look very different post lockdown – at least for some time until the safety of employees can

be assured. Many businesses might choose to permanently adopt the concept of remote work as it will mean employees don't need to travel and businesses can operate from smaller offices.

Second, people with disabilities could also experience the benefits of this concept. Post lockdown, they can approach their employer about a more permanent arrangement, or they can consider a career which allows them to work from home. The benefits are truly endless, especially for employees with disabilities and the businesses that wish to employ them.

Maureen Bvuma shares how she benefited from remote work during lockdown. "The company I work for made me a priority to work from home prior to the lockdown to ensure my safety and that everything is set up and

working properly," she explains. "The positive it is that I am comfortable and don't have to worry about the pressures of getting ready for and to work or the stress of traffic.

"So, I could definitely work from home post lockdown as I see that it has also increased my productivity. The downside is that I miss the interactions with my colleagues and friends," she concludes.

### AVOIDING THE DIRTY WORK

Possibly the most significant benefit for businesses is that they can take advantage of the BBBEE points that come with employing a person with a disability without having to change the office structure.

While all businesses should strive to be universally accessible, the reality is that many don't. Whether it is because of financial constraints or an active choice, an inaccessible workplace makes it simply impossible for a person with a disability to be employed.

If the person with a disability works remotely, the business doesn't need to accommodate all their specific requirements. Instead, the employee can be provided with all the necessary equipment and work from their homes, which is most likely already accessible.

For those who don't have the capability to work from home, businesses can arrange an alternative remote office. For example, non-profit organisations with accessible facilities can be contacted to host remote employees on behalf of the business.

### TRUE COMFORT

Aside from avoiding a long commute and all its challenges, remote work ensures true comfort for the person with a disability. Each person is different with specific requirements to ensure a workspace is truly accessible. Maybe the bathroom at the company is too far from the person with a disability's desk or the cupboards are too high.

Working from home will ensure that the person has everything they need – a completely adapted environment. But it goes beyond that. Many people with disabilities – as clearly highlighted amid the COVID-19 pandemic – are more at risk of falling gravely ill. For those with underlying illnesses or compromised immune systems, remote work can also improve their health with less risk of catching a contagious illness.

### GETTING SET UP

Businesses and employees have a joint responsibility to ensure that the home office is adequately equipped. The employer, for example, can provide a laptop or computer for the employee, which would remain the property of the company. The employee, on the other hand, can ensure that they have a strong internet connection should they need to join a video meeting on programmes such as Skype, Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

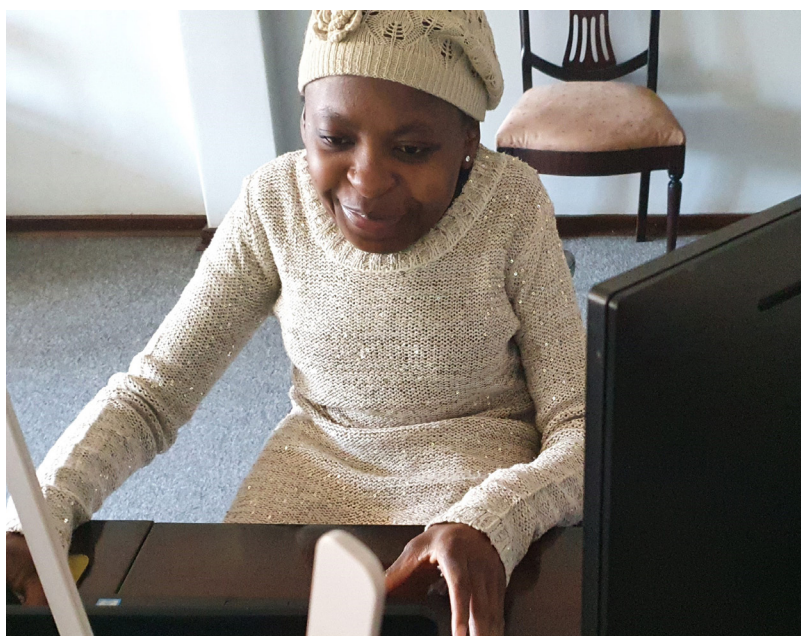
The employee should also make sure that the environment at the home allows them to be productive. To check up on productivity, there are software available that the businesses can upload to the laptop. All of this, of course, needs to be aligned with the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act to ensure all personal information is protected.

### OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION

The most important aspect of remote work is communication between the employee and employer. There needs to be frequent feedback provided with the employer checking in regularly. For example, a weekly meeting can be arranged to discuss important projects and progress. Alternatively, the employee can provide a to-do list with feedback on progress.

Similarly, if there are any obstacles or challenges, it is important for the employee to notify their employer. It is only natural to have an off day. By being vocal, the team can work together to improve productivity. If not, the results might be visible in the employee's work and lead to distrust in their capabilities.

The business has a responsibility to ensure that the employee with a disability is included in team building exercises – especially if they are required to work closely with others. An employer should encourage team building or schedule regular meetings at an accessible location to accommodate the person with a disability.



**LEFT AND ABOVE:** Maureen Bvuma found working from home during the lockdown very convenient.

### A JOB THAT FITS

It is important to note that although most, if not all employees, were accommodated at home during lockdown, this might not be the case going forward. Employees working in finance or with sensitive company information might be required to return to a traditional office setting to protect the organisation.

However, there are many jobs that can be done remotely. People with disabilities who would like to work from home can choose a career that can accommodate remote work or can be done on a freelance basis. There are many to consider, for example, website design, graphic design, social media management and copywriting. <sup>R</sup>

# SUPPORTING BUSINESS OWNERS WITH DISABILITIES



**WHILE NO BUSINESS WENT UNSCATHED BY THE NATIONAL LOCKDOWN, SMALL BUSINESSES FELT THE BRUNT OF IT. FORTUNATELY, ONE ORGANISATION STEPPED UP TO HELP SOME BUSINESSES OWNED BY QUADRIPLÉGICS AND PARAPLEGICS**

**A**s South Africans were asked to stay home, many businesses were forced to close. For a small business or new businesses, a month or more with no income can be fatal. Fortunately, for some businesses owners who are quadriplegics and paraplegics, there was some relief courtesy of the Quadriplegic and Paraplegic Charitable Trust of South Africa (QPCTSA).

The Trust was established in 2012 to raise funding and resources to invest in the entrepreneurial and economic development of quadriplegics and paraplegics. Specifically, it provides start-up and growth capital, but also provides guidance and mentorship where it is required.

QPCTSA supports businesses in a variety of industries from agriculture to car washes and locksmiths. The Trust also aims to uplift previously disadvantaged individuals with 75 percent of its beneficiaries made up of black persons.

Knowing the obstacles facing entrepreneurs with disabilities – especially with a lockdown brining the economy near to a standstill – the QPCTSA made funding available to support small business owners during lockdown.

Nine businesses benefitted from the relief services provided during the lockdown with more than R150 000 provided by the Trust. These businesses were given three months after which the Trust requires feedback to decide whether continued assistance is needed. While the funding from QPCTSA was a great relief, these businesses still need your support!

## West Rand Locksmith and Number Plates

Deon Nel opened his businesses, West Rand Locksmith and



**ABOVE:** Deon Nel (left) was fortunate to have his son, Jason Nel (right), take over the management of his business after he was diagnosed.

Number Plates, in 1987 as a qualified locksmith. Tragedy struck in 2004 when Nel was diagnosed with a terminal motor neurone disease, which led to paralysis and a loss of his voice. By 2008, Nel was unable to consume food or liquids through his mouth nor breath without assistance.

Fortunately, his son, Jason, graduated high school in 2004 and became his father's voice and hands. He qualified as a locksmith to run his father's business. Jason has not taken a salary as the income only covers the overheads and Nel's medical aid.

Nel shares: "Most difficult thing is not being able to go into the shop to help Jason or to talk. It is frustrating as people still insist even though my wife, Bernice, is my voice.

"She has been in tears on many occasions as people don't understand some disabilities rob you of your voice. I am a quadriplegic and can only move my eyes, but my brain is still 100 percent. It is just locked in my body," he adds.

For this small, family owned and run business, the funding was a “godsent”. As the business was shut during lockdown, there was no daily income, which meant devastation for a family that already lives from hand to mouth.

“Life support is very expensive, and I can’t live without power or medical aid. The grant enabled us to pay a few overheads and open doors for a few hours a day to provide essential services,” Nel explains.

### Beauty Academy International

Joy Duffield started her business in 2002 after working as beautician for many years. She explains: “I got to a point in my career where I felt I needed to grow and do something for myself – become more independent. So, I diverted my career from doing various therapies to sharing my knowledge with others by establishing a beauty therapy training centre.”

By 2005, Duffield bought property to expand the school. However, the same year, she broke her neck. Fortunately, she was still able to expand her businesses in 2006 with a distribution centre to supply products and equipment to the hair and beauty industry.

There are many benefits to entrepreneurship, such as making your own hours. For Duffield, this career choice provided even more freedoms after her accident.

“For me, as a person with quadriplegia, it works really well, as I do not have to answer to anybody if I’m not at work due to any health or quadriplegic body management issues,” she explains. “As difficult as it may be, it is great to make one’s own decisions. Ideally, it is financially beneficial.

“It is also incredibly rewarding when you reflect back and take note of what you have accomplished. Having my own business has definitely given me a purpose in my life as a quadriplegic. I have something to get up for each day!”

It does come with its own challenges. Duffield found the COVID-19 pandemic humbled her as it demonstrated how quickly a business could be cash-strapped.

“With the coronavirus, our doors closed for six weeks, which meant devastation with zero income for that time, however basic expenses remained same, for example, more than 20 staff members to pay,” she notes. “We had ordered large amount of stock just prior to lockdown, which had to be paid. But, with the business closed, nothing was sold.

“Even though we have now been allowed to open our doors, the hair and beauty industry, who are our customers, is still shut down, which means our figures are still down dramatically,” she adds.

Fortunately, with funding from QPCTSA, Duffield was able to secure some income for her business. She explains: “We have always been a supplier of certain personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, gloves and sanitisers. By the time lockdown started, we were completely sold out.

“We used the funding to purchase PPE as soon as it became available. This enabled us to open as an essential service provider for our industry and the general public. We are working limited hours with skeleton staff, which has made a small, but definite, difference,” she concludes.

### Access Universal Solutions

Mandy Latimore started her own business in the 80s so that she could create her own working environment. “I always felt like I was giving 150 percent of myself, while my employer took advantage,” she says.

She changed her profession and started working alone as she found it less stressful. The reward for her, of course, is that she now reaps all the rewards of her efforts. “The amount of effort that you put into the business is for your reward. You can’t not appreciate your own effort,” she says.

As is common with entrepreneurs or small businesses owners, a salary is often an afterthought, which comes with its own challenges. “I have always put myself last when it comes to my monthly remuneration,” Latimore elaborates.

“The constant stress of ensuring that you create sufficient funds each month to cover the business and personal expenses is quite tiring. As a result, I was always reticent to take extra funds for the “little extras” like a weekend away or new clothes. I wanted to ensure that there were enough funds for the coming months,” she says.

As a lone businesswoman, from what is considered politically as a privileged background, Latimore didn’t qualify for the various relief schemes offered by many banks and the government. So, when the brunt of the lockdown hit, she had no where to turn.

“I was unable to make use any of the relief packages offered by these institutions. My consultancy has two aspects: Training staff and Universal Access Assessments and reports. Due to the lockdown, both of these sectors were closed down physically and will probably remain very difficult to get going once the country opens up due to the financial stress that the entire world is finding at present,” she explains.

Fortunately, the QPCTSA funding provided her with a life raft. With the funds, Latimore will take a course on online

**RIGHT:** Anda Mthulu started his shoe shine business to assist other people with disabilities. He was able to keep all his staff on with the funding provided by the Trust.



training, which includes how to instruct online and develop training material for online platforms. Some of it will also go towards funding her medical aid – an essential service of people with disabilities.

For more information or to make use of her services, contact Latimore at [mandy@universalsolutions.co.za](mailto:mandy@universalsolutions.co.za).

**MSI Shoe Shine and Services**

Anda Mthulu started his company in 2016 as he wanted to be self-employed and create job opportunities for people with disabilities. He enjoys earning his income through what he enjoys, but finds it challenging to play so many different roles in his business.

“The challenges of being a business owner, especially small business like mine, is that you have to be a bookkeeper, administrator, frontline service provider and do everything in the company as technology, human and financial resources are constrained,” he explains.

With the pandemic, Mtuli wasn’t able to work. Fortunately, with the help of QPCTSA, he was able to keep his staff on.

“The funding sustained our business by keeping the talent and staff. This business is about people and, without the right people, a business can’t grow and mature,” he says.

Visit the MSI Shoe Shine and Services website at [www.msiservices.co.za](http://www.msiservices.co.za) or the Facebook page at Master Shiner Invigorator.

**Travel with Renè**

Renè Moses started her business in 2009 as she realised the need in the tourism market. She enjoys setting her own standards, working from home and deciding how hard to work each day.

“Should a medical emergency arise, I am in the comfort of my home to deal with the issue, no explaining to a ‘boss’,” she says. She notes it can be tough managing businesses – especially practicing self-control with her finances.

“I firmly believe my business and personal bank accounts need to be kept separate. People often make the mistake of spending at will then when times are tough the business suffers,” Moses explains.

With the tourism industry closed, Moses had no income with pre-booked services refunded. The QPCTSA funding allowed her to pay insurance, vehicle tracker and other businesses expenses while the industry is on hold. Grateful, Moses says: “Without it I would not have survived.”

**Disability Info South Africa**

Alan Downey knew after his accident that it would be difficult to return to work. He wanted to earn an income and work from home, so, he started a small graphic design and printing business. In 2015, he saw the need for a one-stop information support service for people with disability and, in 2017, Disability info South Africa (DiSA) was officially launched. For Downey, the benefit of being a business owner is doing something that you are passionate about.

The experience has taught him self-discipline and given him a great sense of accomplishment. While it might mean doing something you love, a small business does require some personal sacrifices. There is also a challenge of managing unforeseen circumstance such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

“You may be forced to think outside the box and reinvent your business to come up with products, services and ideas that are relevant to the current situation that people find themselves in. This may be extremely difficult, but can be very beneficial in the long term, if done correctly,” Downey explains. DISA provides a free service with the assistance from companies, organisations and clubs who advertise. As many of these businesses closed for lockdown, DISA had a loss of income.

“Through the relief of funding from the Trust, we were able to supplement the income that we got from the advertising, so that we could get through this difficult stage and continue to develop new sections and pages on the DISA website, including a page on COVID-19,” Downey says.


“We would therefore like to thank the Trust for assisting DISA and the various other companies during this difficult period,” he concludes. To view the DISA information site, visit [www.disabilityinfosasa.co.za](http://www.disabilityinfosasa.co.za).

**Siphola La Trading**

Back in 2006, Sipho Mdletshe established his business Siphola La Trading, which was only fully operational and registered in 2015. He started his business after realising there is a need for adapted vehicles.

“I noticed that most people with disabilities are not driving since they don’t have a driver’s licence,” he explains. “Even if they have a licence, they don’t get cars that are adapted for their needs. Some end up requesting people to drive their cars. I decided to close that gap by providing the service of adapting their cars by using my previous skills of motor mechanic and engineering.”

Mdletshe enjoys that he can work from home, be his own boss and support his family. Prejudices from vehicle owners and motor dealers make it difficult for him to find work. Lockdown has meant even less work as he was unable to travel to clients or have vehicles brought to him. In addition, customers have less budget for hand controls.

Support from the QPCTSA allowed Mdletshe to start repairing starter motors and alternators as well as hot plates, kettles, and irons. To make use of services provided by Siphola La Trading or to find out more, visit the website at [www.sipholala.co.za](http://www.sipholala.co.za). 



**ABOVE:** Sipho Mdletshe in his work station where he adapts vehicles for people with disabilities.



# DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AMID COVID-19



## RUSTIM ARIEFDIEN TAKES A LOOK AT HOW THE GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND NATIONAL LOCKDOWN HAS IMPACTED DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT



COVID-19 is having an adverse effect on our health, food security and economic wellbeing on a global scale, let alone in South Africa. The health implications are keeping us in lockdown and, of late, impacting on our food security as food supply lines become more and more compromised (consider the looting of food trucks).

From an economic standpoint, unemployment is increasing and businesses are failing, especially small to medium enterprises (SMEs). Even big businesses are going into business rescue. In fact, it is estimated that unemployment could hit 50 percent. South Africans are losing their jobs or taking pay cuts.

At present, there are 76 608 persons with disabilities formally employed, which means that a substantial portion of them are at risk of losing their jobs.

Skills development is an area where training opportunities have been available for persons with disabilities. However, skills development levies have been suspended for four months and the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) are expecting to collect far less revenue for the foreseeable future. This will impact tremendously on opportunities for training of persons with disabilities.

It is difficult to get stats on the number of entrepreneurs with disabilities. To what extent would these entrepreneurs be impacted especially if they fall into the SME category?

Disability is an integral element on a business's Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Scorecard. Many companies have taken advantage of the disability points on offer. To what extent is BBBEE going to play a role in the short to medium term?

With so many businesses being in distress, to what extent would persons with disabilities then loose out?


However, there are positives. Persons with disabilities are very resilient. Communities will be focusing on the issues of health and food security first. There will be a recovery and the economy will correct itself – a new beginning. Employers will start employing and disability should be fore of mind.

As a collective of persons with disabilities, we must ensure this narrative. The Employment Equity Amendment Bill will be put before parliament where companies would be forced to meet their Disability Employment Equity targets and more persons with disabilities will be employed.

Once the initial panic is over and we have some sort of economic recovery, then businesses will need to address their BBBEE statuses and disability will again be an option to get their points up.

Once skills development funding becomes readily available again the disability targets of four percent should stand out prominently. The Tax Allowances of R120 000 on learnerships will remain a good incentive for companies to place learners with disabilities into their workforce.

So, we just need to hang in there. Survive the COVID-19 storm and be ready for the opportunities as they present themselves. While in lockdown it is easy to get carried away with entertainment.

However, this period brings with it lots of available time to do self-learning or engage with a plethora of online learning courses. We need to see this period as a new beginning and be ready to play our role in society and contribute to the growth of this nation. 



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.

# KEEPING FINANCES AFLOAT

**GOOD FINANCIAL PLANNING HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT AS THE NATIONAL LOCKDOWN PUTS STRAIN ON THE FAMILY INCOME. FORTUNATELY, THERE ARE SOME EASY TRICKS TO ENSURE YOUR CONTINUED FINANCIAL STABILITY**



**A**

s government placed South Africa in lockdown to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus and save lives, the economy took a tremendous knock. Businesses were forced to close while many employees lost their jobs or took a pay cut. Suddenly, entire families were left with no source of income. While some remain comfortable with a nest egg for exactly this scenario, most South Africans are struggling.

Worst off are people with disabilities who often have a very small income with many (often medical related) expenses. Fortunately, there are ways in which to cut out expenses and supplement your income.

### START WITH A BUDGET

The first bit of advice anyone would give on better managing your money is accounting for every cent spent or budgeting. A budget helps you determine the expenses you can expect every month and account for where you spent money. Your previous month's bank statement is a good place to start.

Consider which of your expenses are essential (for example, rent or medical supplies) and which are flexible. Food, for example, can be cut by altering your diet or refusing to purchase takeaways.

Cook more or swap out meals for cheaper alternatives. Instead of eating eggs, toast and bacon, consider eating oats most mornings. A bag (or carton) of oats can last up to a month (or more depending on the number of people in a household), is affordable and filling.

Even small changes such as purchasing unprepared veggies can save a few rands. Rather than purchasing pre-packaged, frozen or cut carrots, buy them raw, cut and freeze them yourself.

Also, cut any non-essential or luxury items such as chips, chocolates and cooldrinks. Instead, opt to drink more water, which is also much healthier.

Cutting your budget doesn't have to be a chore. If you can afford it, spoil yourself with ice cream or an extravagant meal.

### SAVE WHERE POSSIBLE

Cutting expenses is not only about surviving on a small salary or your savings. It is also about trying to save as much as possible of whatever income you have. Try to continue saving up money even on a smaller income. There is likely to be further lay-offs post-lockdown and it is important to stretch your money as much as possible.

### TALK TO YOUR BANK

Many banks have programmes in place to support people who don't have an income because of the lockdown. If you

are laid-off or had to take a pay cut, consider asking your bank for a grace period on debt payments until you are in a position to pay.

The same can apply to the person from whom you are renting. Consider asking your landlord if you can get a month free. To make up for the rent missed during the lockdown, your landlord can increase your rent for the rest of the term with a few rands.

### BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR

While it isn't the ideal time to build an entirely new business, consider making some extra cash through your skills or hobbies. If you are good at sewing, for example, why not sell home-made facemasks to friends and family?


You can even use some of your professional skills to assist other business. However, if you are still employed, be sure to let your employer know you will be freelancing.

If you don't have a skill that can translate, consider taking an online course. For example, there are many online classes on social media management. With this skill, you can assist small businesses in managing their online presence for a fee. In addition, this can be done from the comfort of your home.

### REACH OUT TO ORGANISATION

There are a number of organisations with special programmes aimed at assisting people with disabilities in this unprecedented time.

The Quadriplegic and Paraplegic Charitable Trust, for example, offered food vouchers to quadriplegics and paraplegics in need, while QASA has established its COVID-19 Relief Fund to provide financial aid to its members. Take some time to research the relief and support programmes on offer from various organisations.

While this is a financial difficult time for many, some planning and budgeting can go a long way to ensure some financial stability. 

## MORE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

### QASA COVID-19 RELIEF FUND

To support its members, QASA has launched its COVID-19 Relief Fund aimed at providing financial relief. If you are in need of support, you can contact QASA during office hours (08h00 to 16h00) at 031 767 0348 or [info@qasa.co.za](mailto:info@qasa.co.za).

### FOOD ON THE TABLE

The Quadriplegic and Paraplegic Charitable Trust launched its Food on the Table campaign, which provides food vouchers of R500 to eligible candidates. Unfortunately, this programme is no longer running.

### SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

The Quadriplegic and Paraplegic Charitable Trust is also providing financial assistance to small quadriplegic and paraplegic business owners. For more information, send an e-mail to [aris@iafrica.co.za](mailto:aris@iafrica.co.za).

# LOVE IN LOCKDOWN

**STUCK IN OUR HOUSES WITH A GLOBAL PANDEMIC RAGING OUTSIDE CAN PLACE GREAT STRAIN ON A RELATIONSHIP. DANIE BREEDT SHARES SOME ADVICE ON HOW TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP DURING LOCKDOWN**

**W**ith the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, all aspects of our daily lives have been impacted with relationships as no exception. Although social distancing is important to prevent the spread of the virus, it has major emotional impacts on our relationships.

In times of crisis, we go through a three-stage process (also known as General Adaptation Syndrome) of alarm, resistance and exhaustion. During the alarm phase our bodies experience physiological and psychological reactions, as we move into a fight, flight, or freeze response for survival. The resistance phase can be seen as our attempt to adapt to and overcome the effects of the stressor.

If the stressor is not resolved, the stress hormone cortisol will continue to be produced, resulting in poor sleep, increased illness, anxiety, weight gain, and poor cognitive functioning. Finally, exhaustion may follow when a stressor becomes chronic either from ongoing exposure or repeated attempts to deal with it. We become overwhelmed.

In these times of overwhelm, it is not uncommon for emotional and relational difficulties to be magnified. Some, seemingly insignificant, irritation that you may have with your partner suddenly feels like a massive issue. In these situations, we often revert to old (and often ineffective) coping strategies due to familiarity and unfortunately the people closest to us often bears the brunt of it.

With a higher probability of discord with your partner, some emotional distance can be experienced at times. In periods of feeling disconnected, intimacy and sex are often out the door first.

Fortunately, there are some tools that can help you get your relationship back on track. Sex is a great way to relieve tension and stress while simultaneously building a relationship up. However, if there are emotional unfinished business between partners, approaching the topic of physical intimacy could easily have the opposite effect.

Therefore, start with addressing the elephants in the room by making more time for honest conversations. Sharing your experiences and emotions during times crisis has a cathartic effect for you, but also helps your partner to empathise with you. This has the added benefit of seeing your partner as an ally in dealing with a problem as opposed to them being the problem.

It could also be helpful to make a point of "checking-in" with yourself about what you are experiencing at a specific time. Becoming aware of how you are feeling makes it easier to prevent unintended lash outs towards your partner. It also helps to keep you rooted in the present instead of feeling anxious about an uncertain future.

Finally, use this time as a relationship-builder in learning to respect and support how each partner's experience may be different. **R**



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.



# ADAPTING TO CHANGE


**LEON FLEISER TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT HOW THE GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS IMPACTED ON SPORTING EVENTS ACROSS THE GLOBE AND WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PARA ATHLETES**



OW! What crazy times we are living in at the moment. Extremely stressful for everyone, including our para athletes. The 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games have been postponed for a year along with all sporting competitions from local to international – some of which were cancelled completely.

There is so much uncertainty on how and where the athletes can qualify for the Games now. It's definitely not an ideal situation as athletes like to plan. Right now, that is not possible. Most athletes can't even train at the moment.

COVID-19 is a real game changer. We are going to have to adapt the way we live from now on. It is going to change the way athletes prepare and participate at sporting events. The sporting horizon will never be the same again.

One thing I do know though is that, as para athletes, we've already had to adapt and persevere, so for our athletes, this is just another obstacle to overcome. They will and, hopefully soon, we will be watching them inspire the world. I can't wait! 

“COVID-19 is a real game changer. It is going to change the way athletes prepare and participate at sporting events.”



Leon Fleiser has been involved with sport in the disability sector since 1992 when he started playing wheelchair basketball. He captained the national team to the Sydney Paralympic Games and the 2002 World Championships. He started working for Disability Sport South Africa in 2001 as a Coordinator for High Performance. It merged into SASCOC in 2005 and he is now the Manager for Team Preparation and Academy Systems. He has delivered Team South Africa to numerous Olympic, Paralympic, Commonwealth and African Games. email: leonf@sascoc.co.za

# ACCESSING SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

**CONTINUING HER SERIES ON INTEGRATING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES INTO INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS, EMMA MCKINNEY EXPLAINS WHAT A LEARNER PROFILE IS AND HOW TEACHERS SHOULD COMPLETE THIS FORM TO ACCESS SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS WHO NEED IT MOST**

**T**he last article focussed on the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) policy and how it assists teachers to determine the support needs of learners and address barriers to learning and development. There are three differing stages in the process of SIAS and providing support to learners. Each is implemented at different levels of the system.

Every level also has a different focus of intervention. In this article, the aim is to provide teachers with an understanding of the first stage, which includes the initial screening, that is required and should be included.

## **Stage 1 – Initial screening guided by the learner profile**

When any learner is admitted into the school, or at the start of a new phase (such as the foundation, intermediate or senior phase), their teacher is required to do a screening. The findings from this screening is included in each student's learner profile, which is known as a SNA 1 form.

There are several documents and reports that can help a teacher collect relevant information about each learner and record this in the SNA 1 form. These include:

- The admission form which was completed when the learner applied to the school;
- The Government's Road to Health booklet, which is very important for Grade R or foundation phase levels;
- Any integrated school health programme reports, which includes, for example, ear and eye screening or gross and fine motor physical assessments;

- End-of-year school reports, which will be found in the learner's profile;
- Reports from parents and other relevant stakeholders (for example, medical professionals, therapists, psychologist or community healthcare workers).

A learner profile should include any areas of concern as well as the student's strengths and needs. This can refer to communication, learning, behaviour and social competence, health, wellness and personal care, classroom, school environment, family, home and community situation.

The report also should include any teacher intervention or support such as curriculum intervention (different content, modified assessments or teaching methods), and any other interventions, for example, changes to the physical or learning environment and a log of any parent, caregiver or learner meetings.

To assist teachers, an asterisk (\*) is included at specific questions in the SNA 1 form or learner profile that are important sections or information. For example, the section on whether the child has a disability, receive a social grant, early intervention services are being rendered and the areas where the child needs support.

The information collated by teachers in the learner profile is vital to the second stage of the SIAS process, which address the school-based support team (SBST)'s responsibilities around assessments and interventions. The next article will take a closer look at this. [R](#)



Dr Emma McKinney is a lecturer at the University of the Western Cape. She is also the owner of Disability Included, a company specialising in disability research, children, and employment of adults with disabilities. email: emma@disabilityincluded.co.za

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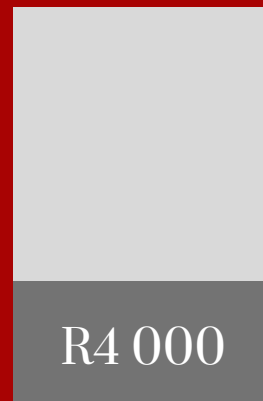
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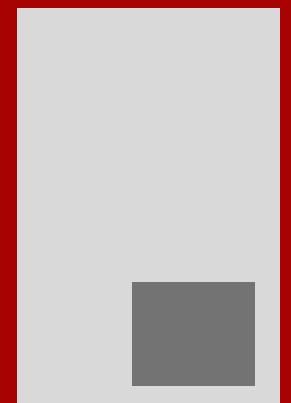
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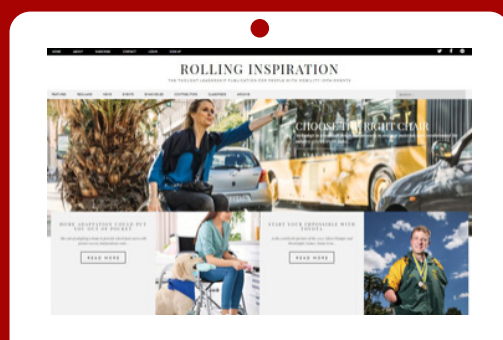
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