



The Torch



Edition #8

Climbing Table Mountain

One of my goals in life was to climb up Table Mountain. So I contacted a guy from a hiking club- his name is Carl. I arranged with him to guide me up the mountain on the 24th of Feb 2019.

On that day Karle picked me up at my place at 6 in the morning and we went to the mountain. When we got there we started our climb. It was a rough terrain with rocks stacked on top of each other to form steps up the mountain. At the start of the climb it was easy going but later on it became too tough for me to go on so I had to turn around and go back down. I have decided to try it again next year when I am a little fitter.



Carl and Braam on Table Mountain

Ian Fraser Students 2019



Victor Williams

Victor is 39 year old and his hobbies include music and debating. He is currently studying toward a Masters in Xhosa at Nelson Mandela University. His ambition is to become a teacher to blind children; he believes this will act as motivation for them. Victor values honesty and respect for others. He describes himself as a hardworking team player. He feels like people perceive those with disabilities as less human, to which he responds by teaching those around him about disability matters.

Lesego Senwedi

Lesego is currently studying through Unisa, toward a post graduate degree in Social behaviour. She is 28 years old and loves reading and ballroom dancing.

She would like to play an active role in the implementation of effective policies through extensive research. She chose her current field of study hoping to equip South Africa combat HIV.

Her son is the most important thing in her life. She is currently exploring bioptic driving.





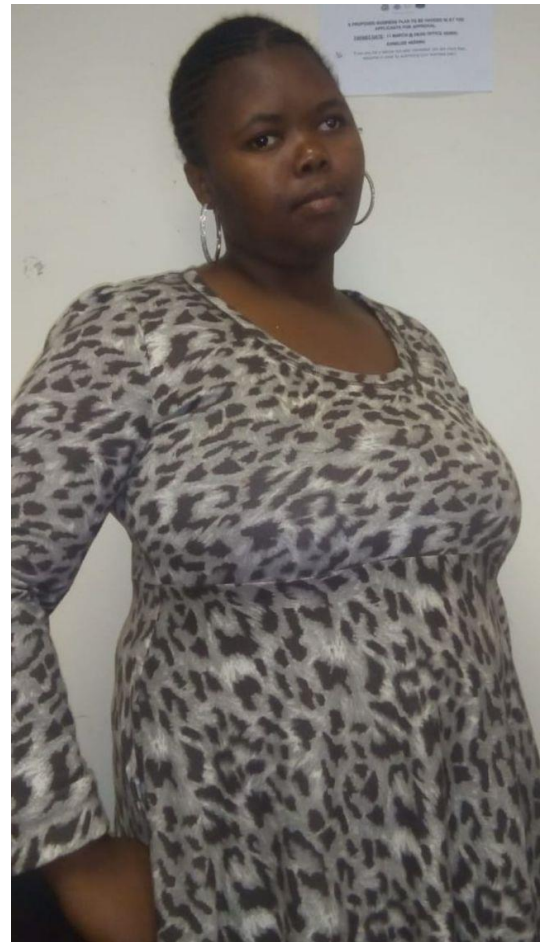
Liandri Steffens obtained her Honours in International Studies at the University of Stellenbosch in December 2018



Jean-Jacques Naude obtained his LLB at the University of Stellenbosch in December 2018



Michelle Nell obtained her Masters in Music at Stellenbosch University in March 2019



Asanda Lengisi obtained her qualification in Social Auxiliary work at the Norah nursing institute in December 2018.



Henri Herbs obtained his Master's in Law at The University of Stellenbosch in March 2019



Anoop Noratam Achieved is B Medicine and surgery at WITS in December 2018

Aplonia's Drawings



Aplonia Ruiendo has become quite the designer at this young age. Her sketches of these marvellous designs give a good indication of a future career.

Blind veterans begin world first trial of driverless pods

An autonomous vehicle company has begun a world first trial of its driverless pods with blind veterans and the charity that supports them.

Blind Veterans UK, the national charity for blind and vision-impaired ex-Service men and women, along with Aurrigo, launched the trial on Wednesday (06/03) to kick start their six month collaboration which will formally begin in April.

This is the first time Aurrigo have ever conducted a trial with veterans or people with a disability. Trialling the pod, which is named Arthur after Blind Veterans UK founder Sir Arthur Pearson, will give the veterans a taste of what it would be like to regain the independence of driving again.



Mark (pictured) was the first blind veteran to take part in the trial

“I was a motorcyclist and I used to race my car before losing my sight so it was a massive loss to lose my license. It was the hardest thing. Being able to make more journeys on your own independently would be absolutely fantastic and open up the world for blind and disabled people everywhere. It was an honour to have been the first one to make the journey.”

Mark, blind veteran

The route of the company’s ‘Pod Zero’, which can carry up to four people and travels at a maximum speed of 15mph, will follow the most popular parts of the Blind Veterans UK training and rehabilitation centre in Ovingdean, near Brighton.

The first blind veteran to take part in the trial was 51-year-old Mark from Saltdean in East Sussex. Mark lost his sight entirely in 1999 and has been supported by Blind Veterans UK ever since.



Representatives from Aurrigo and Blind Veterans UK with the pod



The pod has been named Arthur after our founder, Sir Arthur Pearson



Blind veterans are thrilled to be involved in the trial



Mark was the first of our blind veterans to go for a ride in the pod

The vehicles are exploring the importance of voice activated controls, something Aurigo piloted with IBM Watson at the recent Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas. It was designed with the consultation of another sight loss charity, Guide Dogs, and designed to best suit the needs of people who are blind or vision impaired.

Miles Garner, Sales and Marketing Director for Aurrigo, says: "Using info taken from our discussions with Guide Dogs, we have made some initial modifications to the pods to help the vision impaired, such as lighting and prominent colours on grab rails and seats.

"This trial intended to see how the pods operated in a real-life environment and will help us evolve the pod and highlight any changes we need to incorporate into the design.

"The feedback from the blind veterans who take part will be a massive help to us in improving our pods and making them more user-friendly for the disabled community."

Aurrigo are training members of the Blind Veterans UK transport team to assist veterans to use the pods.

"So many of the blind veterans we support say that not being able to drive is one of the most significant things that hits you when you lose your sight. It's another way of losing independence and can make people more isolated."

Nick Caplin, Chief Executive

What is PTSD?

Click [here](#) to watch the video on PTSD

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder according to journalist Joshua Carstens for SADAG

What is it?

According to the [South African Depression and Anxiety Group](#) (SADAG), PTSD is a "debilitating condition which follows a traumatic event". Patients often relive the traumatic events and it is most often accompanied by sudden and vivid memories.

Symptoms

The fifth edition of the [Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders](#) (DSM-5) specifies five criteria for a person to be diagnosed with the disorder.

Criterion one: The person was exposed to: death, threatened death, actual or threatened serious injury, or actual or threatened sexual violence in at least *one* of the following ways:

- Direct exposure
- Witnessing the trauma
- Learning that a relative or close friend was exposed to a trauma
- Indirect exposure to aversive details of the trauma, usually in the course of professional duties

Criterion two: The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced, in at least *one* of the following ways:

- Unwanted upsetting memories
- Nightmares
- Flashbacks
- Emotional distress after exposure to traumatic reminders
- Physical reactivity after exposure to traumatic reminders

Criterion three: Avoidance of trauma-related stimuli after the trauma, in *one* of the following ways:

- Trauma-related thoughts or feelings
- Trauma-related reminders

Criterion four: Negative thoughts or feelings that began or worsened after the trauma, in *two* of following ways:

- Inability to recall key features of the trauma
- Overly negative thoughts and assumptions about oneself or the world
- Exaggerated blame of self or others for causing the trauma
- Negative affect
- Decreased interest in activities
- Feeling isolated
- Difficulty experiencing positive affect

Criterion five: Trauma-related arousal and reactivity that began or worsened after the trauma, in at least *two* of the following ways:

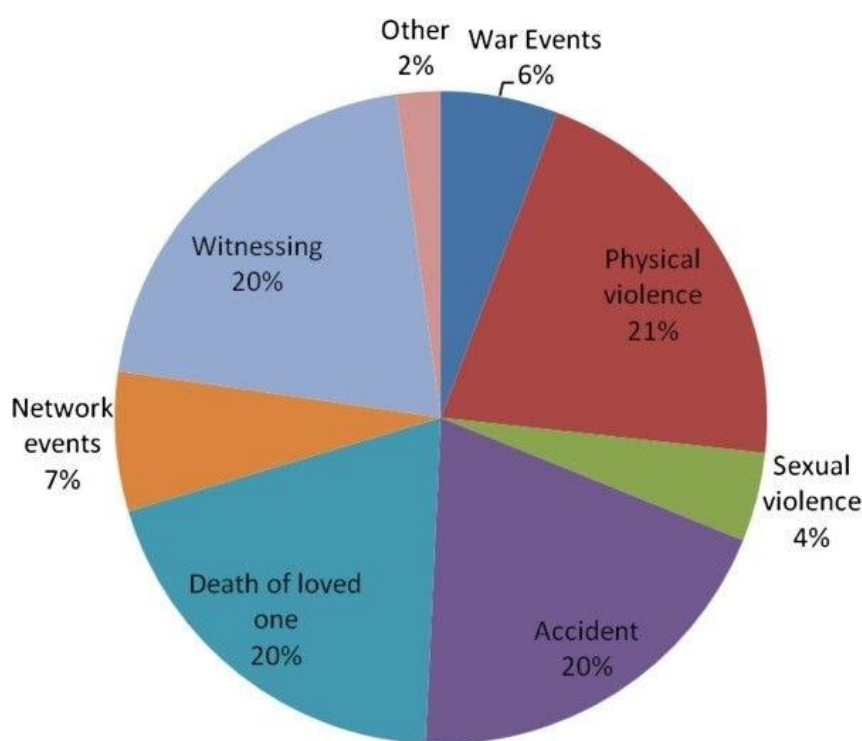
- Irritability or aggression
- Risky or destructive behaviour
- Hypervigilance
- Heightened startle reaction
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty sleeping

These symptoms must last for more than a month; they must create distress or cause impaired function; and the symptoms can't be due to medication, substance use, or another illness.

PTSD in South Africa

According to a recent study from the [University of Cape Town](#), our "unique history, characterised by *apartheid*, and a long period of political violence and state-sponsored oppression ending only in 1994, suggests a high level of trauma exposure in the general population". This study conducted a national survey with more than 4 000 adults participating and revealed that the lifetime and 12-month prevalence rates of PTSD were 2.3% and 0.7% respectively.

In South Africa physical violence is the most prevalent form of exposure. A breakdown of the "triggers" is as follows:



Unfortunately, not only adults are plagued by PTSD. A study from [Stellenbosch University](#) shows that more than 20% of South African children have symptoms of the disorder. "We hope our study can help increase the access of adolescents with PTSD to much-needed support in a developing country such as South Africa," said principal researcher Jaco Rossouw.

Treatment

A combination of therapy and medication is often effective and according to [SADAG](#) "a person who has survived a trauma cannot expect to function as they normally do immediately after the trauma". [Cognitive Behavioural Therapy](#) (CBT) has been successfully used in the treatment of many patients and an experienced psychologist is often one's first point of call.

For further information go to SADAG's website for support and information on mental health.



Upcoming Events

Project Gemini - May 2019

Long Cane Rally - TBC

National Reunion - May 2019

Annual General Meeting - 13 September 2019