

ROLLING INSPIRATION

ISSUE 4 2021

leading magazine for people with mobility impairments

FIERCE WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Those who dream and inspire

BETTER BLADDER CARE

Best practice recommendations

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

A Body Corporate's role

FEMALE SEXUALITY

Debunking the myths





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BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN UNEMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

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Danie Breedt debunks some of the myths regarding female sexuality after a spinal cord injury.

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CELEBRATING FATHERS WITH SCIS




To commemorate Father’s Day on Sunday, 20 June 2021, QASA held a lucky draw. The winner was awarded a R1 500 Checkers voucher (also redeemable at Shoprite).

To enter, the children of father’s with spinal cord injuries (SCIs) had to post a photo to social media with a short description of the important role that their father played in their lives. Tumelo Mabele


entered the competition for her father, Goodman Mabele, and won!

The competition was spearheaded by QASA project coordinator Zandile Miya. She says: “QASA would like to express their deepest appreciation and gratitude to Checkers for the generous sponsorship of a gift voucher for the Father’s Day competition.

“It really means a lot to our organisation and its members. There is no way to fully express our gratitude for such loyalty. We are continually inspired by such dedication and big heartedness,” she adds.

QASA COO Raven Benny notes: “Congratulations to the winner. We are extremely grateful to our funders and sponsors who make it possible for QASA to support its members through our various services, but also with competitions like these.” 

DAN KEKANA PASSES

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Dan Kekana, who served as provincial chairperson for Disabled People South Africa (DPSA) for several years. He was a disability rights activist and will be sorely missed by the disability community. Our condolences to his friends and family. We wish them strength during this difficult time. 



NEW WEBSITE WITH LIFE CHOICES

QASA has a new, user-friendly website thanks to Life Choices – a youth non-profit organisation. Through its Academy programme, Life Choices offers a coding bootcamp. Recently, it provided its network with the opportunity to redesigned their website free-of-charge.


When Life Choices approached QASA, it was already in the process of updating its website QASA COO, Raven Benny, explains: “At the end of 2019, QASA decided that it was time to redesign its website.

“After numerous delays, Life Choices gracefully swooped in to take over the project. They worked tirelessly and efficiently to bring the website to its feet in only a couple of months. Now, we are happy to be relaunching the website that exceeded our expectations,” he adds.

For Life Choice, the decision to assist was simple. Ryan Geel, academy placements and partnerships officer at Life Choices, notes: “Being part of our network and seeing the challenges that QASA faced, we wanted to extend our services to them.

“Their story appeals to us as we are also a youth development organisation and feel that it was crucial to assist QASA with getting their digital presence set up,” he adds.

The Life Choice Academy is aimed at upskilling youth with “future proof” knowledge. It plans to expand the programme to include LC Studio, which will provide digital solutions to the market.

To learn more, visit www.lcstudio.co.za, phone them on 021 696 4157 or e-mail Ryan directly at ryan@lcstudio.co.za. 

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FIERCE WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

To commemorate Women's Month, we interview three fierce women with disabilities who challenge themselves to achieve inspiring goals

Dreams, however big or small, seem a lot more achievable when there are others who have accomplished it too. There are only a few women with disabilities who are in the public eye and can inspire their peers to follow suit.

But, inspiration can be among women from all walks of life – whether they are the host of a nationally broadcasted show, completing their PhD or improving their skills to secure employment.

TARRYN TOMLINSON

From business woman to writer, Tarryn Tomlinson has a long list of passions that have become her career. She explains: "I have a number of passions that have become my businesses. I am a life coach specialising in teaching people how to utilise the Law of Attraction to make their dreams come true.

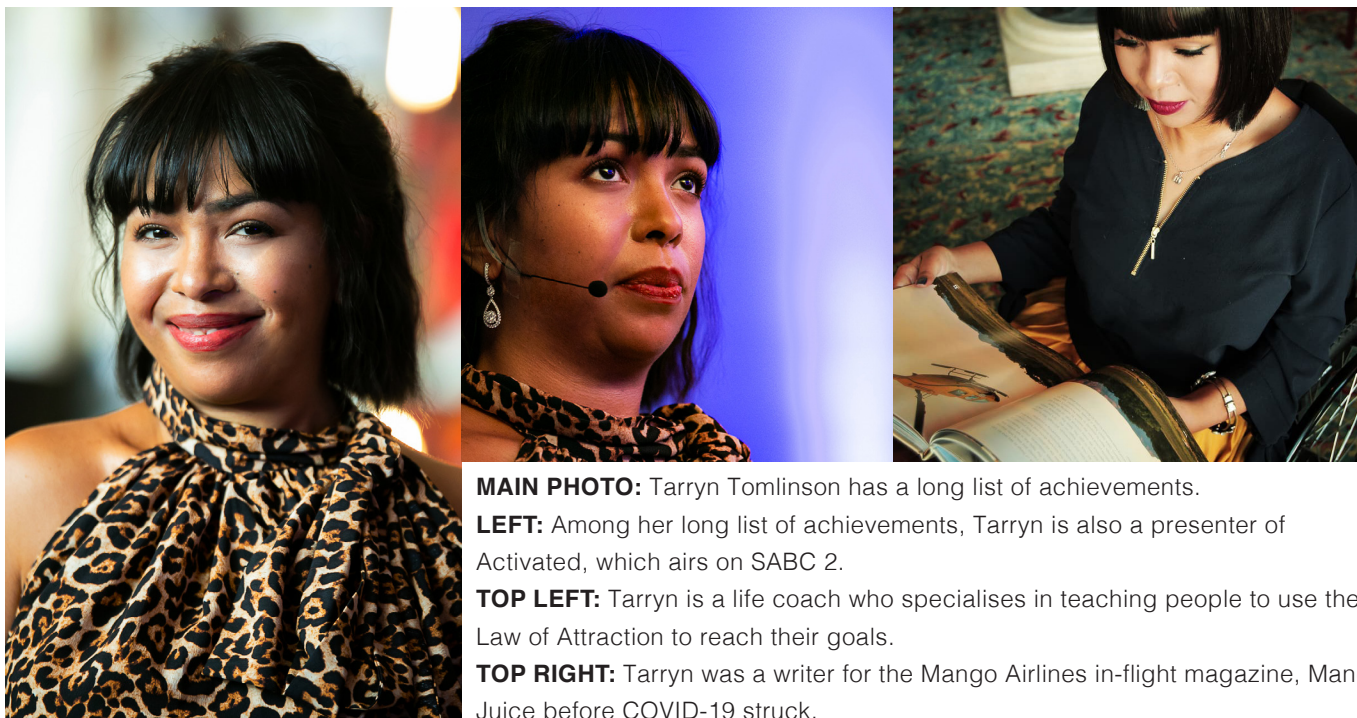
"I am also a writer. Prior to COVID-19, I was writing monthly articles on accessible travel for the award winning Mango Airlines in-flight magazine: Mango Juice (published by Mikateko

media). I also have a consulting business, called LiveABLE which focuses on accessibility within the hospitality sector," Tarryn adds.

She is a content creator under her brand Able2Travel, director for a television production company, The TV Smiths, and director of the subsidiary NPC called, The Human Project – the aim of which is to train and create more employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in the media industry.

She is also the presenter of the SABC 2 programme Activated. Tarryn explains: "Activated is a series which focuses on the human rights of persons with disabilities; how far we have come in our democracy towards the upholding of those rights; and how to plan for a better future.

"In the show we also look to remove the stigma of 'inability' when relating to persons with disabilities by showcasing a number of empowered and inspirational business people, artists, public servants and academics who have all contributed greatly to the disability movement of the past and future," she adds.



MAIN PHOTO: Tarryn Tomlinson has a long list of achievements.

LEFT: Among her long list of achievements, Tarryn is also a presenter of *Activated*, which airs on SABC 2.

TOP LEFT: Tarryn is a life coach who specialises in teaching people to use the Law of Attraction to reach their goals.

TOP RIGHT: Tarryn was a writer for the Mango Airlines in-flight magazine, *Mango Juice* before COVID-19 struck.

The programme offers Tarryn the opportunity to be an advocate for people with disability, for racial and religious diversity.

“There are so many reasons why I love being the presenter of this show! The first reason is that I get to advocate for what I believe in: That all people are equal regardless of their colour, race, religion or physical differences,” Tarryn explains.

It also offers her the opportunity to learn more about disability and its related issues. She says: “I also love it because I have learned so much about the disability movement from the research and talks with guests. It has helped me get a pulse on the latest developments and on some of the amazing initiatives and programmes out there for persons who are differently-abled.

“Each week when I watch the show I am as inspired as everyone else and feel as empowered as everyone else. There are so many passionate, tenacious, courageous and creative people in our country and I look forward to seeing how the younger generation of youth with disabilities shake things even more in the future. Did I mention that I also work with an amazing team?” Tarryn adds.

While she has achieved so much, it hasn't come easy. Tarryn has faced many challenges in pursuing her career. Her invaluable advice to those who would like to follow suit is to let go of constraining ideas or thoughts.

“My advice to all is to find the time to discover

who you are – your intrinsic value as a person. Let go of all your perceived ideas of what is possible in this world for a woman with a disability. I'll tell you now, everything is possible! However, you must know that success depends on the quality of your life's mission,” she explains.

“Let go of all your perceived ideas of what is possible in this world for a woman with a disability.”

“For me getting into media was not because I wanted to be famous. It was because I wanted to change the perceptions many abled-bodied people have of persons with disabilities and I knew that media was the best way to do so. Find your purpose and your passion, work on improving yourself daily, mentally, physically and spiritually, and then use your voice or your craft to express yourself,” Tarryn says.

Her advice to her younger self: “I'd tell myself to stop being so hard on myself, that I can trust myself and that everything will be okay. I'd advise myself to let go of the past and toxic people quicker and to remember that I am beautiful, special, brilliant and valuable no matter what!”

RIGHT: In addition to her incredible academic achievements, Karen Smit has also been happily married for 27 years.

BELOW: Karen boasts a beautiful family. Her daughter (in the middle) has grown up and is currently a matriculant.



of her own passion for advocating the needs of people with disabilities.

She says: “As an industry expert in accessible ICTs, I am passionate about advocating and providing guidance to the industry to ensure that the needs of consumers with disabilities are kept in mind when designing products and technology.”

To achieve this, Karen is a member of the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSMA) Assistive Technology Advisory Group, which encourages mobile network operators to implement the principles of digital inclusion. She also served as the chairperson of the then Department of Communications’ ICT Forum sub-committee on accessibility. Prior to that, Karen was the deputy-chairperson of the regulators’ disability forum where she assisted to formulate the ICT Code for persons with disabilities.

“Over the year’s mobile technology (hardware and software) has become increasingly more accessible for disabled consumers. Smart devices and using of various applications makes it possible for more disabled persons to access and use technology that meet their specific needs,” Karen notes.

She continues: “Furthermore, having access to the internet and accessible technology has become a human right. Without it, people with disabilities will not be able to participate in society.”

Tertiary studies, in general, are time consuming and require some sacrifices. However, PhD studies – often done part-time – are even more demanding. Karen dedicated five years to completing her PhD.

“Doing a PhD requires a lot of sacrifice in terms of spending most of one’s time writing one’s proposal, conducting research and writing up the thesis chapters. It took me five years to complete the whole journey. My family – we were

KAREN SMIT

Passionate about diversity and inclusion, Karen’s life purpose is to influence businesses and organisations to embrace the inclusion of persons with disabilities. With over 23 years of experience in a large telecommunications company, Karen’s advocacy for the digital inclusion of people with disabilities and the elderly has established her as a global industry expert in accessible Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs). She obtained her PhD in Disability Studies within the Health Science faculty at the University of Cape Town.

“My topic was about investigating how Mobile Network Operator’s processes promote or impede the digital inclusion of consumers with disabilities. Hence I developed a framework for ICT companies to promote the digital inclusion of people with visually impairments and other disabilities,” Karen explains.

Her motivation to pursue her PhD was in part because of her career. “My job entails driving the digital inclusion of consumers with disabilities by ensuring accessible products and services for South Africa’s largest telecommunication company,” she says.

“It is important for consumers with disabilities to become part of a connected society where they are able to not just connect, but use accessible technology and services. I myself as a disabled person and as a user of mobile technology experience on a daily basis the benefits of using accessible technology and services,” Karen adds.

While she was supported by her company, Karen was also motivated to further her studies because

in lockdown long before the COVID lockdown came,” she explains. Family vacations, holidays and celebrations were put on hold so that Karen can dedicate time to her studies.

“Although hard at times, I enjoyed the experience overall as I learned so much about the research process and about the topic I was investigating,” Karen says. “It was exciting to see how my research came together and I loved discovering gems that enriched my study. Doing a PhD is like climbing a mountain, it is tough, but pushing forward and never giving up made reaching the top and seeing the view worth the sacrifices.”

With her passion for life-long learning, Karen always encourages others to follow suit and further their studies. She notes: “I always encourage persons with disabilities to study in order to expand their skills and knowledge. I am a believer in lifelong learning and believe that one can always learn something new.

“Acquiring new skills and knowledge equips one to do your job better and to not become mediocre. Studying helps one to develop more insights about one’s interests or job which assists with developing and implementing innovative solutions. Having qualifications

also gives one a better opportunity of being employed, being promoted in your job as well as giving one the edge when competing with peers,” Karen adds.

Most importantly, she believes that age shouldn’t be a factor that impacts on someone pursuing their studies.

“It’s also important to remember that one is never too old to study. I was 30 years old when I started studying for the very first time as barriers prevented me from studying directly after school. Today technology and access to the internet makes it so much easier to study as one can study an array of courses online from home at your own pace,” Karen says.

She confesses that there is nothing that she would have done differently in her life. “From a young age I inherently had the desire to live life to the fullest,” Karen explains. “It was natural for me to work hard and I am passionate about things I do.

“Growing older, I have learned to pace myself, to rest when I’m tired and to realise that I am my own competition – I don’t compare myself to anyone because I believe everyone has unique traits. I love life and find beautiful places and nature fascinating and inspiring,” she concludes.



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LEFT: After completing the QASA Work Readiness Programme, Zara Talmarkes secured a job as an online shopping assistant.

TOP: Zara encourages others, who would like to follow her example, to have confidence in their abilities and be authentic.

ZARA TALMARKES

In pursuit of improving her quality of life, Zara Talmarkes participated and graduated the QuadPara Association of South Africa (QASA) Work Readiness Programme.

“I received an e-mail from our friendly and helpful staff at the QuadPara Western Cape (QAWC) offices in Durbanville with the advertisement. I immediately felt interested after reading the requirements. At that time, I was unemployed and was seeking for opportunities to get a job as soon as possible,” Zara recalls.

“What motivated me to participate was that the programme was for persons with disabilities who are seeking employment and knowledge. So, I felt that this programme could improve my quality of life,” she adds.

The experience was invaluable for Zara – not only because she secured fulltime employment after completing the programme.

“The Work Readiness Programme experience was absolutely amazing. I do not regret doing it. My peers that I worked with were so kind and friendly. I was always excited to go back,” Zara says.

“Our facilitator Chadley Muller and former programme manager from Australia, Lowri Williams, made a person feel welcome and we could chat about anything that’s how awesome it was,” she recalls.


“After learning so much about modules and

morals of the work environment, I felt so much more confident. I can now apply for any job without any fear in my heart. A month after I graduated from the programme, I received a phone call from Takealot.com, inviting me to an interview. The interview went well and I started working at Takealot.com in 2019,” she adds.

“I felt so much more confident. I can now apply for any job without any fear in my heart.”

Zara is currently an online shopping assistant and loves what she does: “I enjoy my work so much. I enjoy working with people and helping them, resolving issues for them and knowing that the customer is happy and will come back.”

Her advice for other women with disabilities: “Just be yourself and be honest. Have confidence in yourself and your capabilities. Make decisions that will benefit you and not break you. Be friendly, and engage with others! Show interest in your work.”

She adds that “failure is an option, you get to choose”. She encourages others to continue working hard to achieve their goals. 

STEPPING INTO THE FUTURE



Netcare has implemented an electronic medical record system, CareOn, which has enabled staff to have a truly patient-centric approach to treatment.

HEINRICH GRIMSEHL explains

In 2018, Netcare embarked on a journey to digitise clinical records. This would provide patients with the best and safest care. Only a year later, by 2019, the rollout of CareOn – the electronic medical record system used by Netcare – began.


And, in May 2021, the staff at Netcare Rehabilitation Hospital in Auckland Park, Johannesburg, started our own CareOn journey.

A mere three weeks later, we were the first Netcare hospital to have all our inpatient records fully digitised and accessible on our “war room” looking iPads.

As staff at Netcare Rehabilitation Hospital, we were enthusiastic about the change. We fully embraced our new way of work.

Some of the benefits, that we realised after implementation, are the ability for clinicians to access their patient’s files from their consultation rooms, and the ability to view radiology and laboratory results on our iPads.

Therapists are also able to action orders using CareOn during their interdisciplinary meetings – meaning items can be actioned immediately. On ground zero, this means that, if I have to communicate with anybody in our multidisciplinary team, I can do it instantly online.

This mountain of summarised interdisciplinary information translates into informed treatment decision regarding the patients as all the disciplines are involved. In the end, a truly “patient-centric” treatment is the result, and this puts a smile on any healthcare worker’s face! 



Heinrich Grimsehl is a prosthetist in private practice and a member of the South African Orthotic and Prosthetic Association (SAOPA). email: info@hgprosthetics.co.za

CARING WITH PIZZAZZ

Caregiver Zodwa Mabuza's gentle, intuitive approach to caregiving moved **GEORGE LOUW** to investigate and learn more about her journey

Pizzazz meaning an attractive combination of vitality and glamour. Synonyms include stylishness, elegance, gracefulness, poise, sophistication, chic or finesse.

I first met Zodwa Mabuza when she became a carer to my 95-year-old father-in-law. My dad has severe dementia and, at times, became anxious with bouts of delusion. Zodwa is a gentle soul. She has the ability to anticipate mood changes and affect calming solutions that settled my dad down before he even became agitated.

She did so with gentle, friendly firmness. For instance, if he became agitated, she would turn on the TV to a wildlife programme, without sound, and simultaneously play classical music. The calming effect was remarkable.

On another occasion, my dad reminisced about his childhood in Usakos, a small town in Namibia. Zodwa went to YouTube and gave him great joy by playing him a number of clips on Usakos on her phone.

One day, when I was visiting my dad, he fell asleep in his chair and I started chatting with Zodwa. She told me that she grew up in Vryheid in Northern KwaZulu-Natal. After school, she worked in an old age home. It was here where she realised her passion for caring.

But, looking for greener work pastures, she moved to Johannesburg where she was employed by Kobus van de Venter, a C6/7 quadriplegic. She cared for Kobus for two years, from 2017 to 2019.

When he relocated to Betty's Bay in the Western Cape, Zodwa felt that this was too far away from



her family and support structure. She moved on to other jobs until she ended up at La Vie Frail Care at Celebration Retirement Estate, where she came to care for my father-in-law.

I gave Kobus a call to get his views on Zodwa. He is a rather reserved and private fellow, so it was a bit like pulling teeth from a chicken. Eventually, he warmed to the challenge. So, here is their story...

Kobus has been a quadriplegic for 34 years and has employed a number of caregivers over the years. So, he considers himself somewhat of an expert on the attributes of a good caregiver. For Kobus, Zodwa was a caregiver-par-excellence.

To quote Kobus: "For me, Zodwa embodies all the qualities of what a superb carer should be. In the first instance, she is empathetic and passionate about the wellbeing of her companion.

"What truly sets her apart is an uncanny intuition to identify issues and needs beforehand. I guess her attention to both the big picture and details

supports this.”

The attributes of Zodwa’s personality that stood out for Kobus were her “presence” and her ability to look forward. This is how he described it: “Personality or how a carer ‘shows up’ – not just with people they care for but also to the people around them – Zodwa had in spades.

“Whether it was people that I brought into my home, whether it was friends or more serious, she could see from my demeanour. When it was a business thing that was important, her personality would show up, particularly her dress sense, how she would dress up to see those people,” he said.

“Presence: She knows what’s what. She can read a situation and react accordingly. She understands from the perspective of the person for who she is caring, what the issue is. For instance, I took Zodwa for lunch at the Butcher Shop in Sandton Square and there were no worries. She maintained herself one hundred percent there. She did not let up that she was my carer, she allowed me to introduce her as I wished,” Kobus explained.

“Forward looking: Zodwa has an uncanny knack to anticipate consequences of situations. If something bad happened in the past, she ensures that it will not happen again. Zodwa looks ahead, anticipates instead of waiting for things to happen. A good carer can be compared to a priest, a nurse or a teacher. They move the community and yet they are underpaid, as are policemen or firemen,” he added.

Kobus, at that time, lived in a house in Bryanston and Zodwa stayed in a small flatlet on the premises. This was important to Kobus as there was no interruption in her services while also providing separation, allowing Zodwa her privacy.

Noticing her desire to learn new skills, Kobus brought her a sewing machine and she took to sewing like a house on fire. To say thank you, Zodwa made Kobus a bedspread for his bed.

Kobus also funded Zodwa’s training for her driver’s licence. Zodwa had a few nerves during



MAIN PHOTO: Zodwa Mabuza has a gentle approach to caregiving.

TOP LEFT: After receiving a sewing machine as a gift, Zodwa discovered a new passion for sewing.


BOTTOM LEFT: Kobus van de Venter employed Zodwa for two years.

RIGHT: Zodwa always dresses appropriately and remains professional.

her first driver’s test attempt, but passed her test the second time around. Since then, she drove Kobus around when his driver was off duty.

Here are Kobus’s words on funding driver’s licence: “I do this with all those that work for me because I understand that it is a massive skill to have. A relationship with a carer is like a high performance team – you build them by what you put in.”

Zodwa loves music, but when it came to rock, she did not have an affinity for Kobus’s hard rock. She preferred more gentle rock music. As Kobus admitted: “She shows superb intellect and a wicked sense of humour. Being taught the intricacies of hard rock music by me, required both.” (With my father-in-law, Zodwa absolutely loved his classical music.)

A final word from Kobus: “Zodwa became a friend as well as a carer, but always knew where professional boundaries lay.” 



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

TIPS TO TRAVEL BY ROAD SAFELY

Between lockdown restrictions and civil unrest, travelling safely can be challenging. **MANDY LATIMORE** provides tips for remaining safe on the road

The civil unrest in June and August, as well as travel restrictions, has made me reconsider the safety measures that we need to put in place to travel safely during these uncertain times.

If you need to travel, even locally for work, leisure or emergencies, you need to plan your trips in advance to avoid civil unrest hot spots. Many innocent people have been caught up in these incidents by being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Here are some tips to assist all travellers to avoid unnecessary stress and danger:

- Keep up-to-date with local news stations for the areas that are affected.
- Have a “Plan B” in place so that you can get to your destination via another route.
- Inform a relative or co-worker which route you are taking and the alternate route you may have to take. If possible, travel with someone who will be able to assist with looking at maps while you are driving.
- If you have a security or insurance company that offer motorists assistance, let them know that you are travelling and the routes that you may be taking. They may be able to advise if these routes are safe or not.
- Look into downloading armed response apps like that of the AA.

- Be aware of your surroundings at all times. Look ahead!
- Never travel into the area if you see large crowds. Just turn around. Never engage with rioters.


“Many innocent people have been caught up in riots by being in the wrong place at the wrong time.”

With regards to the COVID-19 national lockdown regulations (in July 2021), the latest inter-provincial restrictions prohibits leisure travel into or out of Gauteng. However, the following travel is still permitted:

- Travel for work purposes is permitted provided that you have a permit from your employer, which has to correspond with Form 7 of Annexure A.
- Travel to attend a funeral, which requires a permit that corresponds with Form 4 of Annexure A. These can be obtained at your nearest police station or magistrate’s office.

- To transit through the province.
- Travel to institutes of learning for students.
- Travel when relocating to a new residence.
- Travel to care for an immediate family member providing that the person has an affidavit which corresponds with Form 6 of Annexure A.
- Travel to your residence from a quarantine or isolation facility.
- Travel to obtain medical treatment.

The best option is to just stay at home if you can. But, if you do have to travel, then ... plan ahead, be vigilant and take precautions. Ensure that you have the necessary permits and authorisations.

Check that you have sufficient fuel and that your vehicle is in good repair to avoid any possible breakdowns. Keep your phone charged and have your insurance or medical assistance contact number programmed into your phone. Stay safe and travel safely! 



Mandy Latimore is a consultant in the disability sector in the fields of travel and access.
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STAY UPDATED

The lockdown restrictions and COVID-19 regulations are continuously changing. We encourage the *Rolling Inspiration* readers to keep updated through official sources.

Avoid information and news shared on social media or Whatsapp messages by friends and family. Instead, seek out official, reliable news sources. Follow research organisations, such as the World Health Organization, or government resources. Visit the official South African website for COVID-19 updates at <https://sacoronavirus.co.za>.

For enquiries, phone the government COVID-19 Public Hotline on 0800 029 999 or send "HI" to the Whatsapp Help Service on 0600 123 456.

Be sure to fact check the information that is circulated and be wary of possible fake news.

If the information hasn't been circulated through an official source, avoid passing it along to friends and family. 

M.O.V.E Talks

Smergos' slogan is Inspiring Motion. Smergos is a social movement that is driven to create a more inclusive, accessible and empathetic world by shifting mindsets and building bridges between people with and without disabilities.



One of their initiatives is M.O.V.E Talks - free, bi-weekly, online events that host a range of guest speakers who are inspiring motion in unique ways to share their stories and knowledge.

M.O.V.E Talks are held every other Tuesday at 19:00 on Zoom. Join the movement by following Smergos on social media.

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Smergos invites a guest speaker who has been inspiring motion in unique ways to share their stories and knowledge

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NOT JUST SURVIVING BUT THRIVING



Koben Hofmeyr has only begun to chase his potential. **DAN LOMBARD** reports

The world is currently operating under abnormal circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, for 18-year-old Koben Hofmeyr, this is exactly the arena in which he thrives.

Endurance triathlons are seen as the pinnacle of sport as it takes an already challenging code and cranks it up to a level - the sight of which would make most faint.

Enter the 226 MiWay Brick Challenge Race stage left. Held over the weekend of April 9 to 11, this year, in KwaZulu-Natal, the race consists of a 1,9-km swim, a 90-km cycle, and a 21,1-km run across an intense three days. Koben and his racing teammate Johan van Dijkhorst (aged 59) entered and completed the race. The duo spent 31 weeks preparing for this exceptional achievement and they deserve a pat on the back for defying human expectations.

“It was challenging to say the least,” Koben says. “Long hours were put into training and juggling commitments like school. The support from friends, family, Johan, and all of our backers, including the Players’ Fund certainly helped me to cross that line.”

However, this Louis Trichardt High School Grade 12 learner’s ability to succeed physically needs a closer look ... considering he was lying paralysed on a Limpopo rugby field just three short years ago.

May 19, 2018, will forever be etched into Koben’s memory as the day his life would be shattered. He suffered a catastrophic neck injury during a tackle in a game where he was captaining his U16A charges against Bela-Bela High School.

An ominous crack followed by immense pain in his neck and a flood of pins and needles greeted the gifted athlete who also excelled on the track. Initially, he could move his legs as he desperately tried to get back in the game – a mindset he shares with many of his fellow catastrophically injured players on the Fund.

A trip to the local hospital after the incident revealed the devastating news, Koben had broken his neck at the C6 vertebrae with the ability to ever walk again severely diminished.

Unfortunately, caring for patients with spinal cord injuries through intensive rehabilitation programme requires specialist hospitals that aren’t in his home town.



MAIN PHOTO: Kobus Hofmeyr and teammate Johan van Dijkhorst during the 21,1-km run stage of the 226 MiWay Brick Challenge Race, which took place in April 2021.

LEFT: Teammate Johan assisting Kobus in the 1,9-km swim that formed part of the triathlon.

BELOW: Both Kobus (on the left) and Johan looking energised and excited during the 90-km cycle.



Thus, it was decided to airlift the teenager – who sports a dashing face and a smile that could cross the space-time continuum in an instant – to Life Groenkloof in Pretoria.

“Honestly, the memories of the day are blurry,” Koben recalls. “There was quite a bit going on at the time and I was sedated. The reality was yet to set in.”

The months that followed were gruelling. Intensive rehabilitation at Muelmed MediClinic under physiotherapist Melanie Harding, followed by hours of outpatient therapy back home, saw him recover enough to leave his shocking green wheelchair, aptly named Shrek, behind as he moved to using crutches permanently.

It must be noted that Koben’s recovery is an occurrence that does not happen often. Most rugby quadriplegics are destined to a life reliant on a wheelchair. Call it luck, call it an unshakeable faith in God, but his continued improvement is a miracle within itself.

Koben credits his journey thus far to the incredible #SupportSquad, which includes his circle of friends and family, girlfriend Wilma, teachers, complete strangers, the wider rugby community with a focus on the Springboks, the Players’ Fund, and those who have prayed for




AUTHOR DAN LOMBARD

PLAYERS’ FUND

On June 11, 2021, Dan Lombard (Benji) passed away. The Chris Burger Petro Jackson Players’ Fund provided the below short message around Dan. Our condolences to his friends and family.

Dan Lombard (Benji)
15 February 1990 – 11 June 2021


Rest in peace dear friend, recipient of the Players’ Fund, champion in every way, hero to many, son, brother, nephew, proud uncle, loyal friend, devoted family man, rugby guru, sports journalist of note, founder of Tiger Stripes Revolution, forever Bulls supporter.....

You left us unexpectedly, but the wonderful memories and your legacy lives on. 

him and carried him in their thoughts.

“I enjoy the African proverb that states: ‘If you want to go far, go together’. It is so true. I may be the poster child of my journey, but it’s those around me that shine the light forward,” Koben says.

Completing the triathlon in April is not his only achievement. Koben has earned provincial colours in Air Rifle Shooting, multiple academic awards, which has resulted in his acceptance to study Computer Engineering at the University of Pretoria, and various daredevil activities such as shark cage diving and bungee jumping.

For this young man, the world is his for the taking. His attitude towards life is testament to an unrelenting human spirit that resides in us all. It just takes a slightly different perspective to realise one’s own resilience. And you, Koben Hofmeyr, have turned winning with a losing hand into an art form. 

CARING BETTER FOR YOUR BLADDER



With gaps in the level of care, Dr Virginia Wilson and her team wrote a paper on the recommended best practice for bladder management. **MARISKA MORRIS** reports

Spinal cord injuries (SCIs) are accompanied often by other conditions due to the damage caused to the nervous system. A common resulting condition is neurogenic bladder, which impacts the individual's ability to control their bladder. People with neurogenic bladders rely on alternative methods to empty the bladder, such as intermittent catheterisation.

These invasive methods required can result in numerous complications, such as urinary tract infections (UTIs). Dr Virginia Wilson and her research team identified the level of care provided to people with a SCI and neurogenic bladder in South Africa as a big contributing factor to the number of UTIs and other complications experienced.

By addressing the method of bladder management, regularly checking in with the patient and providing better education, Dr Wilson believes that medical staff can empower their patients to take better care of their bladder health.

"Patients with SCIs are a small percentage of the population with a long-term disability. So, it is up to us, as clinicians, to really empower and engage with our individual patients to provide them with knowledge on managing their bladder to enable them to fight to receive the best bladder management services," Dr Virginia Wilson said while addressing over 100 healthcare workers in a webinar sponsored by the QuadPara Association of South Africa (QASA) and the Southern African Spinal Cord Association (SASCA) held in July.

RESEARCH PAPER GETS THE BALL ROLLING

It started when former QASA CEO and disability activist Ari Seirlis approached Dr Wilson about

the gaps in the care provided and access to services. She put together a diverse research team, the Continence Advisory Panel (CAP), who, collectively, published a paper in 2019 titled: Best practice recommendation for bladder management in spinal cord-afflicted patients in South Africa.

The goal was to address the "significant gaps in practice, and challenges regarding levels of care and access to services and supplies specifically related to the neurogenic bladder". They wanted to establish a standard of care and mitigate costly complications, such as infections.

REVISING BLADDER MANAGEMENT

Bladder management takes place in three stages: Acute, rehabilitation and discharge. During the acute stage, the patient often has an indwelling urethral catheter. Dr Wilson and her team warned against the prolonged use of indwelling urethral catheters as it can harm the urethra.

Instead, it is recommended to move the patient to less intrusive bladder management methods as soon as possible. Before this can take place, Dr Wilson and her team recommends an urology study to determine the capacity of the bladder: how much it can hold; how the bladder empties; and the ability of the patient to do so independently.

This important study needs to take place as soon as possible after six weeks from the patient's initial hospitalisation and within three months. Dr Wilson said: "Every quadriplegic is not the same and every paraplegic is not the same."

Identifying the needs of each individual patient is crucial to providing the best bladder management. While there are several options available, clean

intermittent catheterisation is accepted as the gold standard for managing a neurogenic bladder worldwide. Unfortunately, not all patients chose this method – for whatever reason.

“We need to respect the decision of the patient,” Dr Wilson said. “The best that you can do is to educate the patient. The dangers of indwelling urethral catheters are not really discussed with the patients.”

FOLLOWING UP WITH THE PATIENT

While addressing healthcare workers, Dr Wilson noted that the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the way in which many doctors operate. It is not uncommon now for medical staff to contact patients through messaging apps like Whatsapp – an approach that Dr Wilson has used herself to regularly follow up with her patients.

When checking in, she found that patients would raise issues that enabled her to mitigate many of the challenges and issues. She said: “Don’t leave your patient to their own devices. Following up is extremely important – especially if you can refer your patient to an urologist.”

While the medical staff play a key, essential role in the patient’s bladder management, they are

only able to guide and advise the patient, who, in the end, is responsible for the daily management. Thus, education is crucial in providing the patient with the knowledge and skills to care for their bladder.

EDUCATE, EDUCATE, EDUCATE

Medical staff need to support patients by providing them with all the information on the various bladder management methods (including benefits and risks both short and long term); educating them on how to correctly use the bladder management devices that they chose; and providing support in the patient’s pursuit of securing funding for their bladder management.

INFORMED DECISIONS

For patients to make informed decisions on their bladder management, it is important for medical staff to provide them with all the necessary information. This goes beyond simply educating them of the methods available. It also includes detailed explanations of the pros and cons – both short and long term – of the suggested bladder management options.

This information needs to be communicated in a language that the patient understands. This



is particularly important in a country with 11 official languages and doctors often communicating with patients in their second or third language. The support from staff members play an important role. They can assist with translating, for example.

In addition, especially during rehabilitation when a multidisciplinary approach is taken, the team can ensure that the patient communicates their questions, concerns and needs.

Catheterisation is an extremely personal process. Psychologists, for example, can assist patients with communicating their concerns. With other staff reaffirming the information provided by the doctor, patients might feel more reassured.

ENSURE PATIENTS ARE SKILLED

Patients with neurogenic bladders need to fully understand how to use their catheter correctly and safely. Even when doctors prescribe single-use clean intermittent catheters, some patients reuse their catheter – a dangerous practice.

Potentially, the patient is motivated to reuse their catheter because they are unable to afford the four to eight catheters recommended per day. Nevertheless, Dr Wilson warns against this trend: “There is absolutely no reason to re-use a catheter.”

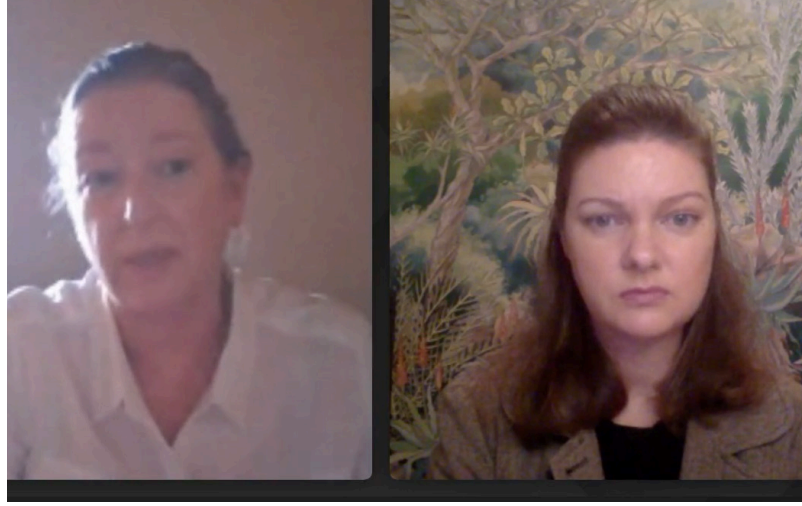
Among her own patients, Dr Wilson has found that reusing a catheter led to patients experiencing up to 10 UTIs per year. Educating the patient, caregiver and family on the importance of correctly using a catheter can help prevent misuse.

Peer support can also play a vital role in educating patients. Speaking to someone who also has a neurogenic bladder could make it easier to understand the challenges, get advice on the best approaches and learn from their peer’s mistakes.

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

Unfortunately, no amount of education, training and support can bypass the challenge presented by a lack of funding. The refusal of funders to support patients with neurogenic bladders by fully funding the cost of their catheters or refusing services present a big challenge to medical staff.

However, healthcare workers can support patients in challenging funders (for example, medical aids) by providing motivation for certain services. South African para athlete, Alwyn




ABOVE: (From the left) Dr Virginia Wilson in conversation with Claire Rush McMillan, editor of Medical Chronicle, during the webinar in July.

Uys, for example, has successfully challenged his medical aid to secure more funding for his single-use catheters.

Important in all of these discussions is to remember: “Cost effective and low cost are not equivalent.” Dr Wilson explained that although some bladder management products might cost less than intermittent catheterisation, these might lead to more UTIs, which can be extremely costly when hospital care is required.

PASSIONATE STAFF ARE THE CHANGE

“You don’t need a passionate urologist. You need passionate staff and doctors,” Dr Wilson concluded during the webinar in July. She added that there are various resources available for the staff who want to provide better support. The manufacturers of catheters, for example, can provide staff with more information and training on the products.

Whatever approach medical staff decide to take, it is important to continue the education after the patient’s rehabilitation. 

FURTHER READING

Best practice recommendation for bladder management in spinal cord-afflicted patients in South Africa (Research paper): <https://bit.ly/3xyn5hf>

Best practice recommendation for bladder management in spinal cord-afflicted patients in South Africa (Webinar): <https://bit.ly/3A103B8>

Challenging your medical aid (Alwyn Uys’s story): <https://bit.ly/37gGEzT>

WHEELMATE TO TRACK ACCESSIBILITY

The Coloplast WheelMate mobile app makes it easier to find accessible parking bays and bathrooms



Many companies try to accommodate people with disabilities by providing accessible bathrooms and parking bays. However, it can be challenging to locate these when first visiting a new building. In addition, these may not meet the necessary universal access requirements.

Fortunately, Coloplast has introduced a mobile app to help track down accessible parking bays and bathrooms. The WheelMate App is free to download and use for both Android and IOS.

It relies on users to register accessible locations. New sites can only be added while the user is at the parking bay or bathroom as the app uses the current location when registering a new site.

As new locations are added, they appear on a map within the app. This allows users to easily track down accessible bathrooms and parking bays in their area or the areas that they plan to visit.


According to the description on the app: “The WheelMate app provides a dynamic overview of the nearest public conveniences to help you plan your day.”

By clicking on the icon for an accessible bathroom or parking bay, users can also request the location. This will open up the navigating app (for example Google Maps) on your device to help guide you to the location.

In addition, the app also allows users to rate the accessible parking bays and bathrooms through a simple thumbs up or down rating system. The rating of the bathroom will thus be determined by the number of users who have given it a good or bad rating.

This assists users with not only finding accessible parking bays and bathrooms, but also determining whether they are in a good condition, potentially meeting the necessary universal access requirements.


The WheelMate app currently has more than 35 000 locations across 45 countries with nearly 17 000 downloads globally.

There are only some locations registered in South Africa, but as more people download and use the app, it will become more user-friendly. So, download the app today! 

#WHEELMATEZA

CAMPAIGN WINNER

To promote the WheelMate app and encourage more users to download, register and rate accessible bathrooms and parking bays, Coloplast partnered with *Rolling Inspiration*, *Smergos* and *WHASCP Fitness*. The three partnering companies assisted Coloplast with promoting the app on social media in June through the #WheelMateZA campaign.

Leanne Watson (right) was drawn as the winner of the campaign. She was awarded a prize from each company. Congratulations to Leanne! 



RECOGNISE THE SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA

The increased levels of stress caused by the pandemic can have lasting effects.

MARISKA MORRIS looks at how selfcare can help and when to seek professional help

Stress and anxiety are ever present in the lives of many South Africans. It could be stress about their job security or their struggle to adapt to working from home. Or they could feel anxious about contracting COVID, seeing friends and family hospitalised or death. For nearly a year and a half, South Africans had to manage this additional strain on their mental health with no end in sight for the pandemic or lockdowns.

For some, this stress and anxiety simply led to a few “lockdown kilograms” around their belly, while others are feeling overwhelmed, unable to cope with all the information, stress and anxiety piled on them. Either way, it is important to practise some selfcare to protect against poor mental health, whether this could mean feeling a little down or suffering a complete depressive episode.

WHAT IS SELFCARE

Selfcare means very different things for different people, but, in essence, it refers to practicing good habits that keep your body, mind and spirit healthy. A big portion of selfcare is indulging in activities that you enjoy, such as hobbies, or taking time to relax. But, it is also about practicing those habits that are less important, but vital, such as exercising.

BASICS TO SELFCARE

Each person needs to adapt their selfcare routine for their own personalities. For example, one person might want to sit in a warm bubble bath for an hour to destress, while another simply wants to take a refreshing shower. While selfcare is a very individualised activity, there are some basics that everyone should incorporate into their selfcare routine:

- **Healthy meals:** Whether you opt for a salad or salmon and veggies, it is important to keep a healthy, balanced diet. There can be cheat days, but people are encouraged to eat balanced the majority of the time.
- **Exercise:** It can be intense weight training or simply walking around the block. Any

good selfcare routine should include at least 30-minutes of exercise a day. Consider swapping between intense exercising and moderate exercising, like yoga or walking.


- **Sleep:** A crucial part of any healthy routine, there should also be enough time to sleep. If necessary, include some other selfcare activities into your pre-sleep routine to help you fall asleep, such as drinking chamomile tea or meditating.
- **Breaks or relaxing:** These breaks can be used to practice hobbies or indulge in other pleasures. However, be wary of any activity that might cause additional pressure or stress. Scrolling through social media, for example, can cause more harm than good.

WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

Unfortunately, selfcare can only do so much to assist with caring for your mental health. Individuals who are struggling to manage their stress and anxiety levels might need to seek further professional help. This can be especially true for those who are more susceptible to trauma. Without addressing trauma, people can suffer post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) during which trauma can manifest and remain with the individuals for many years to come.

IDENTIFYING PTSD

The symptoms of PTSD include: refusing to talk about incidents; feeling emotionally numb; and withdrawing from friends and family. It also often manifest as other mental health disorders such as anxiety, bipolar or depression. Further symptoms can include: drug or alcohol dependency; distressing thoughts or memories; sleeping difficulties; guilt or hyper-alertness.

While you should immediately contact a mental health professional if you show symptoms of PTSD, it shouldn't be the only reason to reach out. If you are at all feeling stuck or overwhelmed with your stress, anxiety or general mental health, reach out to a mental health professional for further assistance. 

FINGERS AND TOES

Manicures provide many more health benefits than simply looking polished.

JOY DUFFIELD elaborates

Manicure and pedicure are treatments for both men and woman! Regular manicures and pedicures (every four to six weeks) provide great benefits for your overall health. Let's have a look at what these treatments entail.

A professional therapist will do a thorough consultation and inspect the hands and feet for any contraindications (factors that can lead to products causing harm) such as fungus or bacteria on the skin or under the nails. Should it be necessary, the therapist will refer you to a doctor.

A wonderful exfoliating will remove any dead skin cells and improve circulation to the area. The nails will be shaped according to the customer's needs and nail type, which can vary from hard, dry or brittle nails to soft peeling nails.

Shaping the nails is not only for aesthetic purposes, but also to prevent and treat ingrowing toenails, which can be excruciatingly painful and lead to the removal of the toenail. If one is prone to ingrown toenails, it is recommended to file the nail straight across and not too short.

Another tip is rather using an emery board as opposed to a metal file when filing nails; and file from the outer corners towards the centre as opposed to a sawing action, which can lead to the splitting of the nails.


Cuticles, the thin bit of skin at the base of the nail, can become dry, which leads to picking

and pulling that result in unsightly and painful whitlows. During the treatment, the cuticle will be gently pushed back and nourished.

For treating hands and feet that have little or no movement, or poor circulation, the cuticles should gently be pushed back with a towel after a bath or shower to ensure the cuticle skin does not adhere to the nail plate – a condition known as Ptyrigium – and continue to grow with the nail.

When having a pedicure, any callused or rough and dry skin underneath the foot will be removed either with a pumice or alkaline peel. Both manicures and pedicures include a pampering, relaxing massage of feet and lower limbs or hands and forearms. This will draw fresh blood to the area and carry away toxins while reducing any swelling or puffiness due to prolonged time in a stagnant position.

This massage can also improve mobility of the joints. Paraffin wax treatments are often an optional extra to treat dry skin and nails, and joint pain. This is a luxurious feeling as the foot or hand is either brushed with or dipped in a basin of warm paraffin wax. The area will then be covered with a plastic to aid in the occlusive (moisturising) effect on the skin. This opens the pores to allow the treatment cream to penetrate while softening and moisturising the skin.

Painted nails are optional. Buffing the fingernails to an optimal shine is just as rewarding. Buffing is usually the option preferred by men. 



Joy Duffield has been a C4-C5 quadriplegic since 2005. She is the owner of Beauty Academy International, an international training Institute for the beauty industry and a distributor of hair and beauty products in South Africa.

ACCESSIBILITY: BODY CORPORATE'S RESPONSIBILITY



Are individuals or the body corporate responsible for ensuring buildings are wheelchair accessible? **CILNA STEYN** provides some clarity

Sectional title ownership (owning a flat or property in a complex) and residence comes with its challenges but is very often the most convenient way to live. There is one important question for wheelchair users who are considering Sectional Title living: Is there an obligation on a developer or a body corporate to ensure that a Sectional Title Scheme is wheelchair accessible?

The National Building Regulations requires that all new buildings must be wheelchair accessible for multiple storeys. The majority of Sectional Title Schemes that we currently have in South Africa would have been built after the National Building Regulations and Buildings Standards Act of 1977 became known to the public or promulgated. We make this assumption as the Sectional Titles Act was promulgated in 1971.

The obligation to ensure compliance with the National Building Regulations would be that of the developer of the Sectional Title Scheme. The requirement to ensure that the spaces within the building or complex are wheelchair accessible would be limited to all public places.

In the context of the scheme, this will only be the common property; thus, the necessary ramps, lifts and other wheelchair accessible facilities need to be implemented on common property.

The National Building Regulations has a specific and clearly defined set of requirements regarding accessibility. These requirements could very well discourage a developer from complying with the provisions of the Act.

Thankfully, the Act and regulations are very clear on this particular topic and non-compliance will carry severe consequences, either in the form of a fine or imprisonment. In some cases, both. More importantly, a developer needs to comply in full before they would be able to obtain an occupancy certificate which would allow them to transfer the developed units to purchasers.

If the development was built prior to the Act, it would be the obligation of the body corporate to upgrade the scheme to ensure compliance and that all common property is in fact wheelchair accessible. This will probably require the body corporate to raise a special levy to fund such renovations.

The individual units do not have to be wheelchair accessible. The owner of the unit needs to obtain consent to make the necessary alterations to the unit to make it wheelchair accessible. The costs of this is carried by the owner of the unit. There is no obligation on a developer to make individual units wheelchair accessible.

In 2016, there was a white paper published with the intention to bring in a new Act which would be called The Disabled Persons Act. It intends to regulate not just public accessibility for people with disabilities, but also regulate and govern a whole range of the relevant parts of society for people with disabilities.

Unfortunately, it has not even reached the phase of being considered for promulgation. It does, however, give us a clear indication of the planned direction with regards to legislative support for people with disabilities. [R](#)



Cilna Steyn is the managing Director at SSLR Inc. Attorneys. She completed her LLB Degree at Unisa, after which she was admitted as an attorney in 2007. She co-founded Steyn & Steyn Attorneys. She regularly presents training sessions, where she advises groups of rental agents and private landlords on matters relating to Landlord and Tenant Disputes and broader scope Property Law related matters.

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT

There are limited employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Fortunately, with some skills and knowledge, they can be more attractive to potential employers. **RUSTIM ARIEFDIEN** explains

People with disabilities remain a marginalised group in South Africa when it comes to economic empowerment. Only 1,1 percent of those included in the working population are formally employed compared to a target stipulated in the Employment Equity Act of 7,5 percent. There are no real entrepreneurship figures to go by; but, it is safe to say that there aren't significant opportunities in this regard either.

So, what does an aspiring person with a disability do? How do you best prepare yourself for the challenges presented by the world of work? How do you take advantage of the programmes that are out there? Who do you network with? How do you access the resources to best guide you?

From an employment perspective, you need to understand why employers have a need to employ people with disabilities. Ideally, they need to achieve a 7,5 percent disability employment equity target. If they want to score on their BBBEE scorecard and maximise their disability points, they need to achieve a two percent black disability employment target and 0,3 percent skills spend.

To take advantage of the employment opportunities, it is imperative that you improve your skill level through formal education, such as accredited courses, or informal training and studies. Institutions of further and higher education offer many funding opportunities, for example, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) or corporate bursaries.

A learnership is a good example of acquiring a

qualification while earning a stipend. There are many opportunities for persons with disabilities who have a Grade 9 or higher. There is a demand especially for learners with a Matric. If you are younger than 30, you have a better chance of finding learnerships as employers can claim such learners for the Employment Tax Incentive.

It would be useful to understand the Employment Equity Act's Code of Good Practice on Disability and the Technical Assistance Guide as they will give you clarity on how employers benefit from employing a person with a disability.

If you find these documents too onerous, there are experts who can explain it in simpler terms. This can give you a distinct advantage in your application. If possible, see if you can get onto a Work Readiness Programme. QASA offers a very good programme that prepares you for the world of work.

For those persons with disabilities who wish to become an entrepreneur, consider what the Development Funding Institutions have to offer. These include the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), Provincial and Local Government Departments. They assist in the improvement of the skills required on your entrepreneurial journey, and funding.

Economic empowerment for persons with disabilities is challenging. Seek the knowledge to equip yourself on your empowerment journey, network with friends, disability organisations and various businesses. In this way, you will best equip yourself for economic empowerment. **R**



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.



PARENTING WITH A DISABILITY

Parents, in general, often receive criticisms and judgements, but parents with disabilities face even more. **EMMA MCKINNEY** shares some personal experiences

My husband, Vic, has level C3 - C5 quadriplegia, I am hearing impaired and we have two energetic young boys. Vic acquired his disability in 1987 – long before I met him. We got married and became parents. While every family is different, here are some of our experiences as parents with disabilities:

PERCEPTIONS AND JUDGMENT

Vic and I chose to be parents. After an expensive and difficult In vitro fertilization (IVF) journey, we became pregnant. While I thought that getting pregnant was the tough part, I was not prepared for the judgment of others. We would have people stare at us and my pregnant belly like: “How did that happen?”

We had comments including: “Why would you make life more difficult for your children with a dad who is paralysed?”; “Aren’t you worried that your children will be teased for having a disabled dad?”; “That is so selfish on your poor children.”

We have had to develop a thick skin. While comments can be hurtful, we choose to be the best parents we can for our boys. We believe

that they are learning many life lessons, including diversity, in a natural and inclusive way.

I remember my son Jamie sharing that he felt so sorry for all his friends who don’t have dads who are wheelchair users: “When they get tired of walking, they can’t climb on their daddy’s wheelchair like me.”

ASSUMPTIONS

Many people were surprised that we could fall pregnant: “I didn’t know that people like him could have kids”; “Is he really the father?”. I was pitied for having to “do it alone”.

What they didn’t know is that Vic was present and actively involved during the birth of both of our children. He had sung them songs, told them stories and spoken to them when they were still in utero.

Vic is a very “hands-on” dad who watches them playing football, plays endless boardgames and floats with them in the swimming pool. We just do things differently with our carers who assist by being Vic’s arms and legs. He is a very “present” dad and spends more quality time with our



MAIN PHOTO: The McKinney family.
ABOVE, RIGHT AND FAR RIGHT: Vic McKinney is a very involved father even if pain looks a little different.



children than many of my friends who are dads.

DISCUSSIONS

We encourage our boys to ask questions and answer them using age and level-appropriate responses. We feel that it is important for them to have the answers as they get asked by their friends and to be honest.

We have to watch and stop them from trying to 'fight the cause', but rather be children and have fun.

Yet, compared to their friends, they are far more aware that life is what you make of it and you have choices. We feel that having open-dialogue with our children is really vital in being the best parents we can. [®]



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

Wheelchair and Holistic Adaptive Strength and Condition Programmes (WHASCP) Fitness is a company purposefully developed to support the fitness and health needs of adaptive trainees, regardless of their presented impairment.

WHASCP Fitness provides a variety of training packages to suit the needs of all interested.

At WHASCP, we acknowledged the need for people with disabilities to train, and use fitness training equipment to serve the needs.

Our training equipment was designed and manufactured to provide fitness training solutions for the adaptive trainee.



Contact WHASCP Fitness via our website:
www.whascp.com

MYTHS ABOUT FEMALE SEXUALITY

It can be difficult for women who have suffered a spinal cord injury (SCI) to find information on sexuality. **DANIE BREEDT** debunks some of the myths

According to a study by Ferreiro-Velasco and colleagues (2005), 69 percent of women with SCIs are satisfied with their current sexual activity. This could be a very encouraging statistic for women who wonder about their sexual future.

However, they also found that 77 percent of women feel that the information they received about sexuality after a SCI was either insufficient or non-existent. It might, therefore, be helpful to debunk some of the most common myths.

NO SEXUAL DESIRE AFTER SCI

Women do not lose their sexual desire after a SCI, and can still have a rewarding sex life. Fears over changes in sexual function may decrease as you become more comfortable with your body and aware of your own sexuality.

You may also find that there are other parts of sexuality that may satisfy you and your partner more. People who approach sex with an open mind and a willingness to experiment to find out what works and does not work after their injury tend to have the most success and reported satisfaction.

NO ABILITY TO HAVE SEX OR ORGASM

Following a SCI, there are two main ways that intercourse is affected physically: Lack of physical sensation (extent depending on the level of injury and whether it is complete or incomplete); and possible lack of lubrication. For the latter, a water-based lubricant can be used to assist initially, but focussing on other


forms of arousal could, in time, also assist with natural lubrication.

There are two pathways to arousal namely, reflexogenic (response to sensual touching) and psychogenic (psychological sexual sensations such as sexual thoughts, sights, smells, or sounds). As the reflexogenic pathway might be blocked due to the lack of sensation, exercising the psychogenic reflex could be helpful in having a satisfying sexual experience and even lead to orgasm.

Reaching orgasm might take longer than it did before but being patient and exploring your body with your partner can be helpful. Physical stimulation on areas that do have sensation or using assistive devices such as vibrators and gentle suction devices might also assist in reaching orgasm.

MENSTRUATION, FERTILITY AND PREGNANCY

Menstrual periods frequently stop for a time after a SCI due to the shock the body has received from the injury. Menstrual periods will usually start again within three to six months. A SCI does not affect fertility (or the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases), which means that safe sexual practices should still be implemented.

If the intention is to fall pregnant, this is likely still as possible as before the injury. It would be helpful to consult with a doctor who specialises in fertility and has an understanding of SCIs to guide you in the medical considerations of pregnancy, labour and parenting as it specifically relates to your condition. 



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.

PARALYMPIC TEAM ANNOUNCED

The South African para athletes who will compete at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games under the banner of Team SA has been announced. The Games will take place from August 24 to September 5, 2021. We wish the athletes all the best!



Cayla van der Walt

Coaches/management: Ingeborg Sanne, Chris Hazen, Robyn van Lijsdonk, Trisha Bell


Para swimming: Christian Sadie, Hendrik van der Merwe, Katherine Swanepoel, Alani Ferreira

Coaches/management: Theo Verster, Keith Jansen

Table tennis: Theo Cogill

Coach/manager: Anver Lyners

Wheelchair tennis: Kgothatso Montjane, Mariska Venter, Eliphaz Maripa, Leon Els

Coaches/management: Gerald Stoffberg, Saidi Moruame 

Para athletics: Ntando Mahlangu, Charl du Toit, Dyan Buis, Reinhardt Hamman, Kerwin Noemdo, Mpumelelo Mhlongo, Tebogo Mofokeng, Tyrone Pillay, Daniel du Plessis, Puseletso Michael Mabote, Ndodomzi Ntutu, Anrune Weyers, Sheryl James, Simone Kruger, Ntombizanele Situ, Louzanne Coetzee, Johanna Pretorius, Liezel Gouws

Coaches/management: Cornelia (Lappies) Swanepoel, Suzanne Ferreira, Daniel Damon, Cathy Lansberg, Claus Kempen, Erasmus Badenhorst

Archery: Shaun Anderson, Philip Coates-Palgrave

Coach/manager: Barbara Manning

Para cycling: Nicholas Pieter du Preez, Ernst van Dyk, Toni Mould

Coaches/management: Elrick Kulsen, Pieter Jansen, Gillian Evans, Walter Lutch

Equestrian: Philippa Johnson-Dwyer,

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

HEALTH LAW

PROFESSIONAL TIPS



Elsabé Klinck shares some insights into when and how to challenge your medical aid. She calls on health professionals to support patient in their quest to secure better funding.



Seasoned wheelchair users give their tips and tricks to overcoming the challenges of using a wheelchair, and enjoy your life to the fullest.

TOKYO PARALYMPIC GAMES REVIEW

Catch the highlights from the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games, which takes place from August 24 to September 5, 2021.

CLASSIFIEDS

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



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