



# NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2024 | ISSUE #03



## FROM THE STAFF

We are heading into the last (and busiest) quarter of the year – where has the year gone? I was fortunate to take some leave during the school holidays to be home with my children and was reminded again of the necessity for rest. Also, how many different forms of rest there are. Apart from physical rest, as humans we need mental rest, emotional rest, spiritual rest and sensory rest.

October is Mental Health Awareness month, and one of the leading causes of mental illness is stress. Through this month I encourage you to find ways to rest between the busyness and do those things that energise and revitalise you. And if it is all getting too much, please talk to someone. You can find great resources and help on the South African Depression & Anxiety Group website : [www.sadag.org](http://www.sadag.org)

~ Ruth



## Level 1 Training Feedback

On 18 & 19 September, staff from 4 different disability organisations attended Senecio’s Level 1 training, run by Ruth. In between great discussions and sharing of experiences and stories (and a good few laughs) we covered the basics of what disability is and how it can impact on how a person functions in daily life, Disability Rights, basic practical skills to support a person with a disability, and how staff can care for themselves in their work. We are so looking forward to Level 2 (covering specific diagnoses and conditions) on 23rd & 24th October. If you would like to find out more about Senecio’s training, contact Ruth at [ruth@senecio.org.za](mailto:ruth@senecio.org.za)



**SUPPORT FOR  
PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES**

[WWW.SENECIO.ORG.ZA](http://WWW.SENECIO.ORG.ZA)

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[info@senecio.org.za](mailto:info@senecio.org.za)

## IMPORTANT DATES

- Eye-care awareness month
- Mental health Awareness Month
- 10 Oct - World Mental Health Day
- 12 Oct - World sight day
- 15 Oct - Global Handwashing Day
- 20 Oct - National Down Syndrome Day
- 27 Oct - World OT day
- 28 Oct-3 Nov - National Stroke Week
- 29 Oct - World Stroke Day

## DID YOU KNOW?

### STROKE AWARENESS MONTH

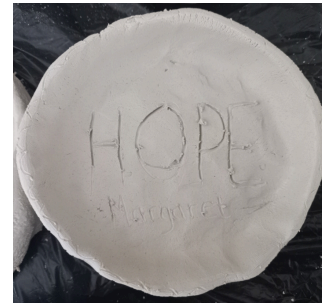
Strokes happen when the blood flow to a part of the brain is cut off, causing brain cells to die. It’s a medical emergency! The sooner a person gets treatment, the better their chances of survival and recovery. That’s why it’s important to know the signs of a stroke! (See the Beneficiary Activity on pg 5 for more info.)



# CENTRE SUPPORT

## EDEN KAROO

Iselle completed the final round of onsite support visits to centres in Knysna, Kranshoek, De Rust, and Stilbaai. These centres completed Senecio's three levels of training in 2023, and we have provided ongoing onsite support throughout 2024. Our aim has been to empower them to become independent in problem-solving, enhance their skills in working with persons with various disabilities, and improve the overall wellbeing of their beneficiaries. We are incredibly proud of these centres for exceeding our expectations! While we will continue to offer virtual support, we are confident in their ability to operate independently going forward.



During our final visits, we were excited to hand over a craft box to each centre, equipping them with resources to continue their wonderful work. Iselle also facilitated a special activity where beneficiaries created clay bowls. This not only produced a useful end product but carried a meaningful message: just like the bowls, each person is unique and has a purpose, despite their differences. It was a powerful reminder of the value and individuality of each beneficiary.







# COMMUNITY EVENTS



## VILLIERSDORP SPORT DAY

On 24 September, five centres for persons with disabilities gathered in Villiersdorp for a day filled with fun and games. The event featured various sports and games, with Senecio leading disability inclusion activities such as wheelchair obstacle courses and crutch races. These activities allowed both persons with disabilities and the general public to participate, fostering compassion and raising awareness about the importance of inclusion in everyday life. Entrepreneurs from the centres also showcased their products, and local musicians, dancers, and radio personalities joined in, participating alongside persons with disabilities. This celebration aligns perfectly with the theme of OT Week (23-27 September), "Occupational Therapy for Changing Contexts", demonstrating how OT promotes inclusion and empowers people to adapt and thrive in evolving environments.



What a powerful celebration of Heritage Day, with the entire community coming together in unity and joy. This is the kind of heritage we hope to share and promote in South Africa!





# STAFF ACTIVITY



“Laughter is the best medicine”. When we laugh, our brain releases endorphins (natural feel-good chemicals). Studies show that in the short-term, laughter reduces stress, relieves tension, and pumps more oxygen through our bodies, impacting all organs and making us feel good. In the long term, laughter can improve our immune system, relieve pain, improve our mood and make it easier to cope with difficult situations.

## LAUGHING EVERY DAY

October is Mental Health Awareness Month, and we encourage you to take care of your own well-being this month.

Why not try the following to bring laughter into your days?

1. Find ways to bring joy into your work team - laughing together is a powerful teambuilder!
2. Watch funny videos on Youtube: e.g. Mr Bean, Epic Fails
3. Play Fun Games: e.g. Charades, Pictionary, Heads up (App)
4. Create a Humor Board: Dedicate a space in the office for funny quotes, cartoons, and pictures.

## LAUGH OUT LOUD

- Did you hear about math book that got a therapist? It had a lot of problems.
- Why did the invisible man quit his job? He couldn't see himself doing it.
- I decided to sell my vacuum cleaner. It was just gathering dust.
- Why did the golfer bring two pairs of pants to the course? In case he got a hole in one.
- Why don't skeletons skydive? They don't have the guts to do it.
- I'm wasn't a fan of facial hair, but eventually it grew on me.
- Why shouldn't you play poker in the jungle? Too many cheetahs.
- Why don't lions eat clowns? Because they taste funny.
- Why did the egg hide? It was a little chicken.
- Why shouldn't you trust trees? They can be a little shady.

JUST REMEMBER  
to never make a joke  
at someone else's  
expense.  
Our aim is to laugh  
WITH one another,  
not AT one another.

You can read these jokes to the beneficiaries as well and have a good laugh together!



# GROUP ACTIVITY



28 OCT-3 NOV : NATIONAL STROKE WEEK  
29 OCTOBER : WORLD STROKE DAY


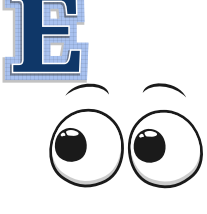
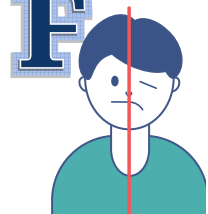



Take some time this month to teach your groups about strokes. You can do this through group discussions, craft activities (like the collage idea below) or asking your local clinic to do an outreach visit to share information about strokes and check everyone's blood pressure.

## COLLAGE ACTIVITY

Design BE FAST Posters highlighting the signs and preventions of a stroke, that each person can put up in their home or gift to community centres for awareness. Use old magazines, newspapers, and colorful paper to cut out letters and pictures that match the BE FAST signs and prevention tips.

## AWARENESS IS KEY - BE FAST!

Use the BE FAST acronym to remember the signs of a stroke:

<b>B</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>
					
<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>EYES</b>	<b>FACE</b>	<b>ARMS</b>	<b>SPEECH</b>	<b>TIME</b>
Is the person suddenly unsteady or dizzy?	Is their vision suddenly blurry or lost in one or both eyes?	Does one side of their face droop when they smile?	Ask them to raise both arms. Is one arm weak or numb?	Is their speech slurred or strange?	It's time for immediate action! Call an ambulance!

Repeating the acronym and what it means daily will help it stick in everyone's minds.

## PREVENTING A STROKE

- Keep Your Blood Pressure Under Control: Regular clinic visits
- Healthy Diet: Avoid foods high in salt, sugar, and unhealthy fats. Instead, eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Regular Exercise
- Avoid Smoking: Smoking doubles your risk of stroke. Get help to quit.
- Limit Alcohol Consumption: Too much alcohol can raise blood pressure.