

Report Workshop B – Living with Epilepsy: Practical Aspects

Participants in this workshop came from various sectors. Some were students, some nursing officers, teachers, a mechanic, retired people and housewives.

It is important that people with epilepsy meet other people with the same condition so as to realise that they are not alone in this situation. It was also important to be inspired by PWE who have succeeded in carrying on with their lives despite the condition. Epilepsy should not stop people from going out, working etc. Epilepsy should not control lives but it should be controlled. High levels of stress can effect these people however life is full of stress and so everyone should find ways how to deal with stress situations. With regards the issue of swimming people suggested that precautions should be taken such as having someone who knows how to handle seizures in water to be present and to take care not to go where it is too deep. The same goes for work outs at a gym. A fitness instructor could help guide through a proper routine in order not to overdo exercise. People with epilepsy should lead as normal a life as possible.

Awareness at all stages in life is important. At school, sports facilities, youth clubs etc are all areas where information should be disseminated as much as possible. Children can also be informed through stories and role plays as well. This will enable them to be of help when the need arises.

Further on in life entities such as ETC, employment agencies and employers associations should be informed more about this condition to improve job possibilities. With regards to ETC, the agency should not only notify prospective employers about the condition but also the type of seizures, how many take place and other relevant factors. Every person has a right to work and deserves an individual assessment taking into account all risk factors also.

Persons with epilepsy need to take control of their lives and not let others restrict the way they live. Children need to learn how to control excitement as well as this could also trigger seizures.

The teachers' pack was also mentioned and it was stated that this pack should also be available on the net apart from being given to all teaching grades. All teachers can phone the department for a copy if they did not get one. PSD sessions could also address this subject among students.

One last issue mentioned was medication. It was stated that changes in the intake of medications should only be done in consultation with the specialist.

The work shop concluded that it is only through more awareness that a change in attitude can take place.