



Creating an inclusive environment

Description

In March we observed International Wheelchair Day to shine a light on the needs of wheelchair users. Zenzele Dlamini, a call centre agent at Gems Contributions and Debt Management: Medscheme, gives us some insight into the needs of employees using wheelchairs.

Zenzele started The Curiosity Podcast show in December last year, profiling the stories of disabled people and the challenges they face. This podcast aims at answering questions that everyone is always curious, but afraid, to ask about disabled people and therefore they start assuming, which usually is not true.

“We are going to try and find ways to help those in need, more especially wheelchairs, crutches and so forth. We as disabled people are as important as any other able-bodied employees,” Zenzele says.

Highlighting some of the challenges our disabled colleagues face, Zenzele encouraged the AfroCentric Group to make reasonable accommodations and urged all our colleagues to be inclusive and aware of their needs. “For instance, having to negotiate steep hills in the workplace is difficult and we need to ask for help to be pushed up these hills, which is not always nice,” he says.

How to help a colleague with reduced mobility

- See the person first, not their impairment.
- Ask questions to learn how you can help – don't assume.
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Be aware of areas that might be difficult to navigate. Keep these areas clear of clutter.
- If you notice an area where we can improve access for employees with reduced mobility, please raise it with the AfroCentric Employee Wellness Team.

Remember, a person is not defined by their disability. I might be disabled but I perform my functions perfectly well.

Reasonable Accommodation at AfroCentric

The Transformation team, in collaboration with the Employment Equity Forums, are responsible for reasonable accommodation and ensuring that Facilities implements reasonable accommodation.

AfroCentric, being recognised as a Top Employer, understands the importance of fostering an inclusive

and safe workplace for its entire staff. AfroCentric is dedicated to promoting everyday acts of inclusion by collaborating with colleagues with disabilities to create an inclusive work environment, approaching disability management with respectful curiosity, and maintaining long-term commitment to allyship. This is most clearly demonstrated by the reasonable accommodations consistently applied throughout the business, taking into consideration how the impairment affects employees' ability to fulfill their designated duties.

Some of the reasonable accommodations implemented across the business include:

- Removing physical barriers, for example, building a ramp to ensure wheelchair access.
- Offering priority boarding for employees with physical disabilities when using lifts, and making bathrooms accessible.
- Reorganising roles to reallocate non-critical tasks.
- Rearranging workstation setups.
- Changing the duration of working hours.
- Modifying the performance rating grid based on type of impairment.

default watermark



Category

1. OUR PEOPLE

default watermark