

MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES REGARDING EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES:  
AN EAP EXPERIENCE

by

BABALWA SOLOMBELA

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SUPERVISOR: PROF L. S. TERBLANCHE

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## DECLARATION OF OWN WORK

I Babalwa Solombela, 12309142 is student enrolled with the University of Pretoria, for a degree in MSW (Masters in Social Work specialising in Employee Assistance Programme) with a mini- dissertation titled “Management challenges regarding employees with disabilities: an EAP experience”, hereby declare that this is my own original work.

All secondary material used were carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the requirements of the University of Pretoria.

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.....

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## ABSTRACT

It is important that employees with disabilities are recognised as valuable contributors to the growth and profitability of organisations and ultimately the country. However, on the broad status of disability and equality, data reveals that despite access to guidelines, there has been very little progress regarding the awareness of and action to address the stigma and misconceptions about disability, nor enough work to enable the development of skills to accommodate persons with disabilities into the workplace adequately.

Evidence shows that employers still discriminate against employees with disabilities and do not fully utilise the talents and skills that persons with disabilities can bring to the workforce.

The ideal outcome is that managers should strive to create an inclusive workforce and to implement all labour and Employment Equity legislation meaningfully.

The goal of the study was to identify and describe the challenges experienced by managers of employees with disabilities. By law, employers are obligated to evaluate the effectiveness of their workplace strategy on the management of disability at regular intervals and make improvements where required. The study was motivated by lack of availability of research and understanding of the experiences and challenges of managers of employees with disabilities.

It was found that managers are predominately unable to effectively manage employees with disabilities because they are not trained nor provided with the requisite skills and knowledge to deal with issues of disability in the workplace.

The study from an EAP perspective was motivated by the minimal research on the involvement and role of EAP in disability management in the workplace. The potential role of EAP regarding disability management was identified in the study. The role for EAP in disability management and recommendations in the regard is likely to have implications on the practice of EAP in relation to the management of employees with disabilities within the workplace.

## LIST OF KEY WORDS AND CONCEPTS

Disability

Disability in the workplace

Employees with disabilities

Managers of employees with disabilities

EAP: Employee Assistance Programme

Employer

Management

Diversity

## ABBREVIATIONS

EAP	- Employee Assistance Programme
EAP-SA	- Employee Assistance Programme- South Africa
WHO	- World Health Organisation
SAHRC	- South African Human Rights Commission
UNCRPD	- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities
CGPEPD	-Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities
PEPUDA	- Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act
WPRPD	- White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EEA	- Employment Equity Act
SSA	- Statistics South Africa

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## CHAPTER 1

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. INTRODUCTION

Disability is a global concern because people with disabilities are marginalised and excluded from full participation in many societies. As a result, the need for the empowerment of persons with disabilities has been recognised all over the world (World Health Organization (WHO) & World Bank, 2011: XI).

In 2011, the World Health Organization and the World Bank Group jointly produced a global report on disability to provide the evidence required for the development of innovative policies and programmes that can be implemented to improve the lives of people with disabilities in various countries (World Health Organization & World Bank, 2011:XI).

In South Africa, according to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) (2017:6) people with disabilities also face a wide variety and multiple forms of discrimination in various social spheres, including their access to healthcare services, employment and education.

In the labour market context, persons with disabilities face multiple challenges when trying to find employment or when already working in organisations. Ottman and Rogers (2010:74) stated that “the organisation is society in microcosms”. Thereby implying that in South African society, which is laden with social and human rights issues and where people with disabilities are discriminated against, marginalised and excluded from full participation in society, it is inevitable that people with disabilities will have or be impacted by the same issues within places of work.

The researcher believes that in order to fully understand the issues affecting persons with disability and their management in the workplace, it is important to explore the challenges faced by managers, specifically regarding the disability management aspects of their work.

This study benefits managers of employees with disabilities. It may also have a consequential benefit to employees with disabilities as well as have implications on

the role and practice of the Employee Assistance Programme in relation to the management of employees with disabilities within the workplace.

## 1.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following literature review, the researcher shall define key concepts and reflect on sources covering relevant topics regarding the challenges experienced by managers of employees with disabilities. The review shall include studies from the Employee Assistance Programme perspective.

### 1.2.1. Definitions of concepts

- People with disabilities: “People who have a long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits their prospects of entry into or advancement in employment” (Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998:11)
- Disability: According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD, 2011:2) “disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments, attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. The presence of social barriers means disability is more a product of non-conducive social context.”

The WHO (2002:7) defined “disability as an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in the body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action, while participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Therefore, disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person’s body and features of the society in which they live.”

- Employees with disabilities: People with disabilities, as defined above; however, employees with disabilities refers specifically to persons that are employed.
- Management: Management is the planning, organising, activating and control, which a manager undertakes when managing an enterprise. The aim is to



achieve on the objectives of the business and make a profit. Additional management elements are to coordinate, communicate, delegate, make and implement decisions, execute disciplinary action and leverage motivation.

- Disability management: A process in the workplace designed to facilitate the employment of persons with a disability through a coordinated effort and taking into account individual needs, the working environment, enterprise needs and legal responsibilities.
- Eskom: Eskom is a designated employer under the Employment Equity Act of 1998 and is the national electricity provider for South Africa – a public enterprise with a large network of offices, power stations and electrical network throughout the country.

### 1.2.2. Overall challenges with disability management

The SAHRC (2017:15) in a report evaluating progress on the broad status of Disability and Equality in South Africa from 2013-2017 revealed that despite access to guidelines (Dube, 2005:21), in reality there has been very little progress regarding the awareness of and action to address the stigma and misconceptions about disability, or enable adequate skills to accommodate persons with disabilities into the workplace (Naudé & Delpont, 2004:40).

Consequently, the employment status of persons with disabilities is dire as very few persons with disability are considered for employment or actually employed. Moreover, challenges persist even for those who are employed (SAHRC, 2017:13).

The SAHRC (2017:13) found that employees with disability are underemployed, which means employees with disabilities as a subgroup often remain in low-status jobs, obtain lower than average remuneration and generally are not reasonably accommodated in the workplace. When employers perpetuate unequitable and unfair employment practices because a person has disability, this means the employer is discriminating against an employee on the basis of disability in the workplace which is a human rights violation.

Employers are mandated by law according to the Employment Equity Act (EEA) no 55 of 1998 to create appropriate working environments without of acts of

discrimination (EEA No 55 of 1998:14). Line managers are employer representatives; therefore their failure to implement and adopt correct EEA practices creates a legal responsibility and obligation for the employer (Van Staden, 2011:36).

In the event that incidents of discrimination or inappropriate responses to legislation occur, the risk is that employees with disabilities might lodge grievance procedures, resulting in cases ultimately being brought before the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) against their employing organisation, based on company policy or the managers' incorrect actions, omission and/or negligence in applying the laws. CCMA hearings are costly and avoidable becoming a liability since they are a waste of valuable resources for the employer. Furthermore, costs are compounded by the cost of potential negative publicity and the risk regarding damage to the organisation's reputation in the market place, should it be found to be guilty of discriminatory practices (Van Wyk, 2011:130).

Ultimately, the onus lies with employers to evaluate and review their compliance and obligations regarding the EEA and effectiveness of their workplace strategy on the management of disability. They should at regular intervals evaluate and make improvements where required (International Labour Organization, 2002:19).

### 1.2.3. Challenges faced by managers

Maja, Mann, Naidoo, Sing, Steyn (2008:24) conducted a study in South Africa in response to the requirement for the employment of persons with disabilities brought on by the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. The study looked at ways to address barriers to entering employment that persons with disabilities face in the workplace. They found that everyday practical issues remain prominent and that the implementation of these laws and policies was a challenge. Their study was aimed at identifying the awareness, knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and experiences of employers when hiring persons with disabilities (PWDs). The researchers interviewed human resources managers and one supervisor on an employee with a disability. They found there was a lack of knowledge about disability in general and negative attitudes were extended toward employees with disabilities by fellow employees and that there existed physical barriers preventing the employment of persons with disabilities within the organisations.

However, there were also clear benefits to employing persons with disabilities such as the acknowledgement of the positive contribution made by employees with a disability in the workplace (Maja et al, 2008:24). However, considering the fact that only one person who was an actual supervisor of an employee with disabilities gave input, the researcher believes that the presentation of one manager's views is not an adequate representation of the challenges faced by managers of employees with disabilities.

Furthermore, Jans, Jones and Kaye (2011:536) investigated why employers do not hire and retain persons with disabilities. Their study also focused on human resources managers to identify barriers to employing persons with disabilities. The study found that there was a lack of awareness on how to manage persons with disabilities and lack of awareness on how to address accommodation issues. The study found that human resource managers had concerns over costs and fear of legal liability regarding employing persons with disabilities hence they did not hire or retain employees with disabilities.

Therefore the researcher believes more research needs to be conducted with specifically managers of employees with disabilities, with regards to their attitude, knowledge, perceptions, and experiences upon hiring, retaining and managing employees with disabilities. A review of studies conducted on management challenges regarding employees with disabilities in South Africa, as experienced by managers of those employees, has been sought and examined in detail in this study.

The factors involved in the decision making process of managers about disability management needs to be looked at more closely.

Kulkarni and Lengnick-Hall (2014:166) suggested reasonable accommodation was difficult because the manager may attribute the requester to be abusing the legislation by asking for unjustified and undeserved time off, and if the employee is a poor performer, the request is further regarded as unreasonable or even inappropriate. As a result, the employer – employee equality can be threatened when the request is viewed as unreasonable. The research, however, did not show that these requests were viewed as unreasonable on the basis of the manager's

knowledge of policy, legislation and an understanding of the requirements for disability management in the workplace. For example, SAHRC (2017:14) mentions that reasonable accommodation is not conditional on the performance of an employee because the provision of the appropriate equipment enables productivity.

Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate whether management challenges are driven by a lack of training on policy and legislation prior to making decisions about the requests, needs and rights of persons with disabilities regarding reasonable accommodation.

#### 1.2.4 Challenges of employees with disabilities in the workplace

Ximba (2016:142) mentions that employees with disability perceive that there is a stigma against them and limited knowledge from their managers and colleagues on how to work with them as PWDs. As a result, PWDs report to have negative relationships and experiences at work. Furthermore, a suitable working environment that reasonably accommodates PWDs, which would empower them to do their work effectively and efficiently, is not always provided. The researcher believes that this is a significant and unacceptable barrier to the achievement of any success in the workplace for persons with disabilities.

Blanck, Blasi, Kruse and Schur (2009:401) conducted an explorative study of the experiences and attitudes of employees with disabilities. The findings were that persons with disabilities face a number of disparities at work, including lower pay or benefits, less job security, higher levels of supervision, lower participation in job and departmental decisions, lower levels of company-sponsored formal training and less informal training from co-workers.

The researcher however, had not yet found studies that include the experiences and attitudes of managers of employees with disabilities as described by themselves toward persons with disabilities and regarding their challenges in managing employees with disabilities.

### 1.2.5 The role of EAP in disability management

The researcher believes that the involvement of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) professionals would lead to the meaningful employment, inclusion and capable management of employees with disabilities in the workplace.

Van Wyk (2011:132) stated that an EAP is "a confidential and professional service provided as an employee benefit, which complements and extends in-company resources in the constructive and supportive management of people impacted by concerns in their personal and work lives".

Most organisations in South Africa employ social workers as EAP practitioners, although it is a multi-disciplinary field (Du Plessis, 2001:103). Chitereka (2010:90) stated that the preference of employing social workers for the EAP role may possibly be based on the assumption that social workers are more committed to assisting people who are "disenfranchised" by the systems in society, which has always distinguished them from other social professions.

Mackelprang (2013:12) validated the assumption, by reflecting on the link between disability and the social work profession, stating that the social work profession has a reliable history of responsibility to work with and advocate for the disadvantaged and oppressed in society.

In the social welfare context, social workers can be identified by their advocacy role, whereby social workers lobby government to pass legislation specifically targeting persons with disabilities (Chitereka, 2010:91). Similarly, Bhoodram (2010:90) wrote that various labour-related regulations have played a significant role in the development of EAPs in South African workplaces. Legislation provided an environment in the workplace where the health and wellbeing of employees needed to be protected through multiple precepts, which also indirectly provided a mandate for EAP (social work) services to step in and create social justice, health, wellbeing in the workplace (Bhoodram, 2010:90).

Chitereka (2010:90) stated that the role of social workers concerning persons with disabilities was to raise awareness regarding the issues of disability and the

challenges experienced by PWDs in the country, because negative connotations and references about disabilities persisted. Similarly in the workplace, Ximba (2016:142) stated that employees with disabilities perceive that there is a stigma against them presenting a barrier to cohesive relationships with their managers, hence there's social advocacy role for social workers stationed in the workplace in this regard.

EAP is an instrument used to improve the quality of life of employees. The purpose of EAPs is not only to improve the wellbeing of employees, but also the effectiveness and productivity of the company (Van Wyk, 2011:131). Therefore, the intended beneficiaries of an EAP are both the employees working for the organisation and the employer. Ultimately, the researcher believes that EAP can play a more prominent role in removing barriers and supporting the employer regarding the management of disability in the workplace.

The supportive role of an EAP toward supervisors in the management of people is recognised. Simelani (2007:67) stated that it is important that EAPs should be viewed as an organisational asset that can play a significant role in helping those in positions of authority to resolve complex work problems. According to Bhoodram (2010:59) EAPs are well positioned to support supervisors and address the challenges they experience in their role as people managers.

The role of EAPs in disability management in the workplace has also been discussed by authors Naudé & Delpont (2004:218) and Mathaphuna (2007:102).

Naudé and Delpont (2004:281) discussed the role of social workers in assisting organisations with the task of entry and integration of persons with disabilities. Labour relations personnel and human resource management experienced challenges because they had to comply with the legal requirements of employing persons with disabilities. The study had aimed to establish how difficult it was practically to integrate employees with disabilities into the workplace. The study found there was a need for social workers to be part of the solution by assisting organisations to achieve entry and then integrate PWDs in the workplace.

Mathaphuna (2007:102) having conducted research to identify needs and barriers as experienced by employee with disabilities in the workplace stated that EAP has a

major role to play from a human resource management collaboration perspective regarding disability issues.

Mathaphuna (2007:102) identified six potential roles that EAP can play to support the organisation with disability management as follows;

- The collaborative role of EAP within human resources
- The consultative role;
- An evaluator of the organisation's application of legislation;
- The mediator role between the persons with disabilities and the employer/management;
- The programme developer role;
- The trainer role where training includes sensitivity, and is included in supervisory training to help supervisors recognise the rights of the person with disabilities in the workplace, based on EAP knowledge of the reasonable accommodation needs from PWDs.

Mathaphuna (2017:102) recommended the role of EAP based on the findings on the perceptions and experiences of employees with disabilities. However, in this study, the role of EAP will be determined directly from the managers' experiences and challenges in the workplace.

Studies that focus on the role of EAP in disability management, in support of managers and the organisation have not yet been identified by the researcher. Therefore, the researcher believes a link needs to be found between what managers believe they need from an EAP and the service implications required from EAP in order to optimise the benefits of EAP interventions to both managers and PWDs employed in such organisations.

### 1.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For the purposes of this study, disability is defined in accordance with both Employment Equity Act (1998:10) which states that disability is "a long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment, which substantially limits the prospects of

entry into or advancement in employment”. The researcher utilised the definition of disability based on the social model.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2011:2) provided a definition of disability based on the ‘social model’. “This model explains that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments, attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. The social model of disability argues that disability is a social construct and can only exist within a social environment that devalues differences” (Danieli, 2000:403). According to the social model, it is impossible to function in a vacuum and all people are interdependent on each other and on systems for survival (Naudé & Delport, 2004:274).

For the research study, social construction theory forms the theoretical framework that allows one to gain an understanding of disability and the management thereof.

Social construction theory is an approach to the social sciences that draws its origins from a number of disciplines, including philosophy, sociology and linguistics, making it multidisciplinary in nature (Burr, 1995:2).

Social construction theory is defined as a critical stance toward an understanding of the world and ourselves. The understanding of the world and ourselves can be extended to include the workplace, disability, understanding PWDs, managers and the management of employees with disabilities in the workplace. The theory invites the researcher to be critical of the concept that observations of the world yield facts about its nature without distortion (Burr, 1995:3).

Social constructionism cautions researchers to remain suspicious of assumptions about how the world appears to them. It also implies that all understanding is historically and culturally relative (Burr, 1995:4). Knowledge of the world is constructed between people, interacting with each other, instead of it being derived from the nature of the world objectively.

Social constructionism allows the researcher to take a political – or any other world-view – approach to research, where the researcher has an interest in investigating



the workings of language and the construction of accounts for their own sake as a means of understanding social phenomena (Burr, 1995:182).

Wendell (1996:57), when he described disability as a social construct, argued that neither impairment nor disability can be defined purely in biomedical terms. Social arrangements and expectations make essential contributions to impairment and disability, and to their absence. Wendell (1996:57) further explained that the distinction between the biological reality of a disability (impairment) and the social construction of a disability cannot be made decisively, because the biological and the social are interactive and interlinked in creating disability. They are interactive not only in the complex interactions of social factors and our bodies affect health and functioning, but also in that social arrangements can make a biological condition more or less relevant in almost any situation.

The subjective relevance of a biological condition is consistent with the social model and the social constructions theorists stating that there are various understandings of the world, which are negotiated between a wide spread of people. The social world itself, including people as a product of social processes, determines the nature of the world or people (Burr, 1995:3). Wendell (1996:57) called the interaction of the biological and the social factors to create (or prevent) disability "the social construction of disability".

Social construction theory can be applied to examine the approach to the phenomenon under study, which is the social construction of management challenges regarding employees with disabilities.

#### 1.4. RATIONALE AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

It is important that employees with disabilities are recognised as valuable contributors to the growth and profitability of organisations and thus the country. However, evidence shows that employers still discriminate against employees with disabilities, according to Marumoagae (2012:4), and do not fully utilise the talents and skills that persons with disabilities bring to the workforce.

Therefore this implies that employers have not yet realised the full contribution nor given PWDs the credit for such contribution (Collela & Stone, 1996:352; Hunt &

Hunt, 2004:267), thereby constructing a reality where persons with disabilities have negative evaluations of employment and how they are treated in organisations.

The disparities in treatment also explain the higher likelihood of high staff turnover among PWDs and lower levels of company loyalty and job satisfaction. However, where persons with disabilities experience fairness and support from their managers, these negative outcomes do not occur (Blanck et al., 2009:401).

The researcher believes that by identifying the challenges and barriers to fair and equal treatment of PWDs by managers, is crucial to eradicating them, thereby achieving successful disability management.

Mathaphuna (2007:140) found that the lack of management support is one of the negative experiences of persons with disabilities in the workplace. Managers seem to be ignorant on issues of disability. Managers are reported to not have the requisite skills and knowledge to deal with issues of disability in the workplace.

Therefore, the problem under study can be formulated as managers are unable to effectively manage employees with disability. Inability of managers to effectively manage employees with disability has direct implications on the experiences of employees with disability in the workplace in terms of access, inclusion and prevention of discrimination in all spheres of their work life. Furthermore, the lack of appropriate disability management by managers has the potential of liability claims occurring for the organisation.

Social workers should be concerned, conduct research and create interventions when the following issues are found in the workplace;

- Lack of equal treatment of persons with disabilities;
- Challenges with finding and providing appropriate employment for PWDs.
- Challenges caused by an inappropriate working environment for PWDs.
- Negative attitudes by the employers toward PWDs.
- Negative experiences by PWDs at work;
- Lack of support, inclusion or acceptance by managers;

- Lack of training for management on how to manage employees with disabilities.

A comprehensive study has to be undertaken regarding the role of an EAP with regard to disability management practices such as; what role can EAP play in supporting employees and the organisation with policies and procedures relating to disability management?

Research needs to be conducted on the role of EAP in addressing the actual challenges identified by managers regarding disability management.

Therefore the research question has been formulated as follows:

- What are the challenges faced by managers of employees with disabilities?

The above question should be seen from the vantage point that employers and managers should strive to create an inclusive workforce to implement all labour and Employment Equity legislation meaningfully.

## 1.5. GOALS AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

### 1.5.1 Goal of the study

The goal of the study is to identify and describe the challenges experienced by managers of employees with disabilities in Eskom, Gauteng.

### 1.5.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study will be to;

- Theoretically conceptualise the management of employees with disabilities;
- Explore and describe the challenges faced by managers of employees with disabilities;
- Describe the potential role of the EAP regarding the challenges faced by line managers in managing employees with disabilities in the workplace;
- Outline implications for EAP practice concerning issues affecting disability management.

## 1.6. RESEARCH APPROACH

A qualitative research approach was followed in this study to obtain an in-depth description of line managers' experiences of employees with disability. The qualitative approach was selected because it allowed flexibility in all aspects of the research process. The unstructured characteristic was more appropriate when attempting to explore the nature of line manager's problems and challenges faced when managing PWDs. Creswell (1998:15) defined qualitative research as an inquiry of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher built a dynamic, complex and holistic picture, including analyses of words, reported on detailed views of informants and conducted the study in a natural setting of managers, which was the workplace in this study.

The qualitative research approach can be used by researchers to explore complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. The qualitative approach provided information about the "human" side of an issue – that is, the often contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions and relationships of individuals.

The qualitative approach was a suitable approach to investigate the challenges in managing employees with disabilities as it enabled the analysis of the human experiences of managers in the work context. Qualitative methods utilised were effective in identifying intangible factors such as social norms; socio-economic status, gender roles, ethnicity and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent (Delpont, De Vos, Fouché & Strydom, 2011:64). The qualitative method enabled the researcher to explore the social norms of line managers of employees with disabilities as a unique group within the organisation.

In qualitative research design, questions are answered by the informants in a subjective way, where each participant shapes the meaning of life under study from the vantage point of their own world. Therefore, the social construction of reality was looked upon (Delpont et al., 2011:82).

## 1.7. TYPE OF RESEARCH

The type of study is applied research. Applied research aims to address immediate problems facing the professional in practice. The researcher utilised the applied research method, which was aimed at solving problems to assist decision-making at supervisory, line managerial and policy levels. The value of the study is realised when findings are analysed and are applicable in practice by an EAP. The study will assist line managers to effectively manage employees with disabilities and implement the organisational policies and procedures (Durrheim & Terre Blanche, 2002:41).

## 1.8. RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher utilised the collective case study design. The collective case study design is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in-depth a programme, event, activity and the process of line managers. Cases are bound by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Creswell, 2009:13). Different managers as respondents were studied in their natural environment for the purpose of gathering information on interactions, attitudes and characteristics to identify commonalities in terms of challenges and strategies in the management of employees with disabilities.

## 1.9. RESEARCH METHODS

### 1.9.1 Study population and sampling

The population for this study were line managers working for Eskom, situated in Gauteng. All participants were managers of employees with disabilities within the organisation. The employees with disabilities of these managers must have disclosed their disability to the line manager and/or the employing organisation.

The following steps, as outlined by Creswell (2009:148), will be followed in the sampling methodology:

- The identified population in the study were line managers of employees with disabilities. The size of this population is 132 Eskom managers located in the Gauteng region and a list of their names was accessible;
- Single stage sampling was utilised as the researcher had access to names in the population and could sample directly;
- Purposive sampling was utilised. Purposive sampling as a type of non-probability sampling is based on the judgement of a researcher regarding the characteristics of representative sample. Personal judgement is used to choose cases that help answer the research question or to achieve the research objectives. According to the type of cases, purposive sampling can be divided into categories. For this research, homogenous sampling was used, which focused on the one particular subgroup in which all the sample members are similar, such as being a manager, and having employees with disability reporting to them (Lewis, Saunders & Thornhill, 2012:288 ).
- A representative sample from a population provides the researcher with the ability to generalise to the organisation (Creswell, 2009:148).
- The criteria for purpose sampling were as follows:
  - Respondents must be a manager employed by Eskom Gauteng;
  - Participant must be a manager of one or more employee with disabilities
  - Respondents should have a minimum number of 3 years' management exposure to one or more employees with disabilities under their supervision;

The researcher aimed to interview 15 participants. As it could not be predicted by researcher how many responses the researcher would be obtained, the researcher sent a request to participate to the total management population in Eskom via electronic mail (132 managers). A final sample size of  $n = 10$  (respondents) were accepted, which is over one-tenth of the population (11%). 10% is a statistically representative sample in organisational and qualitative research. The first 10 qualifying respondents accepting the invitation to be interviewed were to be included in the study.

### 1.9.2 Data collection

A semi-structured interview is generally organised around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee/s (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006:315). This is a semi-structured interview schedule; it was developed for data collection through a one-to-one personal interview. A qualitative interview is an attempt to understand the world from the participant's point of view, to reveal the meaning of people's experiences, and uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations (Greeff, 2011:342).

The data gathered through interviews was presented in the form of direct quotes from the participants. These interviews involved unstructured and generally open-ended questions that were intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2009:181). The researcher recorded the information from the interviews by making hand-written notes in support of the digital records taken, as suggested by Creswell (2009:183).

### 1.9.3 Data analysis

Delport, De Vos, Fouché and Strydom (2011:66) stated that in qualitative research the units of analysis will be holistic, concentrating on the relationship between elements and contexts. Qualitative data analysis in the study was used to establish how participants make meaning of their experiences by analysing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings and experiences in an attempt to approximate their construction of the challenges they face. Qualitative research methods look for themes when analysing data. The interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed in detail (Lewis et al., 2012:167).

Testing the emergent understandings and searching for alternative explanations forms part of the management and organising of data. An on-going process, involving continual reflection about the data, asking analytical questions and writing memos, this was done throughout the study. Creswell (2009:184) wrote that data analysis is conducted concurrently with data gathering, making interpretations, and writing reports. While the actual interviewing takes place the researcher must be analysing the interviews collected earlier, writing memos that may ultimately be

included as a narrative in the final report and organising the structure of the final report (Creswell, 2009:184).

Creswell (2009:185) listed the following data analysing strategies to be utilised;

- The researcher organises and prepares the data for analysis, which involves transcribing interviews, optimally scanning material and typing up all field notes, or sorting and arranging the data into different types of responses, depending on the source of information;
- Reading through all the data to obtain a general sense of the information and reflect on the overall meaning. What is the tone of the comments? What is the overall impression of the depth, credibility and use of the information?
- Detailed analysis is done by the researcher through codes. The coding process is the organising of the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to the information. Coding involves taking text data or pictures gathered during data collection and labelling such data into categories with a theme (Creswell, 1998:57);
- The researcher uses the coding process to generate descriptions of the interview sessions, people and categories or themes for analysis. These descriptions also involve details of information about the places or events in a setting.
- A qualitative narrative is added to convey the findings of the analysis.

The interpretation and meaning of the data is done by asking the sample about their lessons learnt and then comparing the findings to literature and theories, and benchmarking those against the actual EAP practice.

#### 1.10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Delport et al. (2011:113) stated that research should be based on mutual trust, acceptance, cooperation, promises being kept, and well-accepted conventions and expectations between all parties involved in the research project. The researcher ensured that the basis of mutual trust, acceptance, cooperation, promises being kept, and well-accepted conventions and fulfilling expectations were upheld by making expectations clear and explaining what the research entails. Thereafter, informed consent participation was obtained by disclosing the goals and objectives



of the study and providing consent forms to complete prior to their commitment to participate in the study.

In this study, the following ethical considerations were also be adhered to;

- Voluntary participation is an ethical consideration as isolating the Gauteng cluster through purposive sampling increases the probability of these supervisors of employees with disabilities being selected to participate in the study more than the rest of the managers in Eskom. However, the researcher highlighted that participation was voluntary and that participants could withdraw from the study (Delpont et al., 2011:123) at any time and without any penalties;
- All participants were offered counselling in case they experienced discomfort about discussing workplace challenges;
- Careful considerations to protect privacy, anonymity, confidentiality of respondents as the identity of employees with disability they manage, were taken by the researcher. The identities of respondents were not included in the presentation of data. Even after the study is conducted, the employer/sponsor will not have access to raw data;
- Eskom was the sponsor of the research project and hence the requirement that the study takes place within the organisation as the (anonymous) results will be used to the benefit of the organisation and its employees. In the formal request for consent to conduct the study at Eskom, the researcher mentioned that the organisation will receive a copy of research report, but would not have access to raw data, an agreement was written to protect the anonymity of respondents and ensure adherence to high ethical standards and thus resolving potential conflict of interest.
- Publication of findings will happen without mentioning the name of the organisation to promote confidentiality and generalisability of the study in any organisation. The findings were not be used to victimise any respondent, but remain in the Human Resource Department with the Transformation Office, also in the EAP domain to influence EAP practices and interventions.
- All raw data will be stored at the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years for archival and possible future research purposes.

### 1.11. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The sample was limited to Gauteng cluster population. The limitation in location was in order to allow the researcher access to face to face interviews with participants due to logistical proximity of an approximate 100 km radius of Eskom offices within the Gauteng province.

The researcher aimed to interview 15 participants, however 10 managers responded to the request for interviews (10%), all 10 respondents were interviewed. Voluntary participation is an important ethical consideration in the research however on the other hand; it presented a limitation for the researcher because the targeted number of participants did not volunteer to be part of the study. Eskom gave the researcher permission to conduct the study and contact employees as per letter in Annexure D however the agreement was on the basis of voluntary participation of managers.

The managers of employees with disability whose disability is unknown to the manager were not included in the study. The Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities (2015:14) states that an employer may not reveal the fact of an employee's disability, of whom they had assured confidentiality of their disability status, to a third party without consent. The sampling of line managers was restricted to consented employees with disabilities; the restriction is also aligned to ethical standards regarding the right to the confidentiality of one's disability, even to their managers.

### 1.12. CONCLUSION

This research benefits managers of employees with a disability, and consequently improves the lives of employees with a disability at work, as well as has implications on the role and practice of the Employee Assistance Programme in relation to management of employees with disability within the workplace.

## CHAPTER 2:

### LITERATURE REVIEW: OVERVIEW OF DISABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

#### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

Persons with disabilities have been excluded and discriminated against in society throughout history. In South Africa, laws were formulated to disempower and impress a socially constructed systemic disability (Liachowitz, 1988:1). Liachowitz, (1988:1) writes that the social construction of disability has legislative roots, observing that laws served to entrench the social process by which people who deviate from the accepted physical and other norms were devaluated and segregated.

This history continues to have a profoundly negative impact on the current status of persons with disabilities. According to Department of Labour, employed persons with disabilities are still underrepresented in the employment sector and in the 2011 South African Census report, eight in ten (80%) persons with disabilities are unemployed (Statistic South Africa, 2014: 116).

The literature review will cover the legislative history of the exclusion of persons with disabilities, subsequent developments toward “enabling” legislation in South Africa. The researcher shall provide a profile of persons with disabilities, disability in the workplace context and the management of disability in the workplace.

#### 2.2. THE HISTORY OF THE EXCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 1948, the South African apartheid government instituted laws and practices that excluded people from employment based on their disability without considering the abilities, skills and qualifications that they possessed in order to perform duties, thereby deeming them “unable” to work (White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015: 27).

Furthermore, during this time the government addressed disability as a social welfare and predominantly a medical concern, which meant that persons with disabilities were assessed and provided services in terms of their medical conditions,

placing emphasis on the impairment rather than on their existing abilities. The responses and service delivery mechanisms of that time were also designed to “fix” the persons and generally segregate them from the rest of society (White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015: 27).

In line with the views of the medical model, Du Plessis (2017:2) reveals that the popular definition that most people are likely to give for disability even today is that, someone is disabled when “their body or mind doesn’t work properly”. This definition originated from old perceptions derived from the medical model, which characterised disability as a problematic individual status, where the solution is to “fix”, or to unduly take care of the person, ultimately persisting in labelling the person with disability as unable, separate and deficient (Du Plessis , 2017: 3).

Consequently, the medical model produced degrading labels for persons with disabilities negating their dignity as full persons with rights on an equal basis with others (White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015:27).

This legislation and model played a significant role in how persons with disabilities became one of the most marginalized sectors of our society, who experience extreme levels of exclusion, prejudice, isolation and denial and/or lack of access to the world of work, fundamental equal rights and equitable services (White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2015:28).

### 2.3. SHIFTING THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The advent of democracy in 1994 was marked by conscious attempts to redress the socially engineered inequalities of the apartheid era. The post-1994 period produced the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, which “promised to establish a society based on social justice, to improve the quality of life of all citizens and to free the potential of each person” (Setlaltoea, 2015:5).

Section 9 of the Constitution prohibits unfair discrimination on the basis of disability (South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), 2017:7), thereby setting the ground for the development of fundamental policies and further laws that opened up significant opportunities for persons with disabilities by promoting equal opportunities

and fair treatment through the elimination of unfair discrimination (Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) 52 of 2002:1).

These policy and legislative changes were the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1995), Employment Equity Act (EEA) 55 of 1998, Code of Good Practice on Employment of People with Disabilities (2002) and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) 52 of 2002. Opportunities were thereby created for persons with disability to have equality, freedom and the right to be integrated into all parts of society including the world of work (Gida & Ortlepp, 2007:136).

Meanwhile on the international front, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities set out a broad range of rights - ranging from civil and political rights, to social, economic and cultural rights of persons with disabilities in an effort to enhance the lives of this group. South Africa ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol without reservations in 2007 and it subsequently came into force in May 2008 (SAHRC, 2017:8). Updates were then done in 2015 on the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy incorporating the United Nations Convention recommendations (White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (WPRPD), 2015: 4).

In order to give effect to the country's value for the equality of all persons, the social model was introduced to as a method to address disability. It is a model that acknowledges that disability is a social construct and examines the socio-economic environment and the impact that barriers have on the full participation, inclusion and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of mainstream society. It also focuses on the abilities of persons with disabilities rather than their differences. It fosters respect for inability and recognizes persons with disabilities as equal citizens with full political, social, economic and human rights (WPRPD, 2015:30), contrary to the medical model.

Whilst significant progress had been made by establishing a legal basis for justice through enabling legislation and creating room for socio-cultural transformation, for 20 years it did not happen because transformation relied more on the attitude of individuals which were not yet in fact transformed (WPRPD, 2015:29).

It is plausible for the researcher to conclude that mind-sets born from historical discrimination have been pervasive within society. The negative impact of these attitudes on the efficacy of policy is evident. Despite empowering changes in laws, the challenges experienced by persons with disability in society are socially constructed and perpetuated through culture within institutions, negative attitudes and lack of corrective measures.

#### 2.4. DISABILITY PROFILE IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Statistics South Africa Census (StatsSA) (2014: 7) conducting the 2011 Census on disability provides disability statistics which is the basis for measuring progress in realising the rights of persons with disabilities. In South Africa, policies and interventions to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to education, employment and basic services require statistical evidence. The researcher believes that statistical evidence serves as a basis for self-reflection to identify areas within society that require change.

The findings by 2011 Census show an estimated national disability prevalence of 7.5%, which is approximately 2.8 million people. The Census reported the types of disabilities as depicted in Table 1 below:

Types of disabilities	% of prevalence
Seeing will be referred to as Vision Impairment	9.4%
Mental/cognitive	3.3%
Hearing/will be referred to as hearing loss and/impairment	2.9%
Walking/climbing stair/physical disabilities	2.6%
Self-care	2.0%
Communication/speech	1.1%

(Table 1: Types of disabilities in South Africa)

Vision loss and/impairment disabilities are the most prevalent type of disability (StatsSA, 2014:7). StatsSA (2014:7) reported profiling data as follows: disability is more prevalent among females at 8.3% compared to males at 6.5%. Prevalence by population group profile shows that Black Africans had the highest proportion of persons with disabilities at 7,8%; followed by the White population group at 6,5%;

the Coloured and Indian/Asian population groups had 6.2% prevalence of disability respectively (StatsSA, 2014: 7).

The Stats SA (2014:10) found further the following noteworthy facts, that there are noticeable differences across the four population groups in terms of the most prevalent types of disability; disabilities increase with age as more than half (53,2%) of persons aged 85 and above reported having a disability. Of the 7.5% national prevalence, approximately 3.5%, which is approximately 1.403120 million people, are at working age population of 15 - 64 years (StatsSA, 2014:117).

Stats SA's 2007 Community Survey showed further that in South Africa persons with disabilities are among the poorest of the poor. People living in poverty are more at risk than others of acquiring a disability. Persons with disabilities face varying levels of discrimination and exclusion because of their race and gender. Therefore black women and girls in particular face compounded discrimination based on race, disability and gender. Women and girls with disabilities, along with the elderly ultimately, are the most vulnerable to poverty. They also face multiple layers of stigma and discrimination (WPRPWD, 2015:32).

It is established therefore that persons with disabilities face many challenges in society. Disability and poverty have a causal relationship therefore it becomes important to examine the employment of persons with disabilities, how to achieve better outcomes by investigating the challenges therein. Disability often leads to poverty. Poverty, in turn, often results in disability (SAHRC, 2017:13). Therefore the researcher believes successful employment is what breaks the cycle.

## 2.5. DISABILITY AS A PHENOMENON IN THE WORKPLACE

It has been established that persons with disabilities are in most cases excluded from society and major activities in society such as; social recreation and employment in the open labour market.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) acknowledges that employment is vital to the self-worth of persons with disabilities. In addition to the various concrete benefits that come with the ability to make a living, employment increases the likelihood of living their lives with dignity, as employment

enables individuals to be economically self-sufficient, creating more independence and easing their full integration into society in the same manner as all others (SARHC, 2017: 13).

However opportunity and participation of persons with disabilities in the workplace remains a challenge in South Africa. Persons with disabilities face disproportionately high levels of unemployment due to the fact that a disability discredits the actual or perceived ability of an individual to engage in social, educational, economic and even political arenas, trapping one in a vicious circular causality of poverty and disability (SAHRC, 2017:13).

Unemployment therefore continues to be one of the worst challenges faced by persons with disabilities (Stats SA, 2014:116). The Skills Portal (2013:1) reported two point five percent (2.5%) of the seven point five percent (7.5%) of persons with disabilities are employable and yet less than one percent (1%) is currently employed.

It is an objective of the South African government to achieve equity in the open labour market hence the formulation of legislation such as the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act No. 55 of 1998) to enforce the entry and integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market. Despite the public sector serving as vehicles for the government to demonstrate and achieve constitutional values set for itself, the employment target for persons with disabilities was set to two percent (2%) for 2005. More than a decade later, this target has still not been met (SAHRC, 2017:15).

In terms of the WPRPD (2015) the employment equity and work opportunity targets for persons with disabilities should increase to at least seven percent by the year 2030. (SAHRC 2017:15). However, current employment equity statistics cast doubt on the prospects of meeting this target. The StatsSA Census (2011:14) concurs with these findings, stating that there is low labour market absorption of persons with disabilities.

The legislation on employment equity is binding on both the public and private sectors. However, despite the existence of legislation, policy and monitoring bodies, barriers do exist and prevent many persons with disabilities from accessing employment opportunities (SAHRC 2017; 15). Furthermore, of those persons with



disabilities employed, they are in low status jobs or receive lower than average remuneration (SAHRC, 2017: 13).

Furthermore, according to the SAHRC (2017:16) the Commission for Employment Equity Annual Report 2016-2017, found that the representation of employees with disabilities in the workplace has in fact decreased between 2014 and 2016 at all occupational levels namely, the top management level, senior management, professionally qualified level and the unskilled level within the few organisations who do participate in employment equity reporting in South Africa. The SAHRC believes that the decrease in employment levels or high turnover of employees with disabilities is as a result of a lack of reasonable accommodation in the workplace (SAHRC, 2017:16).

Persons with disability in general struggle to enter the workplace, are less likely to be hired, and earn less than the able-bodied counterparts. However, the researcher concludes that there are massive disparities that exist among persons with disabilities as a sub-employee group, partly due to historical discrimination along race and gender lines, as follows;

StatsSA (2014:14) points to a disparity on entry, stating that the greater the difficulty experienced in functioning with a disability, the less one is likely to get employed.

It is found that the majority of persons with vision impairment experience the least difficulty with managing this type of disability. Consequently, persons with vision loss/ impairment have higher employment levels compared to other disability types (StatsSA, 2014:10). Furthermore, it is reported that persons with vision impairment disabilities earn disproportionately more income compared with other types of disabilities. Research that gives an explanation for employer practices on entry and the remuneration differences amongst different types of disability may be lacking.

StatsSA (2014:14) states that different population groups are also affected differently when it comes to economic outcome and employment. The White population group had the highest proportions of employed persons, while the Black African population group had the lowest proportions across all functional domains. This is

disproportional considering that Black Africans have the highest prevalence of disability.

Furthermore, in the workplace, White and Indian/Asian population groups have substantially higher annual earnings compared to Coloureds and Black Africans, regardless of disability status. Black Africans with disabilities have the lowest income (R16 861) while their White counterparts earn four times this amount. Such gaps in earnings show that the economic status of persons with disabilities greatly varies across the different population groups (StatsSA, 2014:161).

On gender disparities, females were more marginalised in terms of employment compared to males because they are less likely to be employed despite statistics showing disability is more prevalent among females in South Africa. Further side-lining exists as it is reported that males with disabilities earn double what females in the same jobs earn, regardless of the degree of difficulty with a disability.

The overview of the phenomenon of disability in the workplace provides an in depth evaluation of the socially constructed concept of disability in the workplace through the above noticeable inconsistencies in employer practices towards employees with disabilities compared with employees without disability. Furthermore, upon evaluation of employer's current hiring, remuneration, promotion, retention and termination practices of employees with disabilities, evidence reveals challenges regarding equal treatment and upholding equitable rights on race and gender amongst all persons with disabilities as a sub-group in employment.

## 2.6. MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE

The purpose of the Employment Equity Act (1998:12) is to achieve equity in the workplace by;

- promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination;
- Implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups - defined as black people,

women and persons with disabilities - in order to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.

### 2.6.1. The requirements in management of employees with disability

Section 19 of the EEA (1998:19) states “that a designated employer must collect information and conduct an analysis, as prescribed, of its employment policies, practices, procedures and the working environment, in order to identify employment barriers which adversely affect people from designated groups.”

An analysis conducted in terms of the above must include a profile as prescribed, of the designated employer’s workforce within each occupational category and level in order to determine the degree of underrepresentation of people from designated groups in various occupational categories and levels in that employer’s workforce (EEA, 1998: 19). Once an analysis is done then the employer will be in a position to formulate affirmative action measure/objectives to be achieved.

Section 15 of the EEA of (1998:16- 17) states that;

- “1) Affirmative action measures are designed to ensure that suitably qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equitably represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workplace of a designated employer.
- 2) Affirmative action measure implemented by a designated employer must include ....
  - a) Measures to identify and eliminate employment barriers, including unfair discrimination which adversely affects people from designated groups;
  - b) Measures designed to further diversity in the workplace based on equal dignity and respect of all people;
  - c) Making reasonable accommodation for people from designated groups in order to ensure that they enjoy equal opportunities and are equitably represented in the workforce.”

This means that employers must not discriminate against any person, in this case the person with disabilities, and should employ and reasonably accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities (Thomas, 2002:4, 232; Crane and Matten, 2010:294). Ximba (2016:25) extends stating that affirmative action intends to compensate and correct visible and invisible barriers in the workplace and by so doing, promote constitutional and other legislation objectives.

The Minister of Labour published the Code of Good Practice on the Key Aspects of Disability in the Workplace on advice from the Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) to enable better regulation of matters concerning the management of persons with disabilities in the workplace (EEA, 1998:40).

SAHRC (2017:14) asserts that the Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects on the Employment of People with Disabilities 'was intended to help employers and employees understand their rights and obligations, promote certainty and reduce disputes to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy and exercise their rights at work'. It was further 'intended to help create awareness of the contributions persons with disabilities can make and to encourage employers to fully use the skills of such persons'. The expectation to reasonably accommodate employees with disability was further operationalised by the publication of the Department of Labour's Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with disabilities (SAHRC, 2017:14).

The Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities (TAG) which was intended to complement the Code published in August 2002 to assist with the practical implementation of aspects of legislation relating to the employment of persons with disabilities in the workplace. It builds on the aforementioned code, to set out practical guidelines and examples for employers, employees and trade unions on how to promote equality, diversity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination (Department of Labour, 2000:1).

These policies provide guidance for employers and the management of employees with disabilities. However, Van Staden (2011:06) states that although guidance to

employers toward disability management is provided, it is not linked to the performance indicators of all managers at all levels.

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) also developed a reference resource to guide and assist employers to harness the potential of their diverse workforces and to equip employers with the knowledge and tools to make South Africa's workplaces more accessible, more inclusive and more productive for persons with disabilities. The guide provides guidelines and information that cover ten important aspects relating to disability and employment. A range of strategies provided will assist employers and employees to improve employment outcomes for persons with disabilities and will increase diversity and a culture of inclusion in their workplaces (SAHRC Disability toolkit, 2015:4).

The toolkit outlines five key indicators for the monitoring framework, with an exhaustive checklist for employers, aligned to all the legislative requirements and code mentioned previously (SAHRC, 2015:30) namely;

- A: Employment profile
- B. Policy matters
- C. Reasonable Accommodation
- D. Communication
- E. General indicators

#### 2.6.2. The requirement to reasonably accommodate person with disabilities.

The Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities (2002:9, 10) states that reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities entails the following aspects:

- i) "Employers should reasonably accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities. The aim of the accommodation is to reduce the impact of the impairment of the person's capacity to fulfil the essential functions of a job." However, O'Mahony (2017:2) found that many disabled employees face reluctance from employers when it comes to making adjustments to their

workplace, regardless of how necessary they are. This resistance undermines the capability of employees with disabilities, who actually need to be accommodated in order to be productive.

ii) “Employers may adopt the most cost-effective means that are consistent with effectively removing the barrier to a person being able to perform the job, and to enjoy equal access to the benefits and opportunities of employment.

iii) Reasonable accommodation applies to applicants and employees with disabilities and may be required:

- during the recruitment and selection processes;
- in the working environment;
- in the way work is usually done and evaluated and rewarded; and
- in the benefits and privileges of employment.

iv) The obligation to make reasonable accommodation may arise when an applicant or employee voluntarily discloses a disability related accommodation need or when such a need is reasonably self-evident to the employer.

v) Employers must also accommodate employees when work or the work environment changes or impairment varies which affects the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job.

vi) The employer should consult the employee and, where practicable, technical experts to establish appropriate mechanisms to accommodate the employee.

vii) The particular accommodation will depend on the individual, the impairment and its effect on the person, as well as on the job and the working environment.

viii) Reasonable accommodation may be temporary or permanent, depending on the nature and extent of the disability.

ix) Examples of reasonable accommodation include:

- adapting existing facilities to make them accessible;
- adapting existing equipment or acquiring new equipment including computer hardware and software;
- re-organising work stations;
- changing training and assessment materials and systems;
- restructuring jobs so that non-essential functions are re-assigned;
- adjusting working time and leave;
- providing readers, sign language interpreters, and
- providing specialised supervision, training and support.

x) An employer may evaluate work performance against the same standards as other employees but the nature of the disability may require an employer to adapt the way performance is measured.” However, Van Staden (2011:186) found that there are limitations relating to performance management which are the fairness of the performance management process and uncertainty whether the performance standards to be used for persons with disabilities should be the same as for those employees without disabilities.

xi) “The employer need not accommodate a qualified applicant or an employee with a disability if this would impose an unjustifiable hardship on the business of the employer.

xii) Unjustifiable hardship is action that requires significant or considerable difficulty or expense and that would substantially harm the viability of the enterprise. This involves considering the effectiveness of the accommodation and the extent to which it would seriously disrupt the operation of the business.

xiii) An accommodation that imposes an unjustifiable hardship for one employer at a specific time may not be so for another or for the same employer at a different time.”

As clear as the Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities (2002:9,10) on reasonable accommodation may be,

managers are not trained in managing nor making these assessments, also in how this impacts on managing the performance of persons with disabilities. Accessibility and reasonable accommodation ultimately impacts on the performance of persons with disabilities (Van Staden, 2011:299).

Furthermore, there is a concern that employer perceptions determine what accommodation gets done. It emerged that the cost of accommodation is no longer about money spent on reasonable accommodation, but rather about time and effort spent trying to change negative attitudes of employers towards persons with disabilities in order to get them to implement reasonable accommodation (Maja et al, 2008:27). Ultimately, should employers persist to have negative attitudes, neglect their duty and/obligation to provide reasonable accommodation of persons with disabilities, it can be determined that these are acts of discrimination against an employee.

### 2.6.3. The requirement to remove barriers to access and participation

WPRPWD (2015:49) states that accessibility lies at the heart of the right to human dignity – being able to live as an equal resident in one’s community, being afforded respect for your personal space, having the right to equal opportunities and negotiating one’s life unhindered by man-made barriers. A number of articles in the UNCRPD requires State Parties to take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access, on an equal basis with others, the physical environment, transportation, information and communications as well as other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. This article is applicable to employers.

UNCRPD (2014) writes in article 20 on personal mobility that personal mobility as an important element of access and states that measures must be taken to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy personal mobility with the greatest possible independence in the manner and at the time of their choice, and at affordable cost (WPRPWD, 2015:49). However, in respect of accessibility, the researcher agrees with Van Staden (2011:7) who found that office buildings are generally not disability friendly resulting in a constraint to employing persons with disabilities and of those employed, are not able to work effectively.



#### 2.6.4. The requirement to ensure Disability Awareness and Education

Despite the efforts to increase awareness and sensitivity with regard to disability within South African legislation and policies, employees at work as well as individuals applying for work, still find themselves victims of discrimination because of their disability (Marumoagae, 2012:1).

The Code of Good practice on the Employment of Persons with disabilities (2002: 235) states that discrimination is a socially constructed action. It can thus be avoided by ensuring better knowledge, understanding and awareness about disabilities as well as the challenges encountered by persons with disabilities.

However, Marumoagae (2012:349) believes the (ideal of) elimination and prohibition of discrimination as desired by the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) 52 of 2002, alone, is not a guarantee of equality in practice. The appropriate response by employers to the PEPUDA (2002) requires that special and further deliberate measures are put in place to promote equal opportunities for members belonging to the more vulnerable group of persons with disabilities.

Marumoagae (2012: 350) states further that the Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects on the Employment of People with Disabilities was introduced to provide guidance for employers and employees regarding the promotion of equal opportunities and fair treatment for persons with disabilities as required by law.

Naudé and Delport (2004: 281) affirmed and identified the following factors as barriers preventing employers from achieving appropriate standards of disability management namely: lack of skills, inappropriate behaviour, negative attitudes, stereotypes and beliefs regarding employees with disability.

Ultimately employers are a barrier to the entry of persons with disabilities in the workplace due to their stigma and misconceptions about disability, as well as the lack of knowledge and inadequate skills to integrate persons with disabilities and accommodate persons with disability in the workplace (Naudé & Delport, 2004:271,

280). The attitudes and perceptions of colleagues and managers towards employees with disabilities hinder initiatives to employ them in the workplace (Ximba, 2016).

Disability awareness and training for managers is key for better outcomes in disability management, according to both the literature and the empirical study, it is found that the lack of knowledge regarding disability creates barriers in the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market and this should be addressed through awareness, specifically in a training programme for employers (Naudé & Delport, 2004:271, 280).

The SAHRC (2017:15) in a report evaluating progress on the broad status of Disability and Equality in South Africa from 2013-2017, revealed that, despite access to the guidelines on how to manage and create awareness (Dube, 2005:21), there has in reality been very little progress to address the challenges in the attitude of the employer.

In South Africa, studies undertaken by Marumoagae (2012) have revealed that the perceptions of some employers have caused insurmountable barriers for persons with disabilities to enter the labour market. Biased attitudes and unjustified perceptions are largely strengthened by widespread ignorance and a belief in stereotypes, which ultimately led to such persons being unfairly discriminated against in society at large and in employment in particular (Marumoagae, 2012:4).

The researcher concludes that there is value to be derived from addressing negative attitudes through awareness and education. And that awareness and education are key to successful management of employees with disability. Moreover, that after awareness and training is conducted there should be consequences for managers who perpetuate harmful attitudes and unfair practices against persons with disabilities.

#### 2.6.5. The requirement to ensure equitable career growth

It has been mentioned that the employment Equity act no 55 (1998: 12) protects persons with disabilities against unfair discrimination and then entitles them to affirmative action measures to access entry into the workplace as well as equal

treatment, advancement and equitable representation once employed. In this instance, the researcher refers to requirement in the EEA to ensure equality and equity by giving access to employment in all occupational levels for persons with disabilities.

Employers have a perception that persons with disabilities are low performers but they also do not accommodate them. Furthermore managers think that recruiting persons with disabilities would result in an increase in supervisory time, low productivity and frequent absence (Ximba, 2016:128). Ximba (2016:19) extends this stating that employers believe employees with disabilities will underperform in their roles and that it is costly to accommodate them.

Wendell (1996:58) explains the social construction of disability by stating that societies that are physically constructed and socially organized with the unacknowledged assumption that everyone is healthy, non-disabled, young but adult, shaped according to cultural ideals, and often male, create a great deal of disability through sheer neglect of what most people need in order to participate fully in them.

The neglect of needs in society is more applicable for persons with disabilities because employers are ignorant of the fact that employees with disability require reasonable accommodation in order to attain fair chances to work and progress (Sayce 2011:31; Dube 2005:15). Therefore employers will label persons with disabilities as low performers, therefore not deserving of high status job and positions, without evaluating first how enabling the workplace has been for performance of persons with disabilities, consequently their career growth. Du Plessis (2017:3) affirms, stating that the disparities experienced by persons with disabilities, the under-representation of persons with disability in the workplace is as a result of this social exclusion or inclusion on unfair terms.

According to Ximba (2016:149) the lack of accommodation ultimately reduces the opportunities available to employees with disabilities; thereby negatively affecting their career advancement and eventually also the retention of this employee group in the workplace (Jans, Jones and Kaye, 2011:526). Consequently persons with disabilities are not proportionally represented across the occupation levels in the

workplace, but rather occupy low status jobs or receive lower than average remuneration (SAHRC, 2017: 13).

Ultimately, the consequence of not accommodating employees mocks the legislative goals of employment equity and equality, that is, persons with disabilities must be given preferential opportunities for employment, while being reasonably accommodated and should also be given the opportunity for advancement within the workplace (Basson, 2017:8; Dube, 2005: 19).

## 2.7. EMPLOYER PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE

Employers hold negative perceptions and attitudes toward employees with disabilities. These are unfounded negative presumptions about persons with disabilities' performance levels, skills, work ethic, career advancement aspirations, absenteeism and costs of accommodation. Mathaphuna (2007:106) defines stereotypes as a set of attributes ascribed to a group and imputed to its individual members simply because they belong to that group. Cummings and Worley (2015:208) confirm that there is a perception from employers that employees with disabilities are more likely to have accidents and be less productive.

Grobler and Warnich (2011:78) found that managers have a low expectation of persons with disabilities finding suitable work in their employ. Furthermore, there is a perception among managers that employing persons with disabilities is a burden and an obligation, rather than an opportunity to gain the benefit of skilled employees.

The researcher believes that based on the negative perceptions of managers/employers stated above, it is inevitable that very little progress has been made to transform and achieve equality and equity in the workplace. It is therefore important to investigate whether the negative attitudes of managers and discrimination are contributors of challenges faced by managers of persons with disabilities.

Marumoagae (2012:1) states that a considerable amount of attention has been given to discrimination based on gender, race and religion, however little emphasis has been placed on the persisting discrimination of persons with disability within the

workplace. Ximba (2016:142) also found that having a disability not only impacts on the kind of responsibility allocated to an employee with disability, but also limits opportunities availed to such an employee at work compared with advancements made to redress gender disparities and racial equity in relation to employees without disabilities in the workplace.

Advancements for racial equity far exceed those made regarding gender and disability. However, efforts, knowledge and expertise required to redress disability, gender and racial equity are not the same in all aspects. Van Staden (2011:7) found that the role of human resource management and labour relations practitioners is not clearly defined in terms of disability management resulting in them not prioritising persons with disabilities as a designated group in terms of the EEA. Furthermore, employees with disabilities though employed to comply with the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, as with other designated groups since 1998, they continue to experience major challenges in the workplace with regards to inequality, discrimination, lack of progression and lack of transformation.

Employees with disabilities therefore do not only face obstacles in exercising the most important economic, political and social rights but also experience challenges with discriminatory practices in their employment (Crane, & Matten, 2010:296).

## 2.8. KEY ROLE OF MANAGERS IN DISABILITY MANAGEMENT

Organisations struggle to redress discriminatory barriers faced by employees with disabilities in the workplace because managers do not support the initiatives aimed at creating an accommodating workplace (Ximba, 2016: 86).

Line managers are gatekeepers for the employment success of employees with disabilities. Ximba (2016:190) states that management can play an active role in transforming organisations by changing perceptions of candidates with disabilities.

Kulkarni and Lengnick-Hall (2014:161) wrote on obstacles to success in the workplace for persons with disabilities, revealing that employer decisions regarding employing persons with disabilities are made out of ignorance. Employers had preconceived performance expectations, judgments and decisions made about persons with disabilities who they had not yet employed nor meaningfully interacted

with. Van Staden (2011: 6) states managers and supervisors do not understand disability resulting in deciding not to employ persons with disabilities due to lack of knowledge and negative perceptions they may have of persons with disabilities.

“Having a supportive workplace culture, supervisor, co-workers, and a demanding job are all contributors to having greater chances of promotion” states Ximba (2016:82).

Therefore it can be said that a predictor of employment success with persons with disabilities is management support. Colleagues of employees with severe disabilities experience anxiety and the onus is on managers to fight the stigma against employees with disabilities (Grobler and Warnich, 2011:77).

Employees with longer absences due to injury resulting in disability in the workplace, were more likely to return to work if their supervisor showed interest in their return to work and actively showed flexibility about reasonably accommodating them (McLellan, Pransky & Shaw, 2001:34). An early return to work is likely to lead to job retention.

The researcher agrees that good employer and employee relationships are deliberately developed and maintained to enhance employee morale and wellbeing. Cummings and Worley (2015:509) supports that stating that; negative workplace experiences such as unfair treatment, discriminatory practices, poor peer and boss relationships, lack of support, over or under workload, role conflict and ambiguity are workplace stressors. These can lead to low levels of happiness at work, low productivity and nervous symptoms.

Colleagues and supervisors are the greatest source of these discriminatory practices because negative stereotypes or prejudices form invisible barriers which limit the potential of PWDs and adversely influence their self-esteem (Ximba, 2016:44).

Kali (2006:12) established that supervisors/line managers are aware of and see the link between employees having happy experiences at work and the positive effect of those experiences on employee productivity. Therefore, negative experiences that affect productivity are directly opposed to the supervisor's primary responsibility of

maintaining a productive work environment and promotion of employee development.

In this subsection it is established that managers do have negative perceptions and attitudes about employees with disability. The researcher believes when investigating management challenges, the manager's awareness of the link between a negative relationship with an employee with disabilities and that employee's level of productivity, job satisfaction/happiness and turnover should be scrutinised. There is a need to investigate challenges that a manager may have with being supportive of an employee with disabilities and creating a culture of inclusion.

## 2.9. THE PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES REGARDING THEIR LINE MANAGERS

Employees with disabilities are aware that employers hold negative perceptions and attitudes toward them. They are also aware of unfounded negative presumptions about their performance levels and skills, work ethics, career advancement aspirations, absenteeism and costs of accommodation. The unhappiness of persons with disabilities in the workplace has been examined.

Ximba (2016:142) reports that he found that most employees with disabilities wanted managers to address their career advancement challenges, create inclusive and accommodative environments at work. Participants felt that management connections with them were lacking and that managers should create a trusting environment where persons with disabilities feel valued for their contributions.

Wendell, (1996:59) states that disability is socially constructed by the failure to give people the amount and kind of help they need to participate fully, attain opportunities in all major aspects of life in the society, including making a significant contribution in the form of work.

According to O'Mahony (2017:3) the prevailing culture in some workplaces is that PWDs don't feel comfortable being open about their health condition or disability. "PWDs are afraid they will be wrongly viewed as less capable, passed over for promotion or even lose their job," she explains. Therefore, employees with disability would rather not disclose regarding their disability than be discriminated against by

managers, ultimately affecting their success in employment, due to discrimination on the grounds of having a disability.

## 2.10. THE MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES AT ESKOM

### 2.10.1. Eskom's profile as an employer of persons with disabilities

Eskom Holdings SOC (LTD) is an electricity utility within the energy sector. It is South Africa's major electricity supplier with government as the sole shareholder, making it a parastatal. Eskom's core business comprised of divisions which include operations in capital expansion, generation, transmission and distribution of electricity (Eskom Integrated report, 2018:2).

The organisation is a state owned enterprise therefore remains a strategic instrument for government to meet its transformation objectives for the country at large. During the end of the financial year of March 2016, Eskom employed 42 214 permanent employees, making it a designated employer, which means an employer who employs 50 or more employees or an employer as described in Chapter one of the Employment Equity Act (EEA, 1998:1).

Eskom is a male dominated technical industry requiring physically fit employees who are able to climb and work at heights to be able to attend to electricity wires and cables business which is the largest portion of Eskom infrastructure business (Dube, 2007: 4).

In 2016, Eskom's target was to employ two point five percent PWDs of the total workforce. The organisation achieved three point seven percent (3.7%) (Eskom Employment Equity Report, 2016:2).

Eskom employed a total of 1276 employees with disabilities, which was 3.03% of the total workforce in March 2017. Therefore Eskom achieves consistently and significantly above the public sector and open labour market, who all have not yet met the two percent (2%) target set by the South African government.

Eskom employs more male employees with disabilities 949 (65%), and a total of 327 (25%) female employees with disabilities of the 3.03% staff complement of



employees with disability in the organisation. In the interest of gender equality among persons with disabilities, these statistics need to be improved as ultimately there are more females with disability in the country than males.

The racial demographics among PWDs at Eskom is as follows; 892 (69%) black Africans employees are in the majority, followed by 382 (29%) are White employees, 96 (7.5%) are Coloured employees and 38 (2.9%) are Indian employees (Employment Equity Report 2017:6).

The analysis of the proportional representation at occupational levels reveals that 1165 (91%) employees with disabilities are in non – managerial positions within the organisation, while only 108 (9%) at managerial level positions. Therefore persons with disabilities are not well represented at management levels. Further analysis of management levels reveals that at senior management persons with disabilities are underrepresented at 0.3%. At top management level in the organisation, there is no representation of persons with disabilities at top management.

However, further analysis of managers with disabilities reveals disparities, in that 46% of managers with disabilities are within the white population group, followed by 39% African, 7.5% coloured, 7.4% Indian. Therefore the White and Indian population groups are disproportional and over-represented at management amongst person with disabilities.

The most prevalent disability types are;

- Disorders of Bones, Muscles & Joints e.g. walking (37%)
- Disorders of Eyes: partial or total blindness (for example – complications from Albinism) (18%)
- Disorders of Ear, Nose & Throat, partial and total deafness (15%)
- Disorders of Brain & Nervous System e.g. epilepsy (11%)
- Mental, Emotional & Behavioural e.g. bipolar, alcoholism, schizophrenia (7.3%)
- Disorders of Heart & Circulation e.g. effect from heart attack/stroke (2.4%)
- Disorders of Endocrine system: complications from diabetes (1.6%)
- Disorders of Respiratory System e.g. complication with lung cancer (1.6%)

- Disorders of Skin, Hair & Nails e.g. (for example – complications from Albinism) (1.3%)
- Disorders of Urinary and Reproductive System (1.11%)
- Blood Disorders Hematopoietic System for example - leukaemia (0.69%)
- Disorders of Digestive System: example complications from stomach and pancreatic cancers. (0.62%).

In Eskom most persons with disability have a visible physical disability.

#### 2.10.2. Eskom Employment Equity affirmative action

According to the Employment Equity Act No 55 (1998: 18), “every designated employer must, in order to achieve employment equity, implement affirmative action measures for people from designated groups. It prescribes that the designated employer must;

- Consult with its employees
- Conduct an analysis
- Prepare an employment equity plan and subsequently report to the Director- General on progress made in implementing its employment equity plan, as required by section 21.”

Eskom’s Employment Equity plan was based on consultation conducted by management with designated groups and on an analysis on employment equity matters, for the year March 2016 - March 2017. The plan and subsequent report listed five disability related objectives, out of the total nine objectives, addressing issues related to designated groups in the Employment Equity Plan for the year 2016/17.

Eskom reported that it had partially met the objectives set out in the Employment Equity Plan 2016/2017, conceding that there was a need to expedite transformation and had adopted a “business unusual” stance. To that effect, the objectives that were not attained in the 2016 EE Plan were included in the 2017-2020 Plan. The organisation had put in place rigorous monitoring mechanism to ensure that these will be implemented (Eskom Employment Equity Report Analysis, November 2017: 14).

- Objective 2: Eskom addressing the requirement to reasonably accommodate employees with disabilities, committing to assess and provide reasonable accommodation for 20% (254) of persons with disabilities in March 2016.
- A lack of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in terms of accessible transport. It was decided in 2014 that Eskom buses would be accommodated within a kilometre from their place of dwelling. Where a bus is not available, Eskom would assist with reasonable alternatives. Details of the reasonable accommodation measures were written into the Reasonable Accommodation of Employees with Disabilities Standard to guide managers.
- Eskom reported by March 2017 to have exceeded the target by reasonably accommodating 707 (53%) employees with disabilities.

The reasonable accommodation provided was through provision of alternative work placement, work output adjustments/change in outputs, flexible work hours and related arrangements, workstation adjustments post occupational assessment. Furthermore, Eskom reported to have accommodated a total of 1170 (90%) of employees with disabilities by March 2018. Eskom purchased 35 assistive devices such as wheelchairs, car modification, co-payment with medical aids on hearing aid and prosthetics as well as assistive equipment and aids such as employee specific laptops, sign language interpreter services, braille translation services to the total value of 1, 2million for all of the above by March 2018.

- Objective 3: Eskom addressing the requirement to ensure accessibility of the physical environment for person with disabilities and removal of physical barriers. Eskom building was built in 1928 right through to 1980s, prior to 2011, when the building regulations were amended to include accessibility considerations for persons with disabilities. Eskom committed to conduct access audit of 200 buildings 31 March 2017. According to the WPRPWD (2015:49) the UNCRPD requires state parties to take appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access, on an equal basis with others, the physical environment, transportation, information and communications as well as other facilities and services.

Eskom, in order to ensure identification of barriers in the environment, developed an audit tool based on the South Africa National Standard (SANS

10400:2011) which provides deemed-to-satisfy requirements for compliance with part S (Facilities for Persons with Disabilities) of the National Building Regulations. The regulations were issued in terms of the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act, 1977 (Act No. 103 of 1977) was reproduced in annex A of the Act.

The audit gave a snapshot of a building highlighting areas of improvement; thereby making it an essential tool for producing an accessibility action plan.

Eskom reported to have far exceeded the target of 200 buildings and audited all 745 Eskom buildings by end of March 2017 across South Africa providing a comprehensive defect report. By March 2018, 33% of non-conformances found in Eskom buildings identified as barriers to the physical environment were addressed.

- Objective 4: Eskom committed to expose 20% (8 381) employees in March of 2016 to disability awareness programme. By 31 March 2017, Eskom had developed awareness training for classroom and e-Learning modules, conducted train-the-trainer nationwide, tracked, registered attendees and reported on Eskom's learning management system. However, by March 2017, only 6% (1086) of employees were exposed to Disability Awareness with low uptake on the online training especially. However, by March 2018, with a drive for classroom training across the organisation by transformation office, 35.39% (14 209) of employees were exposed to disability awareness with 10% of that group being employees in managerial positions in the workforce.
- Objective 7: Eskom committed to identify 10 persons with disabilities at professionally qualified levels for accelerated development aimed at senior management roles. By March 2017, 12 employees with disabilities had attended Eskom's middle management programme which equips employees are junior management for middle management roles. Furthermore 15 employees at non- managerial positions were trained on Personal Leadership for employees with disabilities. A programme specifically designed to increase the capacity of employees for personal leadership and creating agency to self-represent and drive organisational changes required for persons with disabilities.

- Additions to the objectives in the 2016/17 plan were undertakings to improve the proportional representation of persons with disabilities at all occupational levels. The organisation needed to set a goal of attaining a 2.5% target per occupational level by 2020. By March 2018, Eskom still had no persons with disabilities represented at top management. However at representation at senior management had increased from 0.3% in 2017 to 1.2%. Representation at professional level has risen to 2.06% just shy of the 2.5% target.
- In 2014, Eskom did not have a disability policy. The reasonable accommodation provided to employees was inadequate. (Eskom Employment Equity Plan March 2015: 12). In May 2015 a Disability Policy was written into company policy with an annexure detailing the process for reasonable accommodation including the process on acquiring an assistive device. Persons with disabilities are not fully accommodated in terms of accessibility and training materials (Eskom Employment Equity Report April 2015:11). Accommodation will extend to learning and development (Eskom Employment Equity Plan March 2016:11). By March 2018, Eskom had procured and installed the latest version of computer software programme called JAWS. JAWS stands for, Job Access With Speech. It is the world's most popular screen reader, developed for computer users whose vision loss prevents them from seeing screen content or navigating with a mouse. JAWS provided speech output for the most popular computer applications on the personal computer. This tool was made available to all employees, with vision loss or impairment, who utilise personal computers for the purposes of enabling optimal performance of work outputs.

### 2.10.3. Eskom's policy on disability in the workplace

Eskom's disability policy introduces the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 as the basis to create an environment within which employees have a right to a workplace that is completely free from unfair discrimination and provides equal opportunities to all. The disability policy

captures the transformation agenda of Eskom Holding SOC (LTD), which means a strategic direction that the organisation takes to drive diversity and inclusion. The transformation agenda is a philosophy supported by objectives that drive diversity that is inclusive of employees with disabilities at Eskom (Eskom Employment Equity Plan, 2016:1; Eskom Disability Policy, 2015:2).

Eskom defines diversity in broad terms, as any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. It means respect for and appreciation of the differences in ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, education, race, religion, different perspectives, work experiences, life styles and cultures (Eskom Disability Policy Draft, 2019:9).

Eskom's diversity and inclusion philosophy is a belief that diversity and inclusion is a strategic business imperative that is essential to make Eskom great, that it should be leadership driven and is levered through organisational values, embracing, valuing and leveraging on a rich mosaic of employees, experiences, background and expertise, not a programme but "who we are and how we live", that commitment to diversity and inclusions underpins all Eskom's human resource policies and practices, and all their dealing with customers, suppliers and stake holders (Eskom Employment Equity policy 2011:6).

Eskom's policy states that transformation at Eskom is a strategic business imperative and therefore the disability policy is intended to address both the legislative provisions and the broader transformation of the business. To that end, the transformation agenda is founded on the elimination of barriers and unfair discrimination in employment as well as the adoption of positive and practical measures to redress imbalances which are an important component of this process, and the policy is a necessary step towards the achievement of equity and the promotion of human dignity (Eskom Disability Policy, 2015:2).

The Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities (2002:1) is based on the constitutional principle that no one may unfairly discriminate against a person on the grounds of disability and services to help employers and employees to understand their rights and obligations, promote certainty, and reduce disputes to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy and exercise their rights to work.

The Code also aims to facilitate the creation of awareness of the contributions that persons with disabilities can make and to encourage employers to fully utilise the skills and capabilities of persons with disabilities (Code of Good Practice on the Employment of People with Disabilities (2002:6).

This policy supports these and focuses on creating awareness of the contributions that persons with disabilities can make and to encourage the organisation to fully utilise the skills and capabilities of persons with disabilities. The organisation has a broad transformation agenda that embraces diversity broadly but specifically race, gender and disability diversity across occupational levels in order to achieve equity (Eskom Disability Policy, 2015:3).

Eskom's Disability Policy framework is aligned to the strategic pillars identified by the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2015) to ensure Eskom and all key stakeholders fulfil the responsibility of realising the rights of employees with disabilities as applicable in the workplace in order to eliminate the persistent systemic discrimination and exclusion experienced by persons with disabilities in general (Eskom Disability Policy Draft, 2019:3).

Eskom Disability Policy (2015:7) states that the purpose of the Disability Policy is to ensure that all promote equity, equality, and ensure all unfair discriminatory practices that serve as barriers for employees with disabilities are eliminated in the business.

Eskom identified the need for a disability policy to address the inability to reasonably accommodate employees with disabilities. The lack of policy was found to be a barrier to equitable employment of persons with disabilities. (Employment Equity Plan 2016/17:13) and subsequently implemented a policy and reasonable accommodation. Van Staden (2011:7) found that persons with disabilities are not being reasonably accommodated because employers do not have policy documents in place to guide them in making decisions in providing reasonable accommodation to employees.

## 2.11. CONCLUSIONS

Many studies focus on the perceptions and experiences of employees with disabilities regarding their line managers and the workplace. The researcher believes

this area is well researched. The findings are consistent. Employees with disabilities report that their experiences of work and their managers are to a great extent negative. There is adequate research on the existing negative attitudes of employers toward persons with disabilities as described by PWDs and human resources managers. Of high concern are areas where discriminatory practices persist in the workplace resulting in the lack of progress in attainment of equity and equality for person with disabilities, which ultimately harms persons with disabilities and organisations.

However, research needs to be conducted with managers of employees with disabilities regarding their challenges with the phenomenon of disability and also to determine and explore, as described by them, the disability management challenges they experience.



## CHAPTER 3:

### THE ROLE OF THE EAP IN ENHANCING THE MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

#### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

The social work profession has a strong history of working with and on behalf of the disadvantaged and oppressed people in society (Mackelprang, 2013:12). Chitereka (2010:90) adds that social workers have been committed to assisting people that are “disenfranchised” by systems in society; this has always distinguished them from other helping professions.

In the social welfare context, Chitereka (2010:90) states that the role of social workers concerning persons with disabilities is to raise awareness regarding issues of disability in society because negative attitudes toward them and beliefs about having disability still exist. Social workers also have an advocacy role where they can lobby government to pass legislation specifically in aid of persons with disabilities (Chitereka, 2010:91).

It is important to also acknowledge however, that persons with disabilities are able to self-advocate, change the position of social exclusion and discrimination, and have a right to self-representation (WPRPWD, 2016: 9). Therefore social workers should enable the empowerment and growth of self-advocacy of persons with disabilities by forming respectful partnerships with individuals having disabilities. Social workers must respect the self-knowledge, strengths, and capabilities of all people (Clute, 2013:7). Based on the ethical values of the profession, social workers have the capacity to respect and enhance people’s worth, human rights and dignity of all people (SACSSP, 2019: 6). As persons with disabilities were previously deprived of worth, human rights and dignity in South Africa, they now deserve and require a deliberate approach and effort in support and empowerment.

### 3.2. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES IN THE WORKPLACE

The Employee Assistance Programme is a workplace resource based on core technologies or functions, to enhance employee and workplace effectiveness through prevention, identification and resolution of personal and productivity issues (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2015:1).

Van Wyk (2011:132) defines EAP as a confidential and professional service provided as an employee benefit, which complements and extends in-company resources in the constructive and supportive management of people impacted by concerns in their personal and work lives, for the purpose of improving the quality of life.

Du Plessis (2001:103) states that most organisations in South Africa employ social workers as EAPs, although it is also a multi-disciplinary field. Furthermore, social workers have traditionally been the profession of choice for internal EAPs due to their diverse set of skills and their ability to address both the macro issues of the organization and to intervene directly with employees on an individual (micro)level (Jacobson & Hosford- Lamb, 2008: 18).

Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009:319) write that advanced occupational social work practice entails comprehensive and integrated practice, across the full range of macro (community, organisational and national/organisational management ) level , meso (group/worker organisations, supervisory structure/families) and micro (individual/employee) levels (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:1).

In this study therefore, social workers as EAP are well positioned to play a significant role regarding disability management in the workplace. Therefore the researcher believes that EAPs can address and influence issues on an organisational/macro level such as organisational diversity philosophy and disability policies, intervene regarding management practices in the management of persons with disabilities located at a group/meso level as well as intervene directly to assist managers and employees with disabilities on an individual basis at micro level.

### 3.3. EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME AT ESKOM

Eskom understands the importance of its employees' well-being and strives through its integrated health and wellness programme to promote a safe and healthy working environment that will enable its employees to stay healthy, productive, happy, and resilient and engaged throughout their working lives at Eskom. The policy aims to comply with all applicable statutory requirements (Eskom Health and Wellness policy, 2010:3).

According to Eskom EAP Standard (2018:1) EAP is a fundamental service aimed at promoting psycho-social wellbeing of all employees. EAP is viewed as a crucial function that forms part of the health and wellness services offered to all employees and their immediate families. Eskom recognises that EAP delivers a comprehensive, quality service to three target groups: organisational management (inclusive of executives), all employees at various levels, and their family members (Eskom EAP standard, 2018:1).

Eskom EAP Standard (2018:3) defines EAP service further as a therapeutic, confidential and voluntary short-term intervention aimed at assisting employees with psychological, social and work related stressors affecting productivity in the workplace. EAP is provided by the employer at no cost to the employees and their families as an employee benefit.

According to Le Roux (2019/03/15) Eskom started employing social workers as EAPs since around 1982. In 2012 Eskom employed 13 social workers as EAPs. Eskom utilises the social worker profession practice guidelines, requires SACSSP registration for EAP as well as utilises the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:1) as a basis for EAP operations with the organisation. Along with social work practice techniques, there are six core technologies and 27 minimum standards that must be present within an EAP (Eskom EAP Framework, 2012:1).

### 3.3.1. History of EAP at Eskom

The longest internal EAP in Eskom service, Le Roux (2019/03/15) shared that he joined Eskom in 1990. He remembers well that there were about or at least 30 internal EAP's 28 years ago when he joined. Eskom also had student social worker interns who joined Eskom as part of their practical training. The focus of EAP was mitigation of substance abuse and providing a trauma response for critical incidents. Eskom utilised an internal centralised EAP model.

EAP function was responsible for meeting all psycho-social needs as required by the organisation. Internal EAP relied upon an independent network of social workers and psychologists in private practice to service employees in the event of a traumatic incident, services offered were subject to the employee's medical aid funds and the availability of those professionals.

Neither independent psychologist nor social workers could be obligated to provide a therapeutic report for the organisation's labour relations processes (HREXCO Submission, EAP Business case, 2015:6), placing liability for any inadequate service on the internal EAP.

However, upon evaluation in 2005, the EAP model utilised at Eskom was changed to align with the organisational value of providing adequate, equitable and accessible EAP services to all employees across the business. It was established that an internal EAP model only comprising of 14 social workers, at that time, was not best practice for an organisation the size of Eskom for various reasons.

Some problems were encountered with the "internal EAP model" regarding the EAP to employee ratio. The ratio of EAP to employee was 1:3000, with 42 214 permanent employees at Eskom, their dependents and a vast number of sites with extensive geographical spread (Eskom EAP Report, 2018:1).

- Internal EAPs did not have a contractual agreement to guarantee a service or priority with independent/community resources, to ensure timeous response to Eskom employees/dependents especially in respect of trauma debriefing which requires a 48 hours at best or up to 72 hour response post incident.

- EAP had to ensure community resources dispatched to the Eskom crisis situation should be registered professionals who were specialised in trauma.
- EAP had to ensure managers who were dealing with a crisis situation would be provided with immediate support and advice while the same EAP professional was on route.
- Employees and family members affected by a crisis situation needed to be provided with immediate and on-going support.
- An additional “safety net” counselling service for all those employees who ignored the onsite trauma debriefing or who may have experienced a delayed response needed to be available. Internal EAP were not shift workers therefore EAP services would not be available at crisis moments occurring after hours. Therefore it was possible for the affected employee, their team or colleagues and their dependents not to receive a timeous service in cases of deaths in service, electrical contact, motor vehicle accident related injuries/fatalities of employees and/or contractors that required greater capacity. (HREXCO Submission, EAP Combination model Business case, 2015:6).
- Immediate assistance was not available, when required in some instances, to employees and their dependents. Internal EAP had liability in respect of issues they did not have oversight over as mentioned above.

At a minimum the scope of EAP services required, in any given year encompassed a response to injuries, fatalities and death in service of the organisation. In 2016/17 it is reported that Eskom had ten employee and contractor fatalities. According to the Eskom Integrated Report (2018:59, 109, 113) Eskom had 15 employee and contractor fatalities in the year 2017/18. During the year 2017/18, Eskom lost 190 employees due to deaths in service. It can be expected that in respect of each incident either employees and/or dependents required psychosocial services as per the Eskom Fatality response protocol (2015:6) which states that EAP must conduct trauma defusing within 24 hours to affected/impacted employees and family members. Therefore Eskom requires a 24/7/365 trauma counselling service as well as capacity and ability to respond within 3 – 4 hours anywhere in the country on work related and personal trauma.

As per Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2015:15) the EAP offers trauma-defusing and trauma debriefing services for employees, family members, and the organization in extreme situations. In an environment such as Eskom, accidents and trauma, however undesirable, will always be an occurrence due to the nature of the work. It is therefore essential that the above minimum criteria are met in order to adequately and timeously deal with trauma to lessen or prevent long-term difficulties or dysfunction at both the individual and organisational levels (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2015:15).

### 3.3.2. Eskom EAP combination Model

The evaluation of EAP services in 2005 brought a strategic change to the model used to deliver EAP services. For the last 14 years, a combination model has been used by Eskom to provide a comprehensive psychosocial service for employees. The current EAP model is mainly made-up of: Internal EAP team (13 social workers), servicing the entire staff complement for the organisation as well as an external EAP service rendered by a contracted external service provider. The Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2015:1) states that the ratio applicable for Eskom would be one (1) EAP professional for every 500 employees for a combination model with a decentralised workforce, outsourcing the therapeutic services and rendering other services internally. In combination model, certain services will be provided internally for example intake, assessment, training, while other services for example clinical/counselling will be outsourced (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2015:8).

The use of a combination model presented an effective, sustainable and cost effective service, designed to deliver on the full scope of EAP psychosocial services to the business. Eskom implemented a cost reduction strategy of contracting with external service provider reduced employee coverage percentage of 60% based on a 45 % historical engagement and EAP service utilisation rate over the previous 9 years.

An external only EAP model would also not be ideal at Eskom. Large organisations have complex systems and internal dynamics. As earlier mentioned in this chapter, advanced occupational social work practice delivers comprehensive and integrated practice, across the full range of macro (community, organisational and

national/organisational management) level, meso (group/worker organisations, supervisory structure/families) and micro (individual/employee) levels (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:1; Van Breda and Du Plessis, 2009:319), the internal EAP is well positioned with a vantage point to guide all three levels of intervention required. Internal EAPs work within an integrated human resource value chain. As well as the organisation's safety programme mitigating behavioural risks in human resources management. Human resource management interfaces with EAP in cases of grievances, disciplinary (substance abuse, sexual harassment and workplace bullying), retention, talent management, change management, absenteeism management and sick leave abuse, issues of remuneration and benefits, leadership styles and staff morale. Provision of support and assistance of EAP is written into Eskom organisational policies and procedures affecting all these processes such as the Eskom Procedure for the Management of Sickness Absence, Sexual harassment procedure and Eskom Code of Conduct.

The occupational health, wellness and safety department proactively interfaces with EAP to support the mitigation of accidents/incidents due to behavioural risk. EAP flags issues of fatigue management and psycho-social issues as they occur in the organisation.

EAP risk management entails elevating attention to high risk cases. These are those presenting with suicide risk/ideation, substance abuse on duty, safety risk and manic/psychotic episode) leading to human error, injury on duty and fatalities. Other services include collaboration at wellness days.

Empowered with capacity, EAP has been able to ensure that managers/supervisors have the time to manage key outputs rather than having to undertake disciplinary or performance management processes as a result of employee issues that could be better resolved through EAP services. EAP has been incorporated as part of the managers' toolbox for managing behaviour and performance. Managers are the first line of contact; they are able to proactively identify employees who may need assistance before their problems affect performance. The manager is able to conduct an early referral to internal EAP, thus preventing productivity and safety issues. Managers can manage outputs and be effective in demonstrating a culture

of care and support in the organisation through EAP referral, thereby demonstrate good leadership qualities.

### 3.3.3. Impact EAP in Eskom

Manganyi (2015:19) wrote that there is a need to calculate, demonstrate and communicate the value of EAP. Manganyi (2015:19) highlighted the EAP has a positive impact on reduction of health care costs, medical claims, mental health, disability and workers' compensation costs.

He added that EAP can have a good impact in reducing the indirect cost of the impact of unmanaged absenteeism, presenteeism, high turnover and low employee engagement through their interventions. Finally EAP has an organizational value which involves reducing the potential for unmanaged risks of safety management, legal liability, culture change, worker morale and other secondary impacts from escalating.

The employee assistance programme (EAP) also offers counselling, financial wellness, various wellness programmes and other psychosocial preventative programmes. The EAP utilisation was about 12.6% for the year 2018, exceeding the public sector average of 10.7%. The top four problems presented to the EAP were relationship issues, stress, organisational concerns and trauma. Employees with financial challenges are offered debt counselling and coaching on managing their finances (Eskom Integrated Report, 2018:113). The overall utilisation of EAP services per annum has been an average of 45% of employees over the last 14 years.

### 3.3.4. The absence of an EAP role regarding disability management at Eskom

EAP already plays a role in the management of mental health conditions however EAP does not play a role in managing mental health disability in Eskom. The researcher believes that there is an opportunity for EAP to play a role in the management of mental health disability in the workplace. Eskom employs 105 (7.3% of the population of employees with disability) employees who are categorised as having the mental/emotional health type of disability (Employment Equity Report 2018:7).



A mental health condition can also constitute a disability if the following criteria are in place, according to Employment Equity Act no 55 of 1998. Mental health conditions are considered as disabilities when:

- (i) the person has had a long term (12 months or longer) or recurring mental health condition
- (ii) is diagnosed to have a mental impairment,
- (iii) the condition substantially limits their prospects of entry into or advancement in employment

Therefore depending on the duration of the diagnosed mental health condition, the severity of functional limitation on working, communicating, learning etc. and requirement for a long term medical and psychological support, monitoring and intervention, along with workplace reasonable accommodation to maintain productivity, therefore that person may be classified to have mental health disability.

However, in the EAP reports, both internally and externally, there is no detailed categorisation highlighting mental health disabilities given. Therefore, Eskom does not have records of assistance given by EAP to employees who have mental health disabilities.

EAP reports however include information on assistance given to employees with mental health condition, where EAP actively intervenes. In the year 2018, it was found that 4.6% of 981 cases reported were of mental/psychiatric conditions (not identified as disabilities in the report). This category comprises of clinical and non-clinical cases of mostly depression, anxiety disorders, self-harm, post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychiatric disorders (EAP report: 2018:3). Therefore it is not known how many of these cases are of people assessed and classified to have mental/behavioural disability.

In EAP reporting at Eskom, on assistance given by EAP to employees with disabilities, there is one (1) case of an employee with muscular skeletal disability attended to by EAP for post disabling injury trauma counselling (Eskom EAP report: 2018:3).

Generally, specific mention of the types of assistance given to employees with disability is not recorded. In addition, EAP do not capture or specifically mention any assistance or support given to managers of employees with disabilities on disability management related matters. Furthermore, specific information detailing the types of workplace issues experienced by employees with disabilities reported to EAP is also not reported (Eskom EAP report, 2018:3).

Therefore the researcher believes that the number of interventions that EAP may have had concerning persons with disabilities and their managers will be underreported as they are not captured as such in EAP reporting.

Based on the information provided on the history of EAP, Eskom EAP combination model, the positive impact of EAP within the organisation and finally the absence of an EAP role regarding disability management at Eskom the researcher concludes that EAP has capacity to realise an opportunity to leverage on EAP services resource and skills in order to intervene in the disability management in the workplace.

### 3.4. THE EAP POSITIONED TO ENHANCE THE MANAGEMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The researcher believes that the meaningful employment, inclusion and capable management of employees with disabilities in the workplace should be an Employee Assistance Programme and practitioner concern.

Social workers, in all contexts, should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, colour, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and disabilities (Clute, 2013:6). As it stands, social workers acknowledge the identities, cultures, experiences, insights, and goals of all persons (Clute, 2013:7). Therefore EAP can potentially support diversity and enhance inclusive workplace practices (Mor Barak, 2000:339).

The researcher believes this makes social workers unique role players in enhancing the management of employees with disabilities because they possess inherent values for embracing diversity. The value of embracing diversity positions EAP to coach managers on the enhancement of diversity in the workplace. Inclusion can be created if leaders demonstrate it through their actions, beliefs and a commitment to diversity. As they do this, they create opportunities for dialogue about differences, and when required, even altering rules for acceptable behaviours (Mathur, Sudarshan, Verma, Mathur, Thakur, Chopra, Srivastava, Gupta, Dasmahapatra, Fonia & Gandhi, 2015: 328).

Social workers should challenge social injustice and poor employment practices with and on behalf of vulnerable groups, and should also strive to ensure access to needed information, resources and services, equality of opportunity and meaningful participation in decision making for all people affected by adverse conditions (SASSCP, 2019:6). Jacobson and Hosford-Lamb (2008:18) supported this, stating that internal EAPs are in fact more likely to engage in employee advocacy by virtue of being positioned within the workplace.

EAP practitioners are strategically positioned to be agents of change on disability matters, able to render services not only to the individuals and their families but also to groups in an organisation such a management group and to the organisation itself (Bouwer; 2009:389; Van Breda and Du Plessis (2009:319). As change agents serving the organisation, EAPs who address social injustice in the workplace can prevent liability for the employer where cases of discrimination could arise (Van Wyk, 2011:130).

The advocacy of EAP is not an unknown concept. Bhoodram (2010:90) writes that various labour related legislations have played a significant role in the development of EAPs in South Africa. Legislation provides an environment in the workplace where the health and well-being of employees is protected by multiple precepts, and also albeit indirectly, provides a mandate for EAP services and advocacy (Bhoodram, 2010: 90). The EAP from a direct and indirect advocacy approach is well positioned to enhance the management of persons with disabilities.

### 3.5. EAP GUIDANCE ON MANAGEMENT OF DISABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

The supportive role of EAP toward supervisors/managers in the management of people in general is recognised. Simelani (2007:67) states that it is important that EAP should be viewed as an organisational asset which can play an important role in helping those in a position of authority to resolve complex work performance problems.

According to Bhoodram (2010:59), EAPs are well positioned to support supervisors and to address challenges they experience in their role as managers. The EAP is grounded in human resource management consultation orientation; it has the requisite skills and offers a wide range of opportunities to support managers to carry out their responsibilities (Bhoodram, 2010: 85).

Social workers both inside and outside the workplace recognise the importance of human relationships. They engage people as partners in the helping process and seek to strengthen relationships among human beings in a purpose effort to promote, restore, maintain and enhance the wellbeing of individuals, families, groups, organisations and communities (SACSSP, 2019:7). Therefore EAP professionals have the unique knowledge and skill that fits with people management skills.

EAP Professionals will have to intervene in organisations to instil knowledge of diversity, discrimination and empowerment and initiate interventions on diversity training, support and mentorship programmes (Bhoodram 2010:76). They can prepare the workplace to be responsive to the needs of people with mental health conditions (as well as other disabilities) and prepare managers and employees to meet workplace expectations by helping to identify and negotiate appropriate accommodation (Akabas & Gates, 2002:1).

### 3.6. THE POTENTIAL EAP ROLE IN ENHANCING THE MANAGEMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

EAPs have evolved significantly from their original conception, impacted by market changes (Sandys, 2015:1). There is an interest in how EAP can play a role with employment and retention of persons with mental health conditions, in the improvement of the understanding of mental illness and how these lessons can be generalised to other types of disabilities (Akabas & Gates, 2002:5).

EAP will typically be involved when employees experience personal and work related problems. However, the researcher believes the EAP role regarding persons with disabilities in the workplace needs to become dynamic and proactive. This means when EAP intervenes with both the employer organisation and the managers of employees with disabilities, EAP can potentially mitigate inevitable work related issues that result from a lack of capable management of persons with disabilities.

Naudé and Delport (2004:281) wrote that the process of integrating persons with disability into the workplace has been difficult for employers. Social workers are better suited to assist in this integration process as they have the required skills and expertise to address the complex psycho-social issues embedded in disability management. Social workers are well positioned to be training consultants, job coaches, facilitators, and specialised consultants to employers in the labour market. Therefore EAP is an adaptable and changing service, able to provide additional services, responding to organisational needs. These services/potential roles can be aligned to the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, (2010:1) core technologies. In this study, roles for EAP will emerge as identified by managers of persons with disabilities.

#### 3.6.1 Marketing

EAP is able to transition into additional roles in the workplace where benefits had been adequately justified (Sandys, 2015:2). The marketing core technology can be utilised as promotion of EAP services (availability and guarantees, i.e. confidentiality) to management, supervisors, unions, employees and their family members regarding evolving role of EAP into disability management.

### 3.6.2 Consultation with work organisations

Mathaphuna (2007:102) states that EAP has a major role to play within the organisation regarding disability from a human resource management collaboration perspective. A potential role can be identified as the collaborative role of EAP with human resources to develop policies that include persons with disabilities.

Mathaphuna (2007:102) identified the consultative role where EAP could consult with the organisation based on an understanding of organisational and human dynamics within the workplace. These roles can be recognised as the consultation with work organisations core technology, where EAP can pro-actively address inherent trends stemming from personal or organisational issues identified regarding disability management (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:1).

Akabas and Gates (2002:7) state that a company's bottom line can be affected by employee morale and morale is affected by the quality of the supervisor. When EAPs help supervisors to be more responsive to employees with disabilities, the quality of work life for the individual with a disability is improved and the work group feels that the supervisor is more supportive.

In a supportive organisational culture, EAPs are likely to become more involved in helping to find ways to keep people in their jobs even in respect of mental health disabilities that are unpredictable in nature (Akabas and Gates, 2002:10).

Gates (2000: 86) states that; when accommodating persons with disabilities for the goal of achieving sustained employment of persons with disabilities, one has to focus on the social dimensions of the workplace. The social dimensions necessitate that the considered needs of a person with a disabilities should harmonise with the policies and procedures of the workplace as well as the needs of supervisors and co-workers. Skilful collaboration and consultation can be done by EAP regarding the needs of the employee with disability, organisational policies and procedures, manager of employee with disabilities and co-worker is required, to ensure that the gaps in functional capacity caused by the disability condition do not interfere with meeting job requirements.

EAP can play a mediator role between the persons with disabilities and the employer/management (Mathaphuna, 2007:102).

EAP can be a programme developer where the programme includes access to and information on community resources such as self-help groups and referrals for rehabilitation counselling for interpersonal and social skills for employees with disabilities (Mathaphuna, 2007:102).

According to the researcher, the collaborative, consultative, mediator and programme developer roles all fit within organisational consultation core technology.

### 3.6.3. Training and development

Ximba (2016:142) reveals that employees with disabilities perceive that they are stigmatised and that it negatively influences their relationships with managers in particular. Therefore, a trainer role where EAP provides training which includes diversity sensitization with managers has been identified. The researcher believes that EAP can potentially provide targeted training to assist in developing manager's skills in creating an inclusive environment at work. Akabas and Gate (2002:7) agree that the impact of EAP can be heightened when supervisory training on disability-related issues is part of the practice of supporting managers of employees with disabilities.

Standards Committee of EAPA-SA,(2010:1) states that training and development is a core technology provided by an EAP to assist organisational stakeholders (managers, supervisors, and unions) seeking to effectively manage the employee who is experiencing behavioural, emotional and wellness issues; in order to enhance the work environment and improve employee job performance. However, there is a need to develop and train managers to address the reported negative attitudes and behaviours in relation to their subordinates with disabilities. The work environment can potentially be enhanced and job performance improved by addressing developmental and training gaps, increasing skills and capability of managers in managing employees with disabilities.

According to Mathaphuna (2007:102), the use of training can help supervisors recognise the rights of the persons with disabilities in the workplace. The trainer role can be extended to recruiters in the organisation, where assistance is offered in the process of hiring persons with disabilities and where the need is identified for continuous training and support for persons with disabilities employed in their

organisation. Training of persons with disabilities, manager/employer as well as co-workers should take place prior and subsequent to a person with disability's employment. Furthermore, a mediator/facilitator/job-coach role player should remain involved during this whole process supporting managers of employees with disabilities (Naudé and Delport, 2004: 280). On the trainer role, the competence of the social worker to fulfil this role as outlined by Mathaphuna (2007:102) is similar to those mentioned by Naudé and Delport (2004: 280) as stated above.

#### 3.6.4 Case management

The case management core technology according to Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010: 1) is about ensuring confidential and timely risk identification, assessment, motivation, short-term intervention, referral, monitoring, follow-up, reintegration and aftercare services for employees with personal and work-related concerns that may affect job performance. Case management may be used as a tool to discover the most suitable implementation of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities, the evaluation of manager practices and decisions regarding reasonable accommodation on a case by case basis. The case management core technology introduces the manager/supervisor as client regarding the support they need on issues regarding the management of employees with disabilities. Angeloni (2013:6) states when an employee is on disability leave, the EAP can provide return to work support, such as preparing the supervisor for re-entry of the employee into the workplace. EAPs can provide supervisory consultation and educational services on an on-going basis.

Akabas and Gates (2002:6) identified the following EAP case management activities for the employee with disabilities, such as facilitation of return to work in cases of disability leave. EAP could potentially also assist clients to return to work after a mental health episode; also prepare them to disclose a mental health disability. Angeloni (2013:6) states that when EAP is integrated in disability cases, it results in 31% fewer days absent from work than the standard disability program. When effective, EAP will ultimately improve the well-being of employees and also improve the effectiveness and productivity of supervisors, and ultimately, of the company (Van Wyk, 2011:131).



### 3.6.5 Networking

The networking core technology can also be utilised in enhancing the management of employees with disabilities. EAP can establish lines of communication between relevant stakeholders that promote understanding and thus reduce the stigma experienced by many workers with mental health conditions/disabilities (Akabas & Gates, 2002:1).

Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek and Leahy (2015: 22) state that one of the aspects in defining social inclusion is that interpersonal relationships facilitate bonding and bridging. Bonding relationships are between people who share a common bond or commonly identify and offer opportunities to build trust, reciprocity and confidence. While bridging relationships, bring diverse people into contact and these relationships may be especially important in improving employment success for persons with disabilities. EAP can play a bridging role in disability management.

### 3.6.6 Monitoring and evaluation

EAP in the evaluator role will be part of a human resources team that gathers information on policies and legislation that have not been implemented and thereby impact on the organisation negatively in relation to issues of disability.

This role potentially involves the monitoring and evaluation of EAP contribution to disability management in the workplace (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:1).

EAP can ensure that monitoring and evaluation of the success and impact of EAP services relating to the organisation, individual job performance, EAP intervention with both supervisor and employee with a disabilities on disability management (Standards Committee of EAPA-SA, 2010:1).

This role is enhanced when the gaps in EAP reporting on disability matters are addressed as mentioned earlier in the chapter.

### 3. 7. CONCLUSION

Hiranandani (2005:3) states that the social work profession has done little to promote disability rights. Social work literature, research and practices on disabilities have lagged behind other topical areas dealing with oppressed groups. Furthermore, the vacuum has given free rein to the use of models and policies which lack consultation with people having disabilities, the lack of emphasis on the social and political forces impacting the lives of people with disabilities, and a reduction of disability to simplistic “objective” criteria that measure functional limitations.

When disability policies rely on disability-as-individual-problem framework, they marginalize the possibility of more enabling methods of human welfare that are based on participation, social integration, and equal citizenship.

As a result research studies focusing on an EAP approach that includes diversity and inclusive management of persons with disabilities has not yet been found by the researcher. Nevertheless, Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:1) provides delivery mechanisms for comprehensive involvement of EAP in disability management as outlined by the researcher.

However, the EAP is adaptable in response to needs of organisations, where a broadening scope of EAP service provision is plausible through the ecological approach that recognises the broad range of issues that impact employee’s performance (Sandys, 2015:2).

EAP have potential to extend valuable inputs to disability management in the workplace through core technologies especially when challenges facing managers of employees with disabilities are known. The study will be able to investigate the challenges in management of employees with disabilities, thereby identifying needs and requirements that may have implications on how EAP extend their offering to provide services in the support of management of employees with disabilities.

## CHAPTER 4:

### EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON THE MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES REGARDING EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES AT ESKOM: AN EAP EXPERIENCE

#### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher presents research methodology, ethical aspects of the study and a detailed presentation of empirical data collected. Social science research is a systematic, controlled, empirical and critical investigation of social phenomena, guided by theory and hypotheses about the presumed relations among such phenomena” (Delpont et al., 2011:42). The purpose was to discover answers to questions about the nature of challenges experienced by line managers of employees with disabilities and thereby gain new knowledge about that world.

#### 4.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology reflects on the objectives and the research question which has been answered by the empirical study, the chosen sample, the data collection method used and some of the problems encountered during the collection of data.

##### 4.2.1 Research approach

The qualitative research approach was utilised in this study.

##### 4.2.2 Type of research

The type of study followed was applied research. The findings of applied research were applied to resolve specific problems faced in the workplace. Findings from applied research assisted with decision-making regarding the management of employees with disabilities. The findings also added valuable inputs regarding the involvement of EAP in the management of employees with disabilities in the workplace. The study was able to address immediate problems facing the varying levels of operations in the organisation, for example, impact on EAP professional practice, as well as policies, managerial practices and individuals in the workplace.

### 4.2.3. Qualitative research design

The qualitative case study methodology provided a tool for the researcher to study complex phenomena within the workplace context. When the approach was applied, it became a valuable method to develop theory and interventions as well as evaluate programs (Baxter & Jack, 2008:544), regarding challenges experienced by managers of employees with disabilities at Eskom. The study was conducted to explore and describe the challenges faced by managers of employees with disabilities, thereby naming each manager as a case (unit of analysis); hence the collection of participants was a collective case study. Baxter and Jack (2002:545) state that the approach to case study was from a constructivist paradigm. Constructivists claim that truth is relative and that it is dependent on one's perspective. The qualitative method through case study enabled the researcher to explore the socially constructed norms of line managers of employees with disabilities as a unique group within the organisation consistent with the social constructionist theoretical framework of the study.

Baxter and Jack (2002:545) state that constructivism is built upon the premise of a social construction of reality. One of the advantages of this approach was the close collaboration between the researcher and the participant, while enabling participants to tell their stories. This was achieved in this study. Through these stories the participants were able to describe their views of reality and this enabled the researcher to better understand the participants' actions and world.

### 4.2.4. Research methods

#### 4.2.4.1. Study population and sampling

The population for this study were managers working for Eskom, situated in Gauteng province as this allowed logistical accessibility of these employees for face to face interviews. All participants were line managers of employees with disabilities within the organisation.

The selection criteria also included only the line managers of employees who had;

- Been assessed for a disability by the employer and thereafter were classified as a person with a disability in terms of Section 1 definition of disability in the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998.
- Had provided their consent for the employer disclose their disability openly to the manager or had themselves disclosed their disability openly to the manager as per Code of Good practice on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities (1998:13).

The managers of employees with disability whose disability was unknown to the manager were not included in the study. The Employment Equity Act Code of Good practice on the employment of persons with disabilities (1998:14) states that an employer may not reveal the fact of an employee's disability, of whom they had assured confidentiality of their disability status, to a third party without consent. The sample of managers was restricted to consented employees with disabilities which were also aligned to ethical and legal standards regarding the right to the confidentiality of one's disability, even to their managers.

The following steps, as outlined by Creswell (2009:148), were followed in the sampling methodology:

- The identified population in the study were line managers of employees with disabilities. The size of this population was 132 Eskom managers located in the Gauteng region at the time the sample was selected and a list of their names was accessible.
- Single stage sampling was utilised as the researcher had access to names in the population sampled directly from the list.
- For this research, homogenous sampling was used, which focuses on the one particular subgroup in which all the sample members were similar, such as being employed by Eskom, being a manager, and having employees with disability reporting to them (Lewis, Saunders & Thornhill, 2012:288).
- A representative sample from a population provided the researcher with the ability to generalise to the organisation (Creswell, 2009:148). In purposive sampling the samples are small, are studied intensively, and each one

typically generates a large amount of information (Curtis, Gesler, Smith and Washburn, 2000: 1002) as was the case in the study.

- The criteria for purpose sampling were the following:
  - Participants were managers employed by Eskom in Gauteng Province;
  - Participants were managing of one or more employees with disabilities;
  - Participants may have had a minimum number of 3 years' management exposure to one or more employees with disabilities under their supervision. Although the researcher could select managers of employees with disability, the researcher could not establish the length of time the manager had served managing employees with disabilities prior to the interview from the data base. Therefore this was one of the questions asked in the semi-structured interview to establish a demographic profile. Three participants did not meet the criteria of 3 years' experience however they had managed an employee with disabilities for a year. These participants were still included in the study because the researcher believed that the manager would have managed the employee and completed a full performance cycle, completed a performance assessment and had performance discussions in that year period; therefore quality of the information provided by participants did not in fact compromise the objectives and goals of the study. In purposive sampling, personal judgment of the researcher needs to be used to choose cases that would help answer the research question or achieve research objectives (Dudovskiy, 2018:1).
  - The researcher sent an email to the sample stating the following:
    - The researcher is a student at University of Pretoria completing a Masters in Social Work: specialising in Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP)
    - The researcher was required to complete a research project.
    - The project was approved and permission granted by Eskom
    - The research objective "Challenges in managing employees with disabilities at Eskom: An EAP perspective."
    - Request for interview: "I would like to request an interview to get your impressions of the following regarding managing persons with disabilities"

- The length of the interview: plus minus 35 minutes
- Assurance of anonymity in the reporting: “Your identity will not be included in presentation of results”
- The usefulness of results for the organisation “ may assist build tools for the management of employees with disabilities at Eskom”
- Attached were the following documents.
  - Permission to conduct research letter from Eskom
  - Informed consent form
  - Respondent debriefing services with EAP

The researcher aimed to interview 15 participants; however of the 132 managers eligible to be part of the study, 10 managers responded to the request for interviews, all 10 participants were interviewed.

#### 4.2.4.2. Data collection method

The researcher utilised a semi-structured interview schedule to collect data through a one-to-one personal interview (attached as annexure E). Semi structured in-depth interviews were conducted once only with individuals taking about 30 minutes to complete (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006:315). These interviews served the purpose of understanding the world from the participant’s point of view, to unfold the meaning of manager’s experiences, and uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations (Greeff, 2011:342). These interviews were conducted in the workplace, which was a natural setting of managers, in English.

The researcher asked open-ended questions that were intended to elicit views and opinions (Creswell, 2009:181). The researcher was able to make follow-up questions on some of the topics emerging from the answers of the participants, as well as probing questions to help generate richer information.

The interviews were digitally recorded and saved electronically in accordance to the number of participants in a digital audio folder. During the interview hand-written notes were taken as supported by Creswell (2009:183).

#### 4.2.4.3 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis in the study was used to establish how participants make meaning of their experiences by analysing their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings and experiences in an attempt to approximate deeper understanding of common experiences, recurring ideas regarding their responses. The recordings were then listened to and transcribed later by the researcher (Lewis et al., 2012:167). Thereafter the transcripts were organised. The researcher then generated categories, themes and patterns from across the data from each participant. In qualitative research methods, researcher looked for themes in the data (Lewis et al., 2012:167).

#### 4.2.4.4 Data quality

In order to ensure that the perspectives of participants of this study were genuinely gathered and presented truthfully, the researcher adopted the trustworthiness criteria which consists of four concepts: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Anney, 2014:272).

Credibility was determined through the use of recording and generating transcripts of the interviews. This was done to demonstrate “that the inquiry was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject has been accurately identified and described”, and to demonstrate that the researchers’ reconstruction and representation of the participants’ views had been represented honestly.

Transferability occurred when study findings are transferrable from one situation or context to another. Purposive sampling addresses the issue of transferability by maximizing specific information in relation to the workplace in which the data collection occurred. Transferability was achieved as the results of a qualitative research study can be applicable to other workplace contexts with other line managers of persons with disabilities (Anney, 2014:277). The researcher further advised that transferability can be achieved through purposive selection of participants and detailed description of the study.

Dependability referred to the extent to which the study can be replicated or repeated. The researcher provided enough information within the study and a sufficient audit



trail in order to allow future researchers to repeat the study and replicate the findings. The raw data of the interviews received from participants was kept as an audit trail for data validation when necessary.

Confirmability was achieved through the neutrality of the research findings and extent upon which the findings were based on the participants' responses and not the researchers' bias or personal motivations. Confirmability was established by presenting data, providing a detailed audit trail and highlighting each step of the data analysis process (Delpont et al., 2011:419-421). Confirmability was also determined by the extent to which the researcher adhered to the set out objectives and goals of the study.

#### 4.2.4.5 Pilot study

The first two qualifying participants reacting to the invite sent out by the researcher via internal email were targeted for the pilot study. The self-developed semi-structured interview schedule was not adapted after the pilot. The tool was viewed as completed because the tool did not have to be adjusted to enhance clarity. Data obtained from the pilot study was incorporated in the main study as no changes were made to the interview schedule.

### 4.3. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher had sent an electronic request for interview stating clearly what was requested from each participant. The researcher ensured that each participant received the informed consent form via email. Together with a referral letter to EAP services should it be necessary. The researcher indicated that the interview was for the purpose of university studies, and that findings may help the organisation.

The researcher thus ensured all expectations were clear. Participants signed the consent forms prior to the interview. The consent form contained relevant details regarding the need to record the interview. Prior to the interview permission to record was sought and granted by each participant. In addition, as contained in the consent form, the assurance of confidentiality was reaffirmed to the participants. EAP services were offered and explained.

In this study, the following ethical considerations were adhered to;

- Informed consent: informed consent participation was obtained by disclosing the goals and objectives of the study and providing consent forms to be completed prior to the interview. Consent was sought prior to the meeting for recording of the interviews and was obtained. The participants' identity and recordings were accessible only to the researcher. The informed consent form was stored safely and then scanned via email to each participant as stated in the form.
- Voluntary participation was an ethical consideration as isolating the Gauteng cluster through purposive sampling increased the probability of these managers of employees with disabilities being selected to participate in the study more than the rest of the managers in Eskom. However, the researcher highlighted that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study (Delpont et al., 2011:123) at any time and without any penalties. The voluntary participation in turn presented a limitation for the researcher because the targeted number of participants did not volunteer to be part of the study. The sample was limited to the Gauteng cluster population.
- All participants were offered counselling in case they experienced discomfort about discussing workplace challenges. Harm was avoided and did not occur during the research. One participant indicated that the services were appreciated and would be used.
- Careful considerations were made to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants. The identities of participants were not included in the presentation of data; instead the researcher presented them as participant 1-10. After the study is conducted, the employer/sponsor will not have access to the raw data.
- Publication of findings will happen without mentioning the name of the organisation to promote confidentiality and generalisability of the study in any organisation. The findings will not be used to victimise any participant, but will remain in the Human Resource Department with the Transformation Office. The findings were presented with recommendations for a possible EAP role in the management of employees with disabilities in the workplace.
- Eskom was a sponsor of the research project and hence the requirement that the study took place within the organisation. The results will be used to the

benefit of the organisation and its employees. In the formal request for consent to conduct the study at Eskom, the researcher mentioned that the organisation will receive a copy of research report, but will not have access to the raw data, this agreement serves to protect the anonymity of participants and ensure adherence to high ethical standards and thus resolving potential conflict of interest.

All raw data was submitted to be stored at the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years for archival and possible future research purpose.

#### 4.4. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

During the collection of data the following problems were encountered:

- In the selection criteria of participants, the researcher initially purposed to restrict participants to those who had managed employees for more than 3 years. However receiving responses from participants and collection of data during the interview, it transpired that the years' experience ranged between 1 to 7 years. The researcher continued to conduct the interview and found that there was no impact on the quality of the information provided. The researcher was still able to achieve the objectives and goals of the study. The sample remained homogeneous due to the characteristics of participants for example, the sample was one particular subgroup in which all the sample members are similar, such as being employed by Eskom, being a manager, and having employees with disability reporting to them thereby still meeting the requirements of purposive sampling.
- Lack of response affecting the sample size: the researcher wanted to get a larger sample however there were fewer responses from the line managers, the sample was less than the number of people targeted to volunteer to be part of the research.
- Disability management is a sensitive and complex topic; the researcher had to assure participants that the study was not an organisational mission to catch managers out since a study of this nature has not been conducted previously in the organisation. There was some uncertainty with managers who had current problems with their subordinates. One of the participants mentioned

that they would utilise EAP due to the challenges experienced with their subordinate with disability, which was affecting them emotionally.

#### 4.5. PRESENTATION OF DATA

##### 4.5.1 Profile of the participants

Below is Table 2, a tabular portrayal of the participants who volunteered to be part of the study, segmented by age, gender, race, occupational level and number of years of experience managing employees with disabilities.

*Table 2: Profile of participants*

Age	Gender	Race	Occupational level	Years of experience managing employee with disabilities
37	Female	White	M16: Middle manager	6 years
62	Male	White	M16 : Middle manager	2 years
55	Female	White	M17: Middle manager	7 years
36	Male	White	M17: Middle manager	5 years
47	Male	White	M16: Middle manager	4 years
55	Female	White	M18: Middle manager	6 years
44	Female	African	M17: Middle manager	1 year 4 months
45	Female	Coloured	M18: Middle manager	6 years
59	Male	African	Senior Manager	2 years
36	Male	African	M17 : Middle Manager	2 years

##### 4.5.2 Discussion on the profile of participants

The profile of participants can be discussed in terms of the age distribution. The participants were between the ages of 36 – 62 years. The number of male five and female five participants were distributed equally. In terms of racial diversity, there

were six white participants and four black participants (3 African, 1 Coloured). Most nine of the participants who volunteered to be part of the study were at middle management occupational level which is level Middle Manager (M) task grade 16-18 in the organisation. One of the participants was a senior manager at executive level. The years of experience of participants in managing persons with disabilities varied from 1 - 7 years. The majority of participants (6) have over 4 years of experience, while three participants had 2 years of experience, while one (1) participant had just over a year's experience.

The managers came from various business areas and working in varying environments such as information technology, project management, finance and human resources departments. The business unit information as well as participant labels were not listed in the table to prevent convergence of identifying characteristics.

#### 4.6. CENTRAL THEMES

The themes in the section will be discussed through multi case study analysis. A multiple or collective case study enabled the researcher to explore differences within and between cases. The goal was to replicate findings across cases. Because comparisons were drawn, it was imperative that the cases were chosen carefully so that the researcher could predict similar results across cases, or predict contrasting results based on a theory (Baxter and Jack, 2008:548). The data was organised by identifying themes common to the participants from the questions asked by the researcher.

The collection and comparison of this data enhanced the data quality based on the principles of idea convergence and the confirmation of findings (Baxter and Jack, 2008: 556). Yin (2003: 26) described an analytic technique called cross case synthesis, which the researcher utilised, where there were similar responses across participants, they were matched and presented in a word table format. The researcher treated each individual case study as a separate case, and had to create word tables that displayed data from individual cases according to a uniform framework and then examine word tables for cross-case patterns.

Table 3: Summary of central themes and subthemes

Themes	Sub-themes
<b>A: Findings on manager's views about the phenomenon of disability</b>	
1. Managers experience disability as phenomenon they can relate with	1.1 Family member with disability 1.2 Has/had a disability themselves 1.3 Expression of social empathy
2. Managers perceived themselves as treating employees with disabilities the same as other employees	2.1 Accepting of the differences between people 2.2 They can relate and communicate well 2.3 Overcame initial anxiety around persons with disabilities
<b>B. Findings on manager's positive views regarding managing employees with disabilities</b>	
3. Some managers perceived employees with disabilities to be good performers	3.1 Employees with disabilities are capable and able to perform their duties
4. Managers implemented reasonable accommodation measures.	4.1 Adjustment of deadlines 4.2 Adjustment of outputs to avoid limitations 4.3 Alternative work placements/sites 4.4 Employee is able to work and manager focuses only on those abilities
<b>C. Findings on challenges experienced in managing employees with disabilities.</b>	
5. Few managers did not trust the motivations of employees with disabilities	5.1 Some employees with disability are perceived to be cherry picking when they seek to be seen as equal and when they seek to be seen as different.
6. Managers were perceived to be victimising when performing their duties.	6.1 Addressing low performance 6.2 Addressing absenteeism 6.3 Reviewing of reasonable accommodation arrangements
7. Managers did not have clarity on measures required to establish the employee's ability to work.	7.1 Employee is unable to work due to own over estimation of ability
8. Managers were not trained, skilled nor supported in the management of employees with disabilities	8.1 Lack of on boarding training 8.2 lack of diversity management tools skills 8.3 Lack of skills/knowledge to manage employees with disability confidently.

D. Finding on the potential role of EAP in support of managers of employees with disabilities	
9. Managers identified potential roles for EAP in support of managing employees with disabilities.	9.1 Conduct training 9.2 Coaching 9.3 Mediation 9.4 Consultation and advice 9.5 Psycho–social support

#### 4.6.1. Findings on manager’s views about the phenomenon of disability

Theme 1: Managers experience disability as a phenomenon they relate with

Ninety percent of the participants stated that disability was a phenomenon that they could relate with because some participants either have or have had family members with a disability or, that they themselves have had or have a disability or that they care about persons with disability. Even those participants, who did not have close personal experience of disability in their lives, did however express a general social empathy towards persons with disabilities.

In the description of the participant’s views on the phenomenon of disability, researcher could identify the following sub-themes.

##### 1.1. Sub-theme: Family member with disability

The participants shared that they have or had close personal experience with disability in their family. Four participants namely P5, P6, P8 and P10 made the following statements regarding having a family member with a disability.

P	Direct quotations
P5	“..a close member of my girlfriend’s family, now wife is a quadriplegic so I got to experience that for about the last 20 years “
P6	“My mom also had polio as a 6 year old and I think that’s where my empathy with (name omitted) comes from. So if he just tells me his mom never knew about vaccinations and things like that. I have a lot of empathy”
P8	“I have a child with disability. And for me, what this has taught me about disabled people is that disability is not something that makes the person less

	in terms of their contribution in society”.
P10	“I had an uncle who lived with a disability”

### 1.2. Sub-theme: Has/had a disability themselves

Three participants shared that they have or have had a disability when asked about their views on the phenomenon of disability. P2 and P3 expressed that they are persons with disability. While P4 shared that at some point he had a disability.

P	Direct quotations
P2	“I can mention that I am also a person with disability myself. I am blind in one eye. It’s something that has happened at a very early age. All my life it’s been that way. I don’t know what it is like to have sight in both eyes.”
P3	“I suppose I must declare my interest because I am also a person with disability. So I think that’s misunderstood and or not known well enough. People are scared of it.”
P4	<p>“You know as a child I suffered from epilepsy. That was ... so you know I can relate in terms of that, where you are perceived as maybe slightly different so I think that kind of helped, going through that experience as a child to maybe understand on the emotional side and the mental side to understand, where they are coming from.”</p> <p>“That they do face different challenges and that the world is geared for the majority and that it isn’t anything against them it is just for efficiency.”</p>

### 1.3. Sub-theme: Social empathy

Most of the participants shared an expression of social empathy for persons with disabilities. Some participants who did not have a close personal experience in their lives with disabilities also expressed concern (P1) and general social empathy (P7) towards persons who have disabilities.

P	Direct quotations
P1	“It’s a soft spot in my heart. I will tell you why (...), My daughter attends a



	school where there are also people living with disabilities...” “There is a school out here in Tembisa that we support and visit quite regularly for children with disabilities”
P7	“It’s life changing. So actually when you sit back and look at yourself and know that you are able to do all these things, but this person has some limitations, you can imagine....”

#### 1.4. Discussion of theme 1 and sub-themes.

Managers have personal experiences with disability in their own lives. Managers were found to be concerned with, affected by or have disability themselves.

Ninety percent of managers of employees with disabilities had a positive attitude and regard toward disability because they were affected by or have disability themselves. Managers did not hold prejudices (which are negative attitudes towards others based on a prejudgment about those individuals rooted upon little prior knowledge or experience) against persons with disabilities (Encyclopaedia, 2017:1).

Furthermore, the participants displayed an awareness, understanding and experience regarding disability. The researcher concluded that managers had potential qualities required to enable them to be supportive of employees with disabilities and create a culture of inclusion in the workplace.

Theme 2: The participants perceived themselves to treat employees with disabilities the same as other employees.

The response from all (100%) participants regarding their view on the phenomenon of disability included a reflection upon their treatment of persons with disabilities. It was found that participants perceive themselves as treating employees with disabilities the same as other employees.

##### 2.1. Sub-theme: Accepting of the differences between people

Some participants mentioned that they treat employees with disabilities like all other employees that they manage. P1, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8 were of the view that persons with disabilities are to be treated like all other employees. Participants purported to

treat their subordinates with disabilities the same as other subordinates, making the following statements;

P	Direct quotations
P1	“We’re all human beings. There might be bits and bobs about ourselves that might be different but it doesn’t mean because you look different so something on your body doesn’t work, (...) that you’re any different to the rest of us.”
P4	“...I was able to treat them the same as other employees in terms of productivity and performance but I did realise that there is a lot that I was able to do to assist them in terms of their work environment.”
P5	“Having a person using a wheelchair you need to think about accessibility.”  “Other than that the employee is treated like anybody else in the team”.
P6	“... I think that we often disregard the fact that they have disability ... we want to categorise people, just because a person might find it difficult to mobilize does not mean he does not have a brain”
P7	“We should treat employees on an equal basis.”
P8	“What I take out of my experience with disability is that disabled people often turn their disability into ability. It is us that often treat them differently. If we treated them the way we treat abled bodied people we would not really notice that they had a disability.”

## 2.2 Sub-theme: Can relate and communicate well

Some of the participants P2 and P3 were of the view that they have a good relationship with subordinates with disability, reported to be supportive of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workplace.

P	Direct quotations
P2	Obviously in my case, being a person with disability, I will approach everything with empathy.  I think it’s very good that organisations are accommodating persons with

	disabilities. And taking them on, getting them into the system as well.
P3	“I found it relatively easy to relate because we have a very open relationship”

### 2.3 Sub-theme: Overcoming initial anxiety around people with disabilities

This sub-theme can be described as an approach of managers to managing persons with disabilities. It was found that P4 and P10 had initial anxieties about their ability to manage a person with disability but overcame their anxiety.

P	Direct quotations
P4	“I think in the beginning I was a bit nervous because I wasn’t sure, you know how harsh or strict I must be. Then I realise that they’re no different, in terms of capability wise and mentally they were no different so... “
P10	“I felt like I was tip toeing around him. A lot of the time I wasn’t sure. I’d seen him react when a team member would say something and they would be sensitive about it. So how to handle such issues. Sometimes ask him how; we should deal with such situations. It can be very awkward ”

### 2.4. Discussion of theme 2 and sub-themes

According to the WPRPW (2015:30) when we treat employees with disabilities equally with others, we display acceptance of persons with disabilities. Managers were found to be accepting of diversity, normalising difference and addressing issues of social integration.

Managers who treat employees with disabilities in an inclusive manner demonstrate a value for diversity. Zenger (2017:1) said that valuing diversity is an attitude and mind-set. It is not a nice-to-have capability in leaders, but rather it is a strategic advantage within organisation. Inclusive behaviours are deliberately constructed and developed. They are not automatically inherited simply because the manager's current employee group is diverse (Zenger, 2017:1). In leadership research, Zenger (2017: 1) found that managers who display inclusive behaviour and who are

perceived to be valuing diversity possess key factors in elevating how their overall leadership effectiveness is perceived. Therefore treating employees with disability well and right is a leadership value that is important within the workplace.

Managers also expressed having to take steps to achieve social integration by overcoming their initial insecurities about the unknown task of managing employees with disability revealing the process of questioning and examining one's pre-existing stereotypes regarding disability, which have been predominately negative in society.

Encyclopaedia (2017:1) explained this anxiety saying most non-disabled persons feel very uncomfortable interacting with persons with disabilities. Many individuals feel embarrassment or awkwardness around PWDs as mentioned by one participant. It is further explained that non-disabled persons often fear they do not know how to talk to PWDs, what to say or how to say it. These feelings which are a result of the social constructs of disability, would ordinarily lead to avoidance by the manager and ultimate isolation of the person with disabilities, as often described in literature. However the managers interacted with employees to gain better understanding of persons with disabilities.

#### 4.6.2. Findings on manager's positive views regarding managing employees with disabilities

Theme 3: Managers believe employees with disabilities are good performers.

Participants expressed the following positive views on managing employees with disabilities. Participants stated that disability did have a limiting impact at work. Eighty percent (80%) of participants P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, found that despite obvious limitations, employees with disabilities were mostly capable and good performers.

P	Direct quotations
P3	"As I mentioned he can't write very well. But nothing more than any other employees also undergo for operations. Other than that he is very able and very capable"
P4	"Strengths, their abilities to be highlighted. They have different strengths"

P5	“Employee’s current performance is good.” ”even if employee can work from home full time in future because his performance warrants that.”
P6	“Both of the employees are very productive. Experts in their respective jobs. But I want to say that one has to be trained to see differences as normal. Because one doesn’t always think of these things.”
P7	“She is good performer. When you give her work to do, she still does it, even on the days she’s working from home.”
P8	“For me, I have an employee directly that has declared. So for me I believe that they have a lot to offer. They are highly skilled. They are dedicated. They produce a high quality of work and deliver on their Key Performance Indicators. They are not difficult to manage. They fulfil their job well. Fortunately, in Eskom we are special friendly so we make it accessible for our disabled employees. So we are not too challenged in terms of their mobility in the offices and the environment that they need to work in.”

### 3.1 Discussion of theme 3:

Participants mentioned that they were satisfied with their employees’ performance. Participants described that there were clear benefits to employing persons with disabilities, confirming findings by Maja et al, (2008:24) stating that managers acknowledge the positive contribution made by the employees with disabilities.

This study found contrary to those stating managers have low expectations of employees with disabilities, that employing persons with disabilities would result in an increase in supervisory time and low productivity (Ximba, 2016:128). The researcher found that one of the key contributors to good performance was that managers were supportive and had implemented appropriate reasonable accommodation measures for the employees.

The researcher found that the managers that were supportive and had implemented reasonable accommodation reported to also productive employees. The implementation of reasonable accommodation should be mentioned simultaneously with productivity of employees with disabilities because being reasonably

accommodated is not conditional on the performance of an employee; contrary, it is the provision of the appropriate equipment or accommodation that enables productivity (SAHRC, 2017:17).

#### Theme 4: Managers implemented reasonable accommodation measures

The participants described in greater detail the various reasonable accommodation measures they have implemented for employees. These workplace adjustments which were made with care and consultation with employees with disabilities as highlighted in theme 2 and 3, are seen as part of what is required and necessary when managing employees with disabilities. However, the process involved in order to achieve appropriate reasonable accommodation, which resulted in improved productivity was not outlined.

Managers implemented reasonable accommodation as follows:

##### 4.1. Sub-theme: Adjustment of deadlines

P4 mentioned that there was an adjustment to deadlines to accommodate a shorter week that the employee worked, as a result of a reasonable accommodation arrangement.

P	Direct quotations
P4	“Adjust our time lines in terms of deadlines. It’s a 35 hour work week for the employee and we do as a team care when the employee looks tired etc. not all days are the same.”

##### 4.2. Sub-theme: Adjustment of outputs and support to avoid limitations

P3, P5, P8, P9 mentioned that some adjustments to employee outputs were required in order to facilitate the productivity of the employees.

P	Direct quotations
P3	“There are certain things that one would have to take into consideration. For instance I can’t ask him to do minutes in a meeting because he can’t write as

	fast as all the other employees.”
P5	It’s not a problem for me as a manager, the thing that becomes difficult is to understand the difficulties that the person with disability has a on a daily basis. That is something you have to get used, if you yourself do not have a disability. “With attending training, and meetings again have to ensure the venues are accessible”
P8	<p>“As a manager if you don’t have understanding and compassion. You can be frustrated because you will have to accommodate the mobility of the employee. When you’re having meetings, you have to think well I can’t expect this person to come all the way. But you know (...) you need to be human about it and professional about it.</p> <p>And say you know what, technology is so advanced. We can have video conferences and we can have telecommunications, we communicate through email, we don’t have to have that physical one–on-one interaction. Yes it is required at times. Most of the time, work can happen without the employee having to travel from site to site. ... If you support your employee by acknowledging their difficulties in mobility, you actually get a productive employee.”</p>
P9	The kind of system we use, a person with his kind of disability will struggle to get some of the information. One of the things I have done is say, you will be able to analyse this data but unfortunately you cannot access the information so what we have done is to get someone to give him the information and then he will have the ability to work with the information for him to do the analysis.

#### 4.3. Sub-theme: Alternative work placements/sites

The participants expressed that they implemented adjustment to work site and placements to enable better productivity of the employees.

P	Direct quotations
P2	“it was said that he could perform office work, and would regain a level of functioning to be able to perform office work, so I accommodated him there

	because being on the wheelchair on a construction site would not really work”
P1	“secondments, and working at a site close to home twice a week”
P6	“he was accommodated to work offsite close to his house, but then he was not coming to work as he should have, so that was taken away”  “Luckily he is accommodated now, and he is only coming in three times a week and its working a lot better...”
P7	“she is working from home, Thursday and Friday, she is allocated to sites that are close by to avoid long travel”
P10	“ I felt like he was playing on his disability but with time I found that I just needed to find out what he enjoys doing and I actually seconded him there but I cannot always do that because I do need people in my team...”

#### 4.4. Sub-theme: Employee is able to work and manager focuses only on those abilities

Participants mentioned their effort in ensuring that they focus on the skills, abilities and strengths of the employee when allocating work and remove those that are not limiting.

P	Direct quotations
P3	“There are certain things that one would have to take into consideration with allocation of work out puts.”
P5	“The employee works with a computer so there are no limitations with that again.”  “I do have a different view, but I do believe the more we give the more commitment and expectation I can have to get a lot out of our employees.”
P6	“she is one of our good trainers so she does a lot of travelling, so it does take a toll on her now physically”
P8	“When work gets allocated, you need to look at the environment that you operate in. trying to ensure the person with disabilities get the task that is desk orientated you know instead of lots of travel. To accommodate the other employees that are not disabled, it’s important that you explain to them the value in terms of this employee ... ”  “Not to simply make him an administrator, they are also skills in that are, they just



<p>can't do the travelling. So it is a culture that you create, in my environment, my team knows that respectful work environment, that's what it about at the end of the day.</p> <p>And this person might have a physical disability but this person may be skilled and or knowledgeable and competent in other areas. We need to balance this by blending the teams and ensuring that each person plays to their strengths.”</p>
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#### 4.5. Discussion of theme 4 and subthemes

The researcher found that all (100%) the participants implemented reasonable accommodation of their subordinates with disabilities with care and consultation. The researcher believes the strengths based approach to reasonable accommodation used by the managers is aligned to strengths based methods in social work: EAP can play a role in enhancing how reasonable accommodation is done.

Section 15 of the EEA of (1998:16- 17) states that; affirmative action measure implemented by a designated employer must include .... c) Making reasonable accommodation for people from designated groups in order to ensure that they enjoy equal opportunities.

This means that employers must not discriminate against any person, should reasonably accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities (Thomas, 2002:4, 232; Crane and Matten, 2010:294) as demonstrated in these findings.

Contrary to literature where Kulkarni and Lengnick-Hall (2014:166) suggested that being reasonably accommodated was difficult because the manager may attribute the requester to be exploiting the legislation by asking for unwarranted time off. Persons with disabilities are reasonably accommodated by the majority of participants.

The Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities (2002:9, 10) states that reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities entails the following aspects which are implemented by managers of employees with disabilities in this study;

- Adjustment of deadlines
- Adjustment of outputs and support to avoid limitations
- Alternative work placements/sites
- Restructuring jobs so that non-essential functions are re-assigned. Manager focuses only on those abilities as was found in the study.

#### 4.6.3. Findings on challenges experienced in managing employees with disabilities.

Theme 5: Managers did not trust the motives of employees with disabilities

Although three participants expressed discomfort regarding employees who profess to seek equal treatment yet often requested to be treated differently due to the disability, it is a less dominant theme however still important.

P 9 expressed that employees with disability cherry pick when they seek to be seen as equal based on the situation. Similarly P10 expressed this is done more often to avoid accounting for deliverables in his experience. P6 expressed concerns with being made to feel guilty.

P	Direct quotations
P9	<p>“It’s an enlightening experience when you get to realize how difficult it is to manage these people. Obviously one needs to know their requirements. Take cognizance of the fact that they are disabled, they have a disability. You need to be aware that they would like to be treated the same as everybody else”</p> <p>“There are times that I make a statement and treat him like everybody else but there are times where he feels no (...) that is not the case by the way. I am not like everyone else. This often happens along the lines that will favour him.”</p>
P6	<p>“So I felt, you know what like, people with disabilities can they play your emotions as well. They will be like... I mean she turned it all around.</p> <p>“There I am accused of trying to make her suffer while she’s on a wheelchair”. But I made it clear I am not talking about her disability or questioning it, I’m talking about work arrangements.”</p>

P10	<p>“Look, I have worked with someone with disability before; found that they are different people. There are those that want to be treated like they do not have a disability. Those that want to be treated like... what’s the word (....) there are those that use it whenever they don’t want to work.”</p>
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### 5.1. Discussion of theme 5

Three participants indicated that they do not trust the motives of employees with disabilities. Lewicki and Tomlinson (2003:1) defined distrust as the confident expectation that another individual's motives, intentions, and behaviours are sinister and harmful to one's own interests. The expectation of harm leads to conflict. Conflict in the workplace is best solved by an objective mediator.

Participants’ distrust in these instances, confirms findings by Ximba (2016:142) that employees with disabilities felt that management connections with them were lacking. Furthermore managers should create a trusting environment where persons with disabilities feel included and valued for their contributions.

In order to create a trusting environment and social inclusion there must be interpersonal relationships which facilitate bonding and bridging (Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek and Leahy, 2015: 22.) Bridging (mediator) relationships bring diverse people into contact and these relationships create a higher level of awareness and highlight prejudices created by lack of tolerance and understanding of a person who is different, these mediations may be especially important in improving employment success for persons with disabilities.

Theme 6: Managers have challenges regarding being perceived to be victimising when performing their duties.

Managers were perceived to be victimising when managing poor performance (P1, P2, P7, P9, and P10) absenteeism (P1, P10) and reasonable accommodation arrangements (P6).

### 6.1. Sub-theme: Poor performance

Managers described a time when they experienced challenges with managing poor performance. With P7, P9 and P10 the issue was less prominent as managers eventually found a way to work around the issue however with P1 and P2, low performance issues have not been resolved.

P	Direct quotations
P1	<p>“I don’t always understand the disability.”</p> <p>“But that has been for me the most incredible challenge because where is the line between simply not doing your job or discrimination”</p>
P2	<p>“What has since come out is that I have become concerned with his outputs throughout the year. And seen very little development nor output.”</p> <p>“I don’t know what the expectation is; I don’t have a medical background. But it has since come out that his ability to work is not going to progress anything more than what it is now. Now I’m in a position where if it was clear to me then that this was to be very limited mobility then I would have really pushed the options for alternative tools like voice activated software.”</p>
P9	<p>“When one says the person with disability should be aware that you have accepted that they have limitations. It shouldn’t be like you are diminishing them. They raise a complaint that they are treated differently”</p>
P7	<p>“There are some things she needed to do and she would just drag along. Sometimes I don’t get work and I see myself being lenient. You don’t know that its’ wrong you have done this and not that. Part of training how do you treat them like any other employee.”</p>
P10	<p>“But I found it to be a challenge in the sense that I would have to deal with what the word as non-productiveness.... Whenever I don’t have my deliverables it tends to be something that is escalated either to the disability forum or my senior managers”</p>

## 6.2. Sub-theme: Absenteeism

Managers have challenges with employees with disability who have high absenteeism. P1 experiences high absenteeism. P10 experience high disability related absences.

P	Direct quotations
P1	“you want to exhaust all avenues, .....instead high absenteeism persists”
P10	“So the emotional side would be that people with disability tend to have more sick leave. As a manager you need to manage sick leave. At times you find there is abuse of sick leave. A person goes for a check-up not necessarily linked to their disability, but they feel they should be having a sick day because they have a disability. That’s just the emotional side have to confront somebody about that.”

## 6.3. Sub-theme: Reasonable accommodation reviews

P	Direct quotations
P6	“...There I am accused of trying to make her suffer while she’s on a wheelchair”  “...the employee wants to take you for a grievance for asking a question, trying to manage them... on reviewing reasonable accommodation arrangements”

## 6.4. Discussion of the theme 6 and subthemes

The participants shared their experienced challenges when engaging employees on poor performance, absenteeism and reviewing of reasonable accommodation arrangements. It is possible that even though reasonable accommodation measures were implemented, employees may still not perform as with P1 and P2. In these instances more integrated approach is required to assist managers and those employees. There is a lot of uncertainty among managers regarding when to initiate the routine poor performance management, absenteeism management strategies within human resources management regarding persons with disabilities.

Managers perceive themselves to be doing their job and treated unfairly by employee’s accusations because all three areas are within the manager’s domain of responsibility to manage.

*“There I am accused of trying to make her suffer while she’s on a wheelchair”*

Managers do not want to be accused of victimising employees with disabilities. Managers do not have a person to consult with to raise these concerns when they arise.

Moreover, managers are not supported, guided nor equipped to deal with these situations. Participants expressed that they were still unsure if they made the right decisions or handled the situation appropriately because there are elements of role ambiguity regarding establishing the work capability of employees.

*“I don’t know what the expectation is. I don’t have a medical background...”*

Employers do not have skills to integrate persons with disabilities in the workplace (Naudé & Delport, 2004:271, 280).

Managers will not easily reasonably accommodate employees with disabilities in the absence of knowledge regarding disability, clear advice from employee and experts on the necessity of those adjustments. This may be perceived as reluctance to make adjustments to their workplace by employees with disabilities, as mentioned by O'Mahony (2017:2).

However the researcher disagrees with O'Mahony (2017:2) who said that managers will not make adjustments even when their necessity is demonstrated. One participant mentioned that he was eager to implement accommodation that would assist to enable the employee to be productive.

*“If it was clear to me then, that this was to be very limited mobility then I would have really pushed the options for alternative tools like voice activated software”*

## Theme 7: Challenges of establishing employee's ability to do work with clarity

### 7.1. Sub-theme: Employee is unable to work due to functional limitations or employee's own over estimation of ability

Participant P1, P2, P7, P9 and P10 indicated they are ill equipped to understand instances where employees are unable to work due to functional limitation or employee's own over estimation of ability.

P	Direct quotations
P1	"Be honest with me, this is my situation, this is what I am capable of doing and what I commit to do. This is what I am not capable of doing. Where can we meet each other halfway? So if I understand,"
P2	"For me, it's still pretty unclear as to what to expect from a person with disabilities. Do they have to perform at the exact same capacity as a healthy person (employee has just returned to work after a severely disabling injury). Or is there any form of leniency?, and if there is any form of leniency then how does one determine that, because it's then very subjective because my stance on it could be very different from someone else. So I just found that sort of ....., being very testing for me."
P7	"It has its challenges though because on the one hand you have to (...) especially what you have given somebody work to do. Their duties, you have to then think, ok, will you have to think will this person be able to do it. At the end of the day you don't want to limit and say but you cannot do this because of your disability. At the end of the day there is some work to be done"
P9	"There are times that colleagues will start asking me how do you compare this employee with that employee and I will say, you cannot and you should not. That employee is not the same as other employees"
P10	<p>".... I felt like he was playing on his disability but with time I found that I just needed to find out what he enjoys doing and I actually seconded him there but I cannot always do that because I do need people in my team.."</p> <p>"So I found myself having to take away more work because it was not getting results from there."</p>

## 7.2. Discussion of theme 7 and sub-themes

Managers have a challenge with establishing employee's ability to do work with clarity. There are times employees are allocated work but are unable to work due to limitations and own over estimation of ability. An understanding of the process involved in order to make these determinations is not provided by participants.

Persons with disabilities face disproportionately high levels of unemployment due to the fact that a disability discredits the actual or perceived ability of an individual to engage in social, educational, economic and even political arenas, trapping one in a vicious circular causality of poverty and disability (SAHRC, 2017:13).

The researcher believes that the abilities of the employee were not established before or during job placement. Therefore if the abilities are not established, the researcher agrees that a suitable working environment is not and cannot be provided to employees with disabilities, which would empower them to do their work effectively and efficiently (Ximba, 2016:142).

The researcher believes reasonable accommodation will always be inadequate in the absence of appropriate job design and environment. Mathaphuna (2007:102), mentioned a key factor regarding job fit, that training should be extended to recruiters in the organisation, where assistance is offered in the process of hiring persons with disabilities and where the need is identified for continuous training and support for persons with disability employed in their organisation.

Cummings and Worley (2009:477) suggested also that organisational development interventions can play a role regarding work design, career planning, and career development and performance management. All the above can be used to integrate the employee with disability into the workforce.

Van Staden (2011:186) found that there are constraints relating to performance management and the fairness of the performance management process for persons with disabilities. Furthermore, there is uncertainty on whether the performance standards to be used for persons with disabilities should be the same as for those of non-disabled employees. From this study, it appears that both managers and employees with disability experience the uncertainty regarding performance



standards. Both employees with disabilities and managers do not have a process of identifying abilities of employees with disabilities. In the absence of the fundamental clarity and guiding processes mentioned above, the researcher agrees with the findings that persons with disabilities will inevitably face a number of disparities at work, including lower pay or benefits, less job security, higher levels of supervision, lower participation in job and departmental decisions, lower levels of company-sponsored formal training and less informal training than co-workers (Blanck et al., 2009:401), which the organisation must find a way to resolve.

Gates (2000: 86) suggested that skilful collaboration and consultation regarding the needs of the employee with disability, organisational policies and procedures, manager of employee with disability and co-worker is required, to ensure that the gaps in functional capacity caused by the disability do not interfere with meeting job requirements.

Theme 8: Challenge of not being equipped, trained, nor supported in the management of employees with disabilities.

This theme was a dominant theme and central finding in the study. The gaps in various types of training such as induction, awareness and skills transfer were mentioned repeatedly by all (100%) participants.

8.1. Sub-theme: lack of on boarding training for managers of employees with disabilities.

Managers described with a degree of frustration how there was a lack of training to prepare them concerning the requirements, attitudes and processes involved in the management of employees with disabilities.

P	Direct quotations
P1	"I don't think managers are equipped"
P2	"Training on this is what you can expect; I felt to a large extent very limited support with trying to deal with things."

P3	“I think if he had a different disability training would be necessary “
P4	“There wasn’t anything. So what could help in an induction? When a manager is appointed. They would go through or things like that.”
P7	“Awareness or an induction into the management of employees with disabilities”.
P8	“No, I haven’t received any training from Eskom on how to manage employees with disabilities, that is part of what I mentioned where Eskom can do more, they can still improve on the way they recruit and educate the management because I think as management it’s just human nature to feel uncomfortable, if you look at a cv and you see that this person has a disability. Because you think it’s going to have an impact on productivity. So you’re already, forming an opinion about this person before you’ve given them a chance. That’s human nature. So what I think Eskom can do, in terms of management is where its starting from, I mean managers are the ones who recruit , they should have a programme where teach the managers, just a little of cultural behavioural change not really a technical thing.”
P9	<p>“Eskom did not prepare me for this. I am of the view that people that are going to work with persons with disabilities should be prepared. I should know what you are going to experience.”</p> <p>“Human resources have not really given me the tools.”</p> <p>“It’s not like I felt bad about him, I was only when I started realising that look, I should have been better prepared for this. And now obviously with his disability, managers have to know about the disability itself.”</p>
P10	“Yes, would have appreciated training”

8.2. Sub-theme: Lack of awareness regarding disability related information in the business/applicability of disability related resources.

P	Direct quotations
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P1	“There is Eskom’s policies and guidelines but getting to the nitty gritty. What can I do what can’t I do.”
P2	“Eskom has numerous documents which I only discovered this year...But I just felt that surely someone could have highlighted those things to me. And say these are the documents that are available, so you need to understand them so you can understand your role and responsibility as a line manager. So once again I just felt had been pretty much left and not really advised.”
P4	“I think it would have been better if it was bit easier to access that kind of information or if it could be packaged in a toolkit”
P5	<p>“The process to get employee accommodated was seriously challenging”</p> <p>“So eventually I had two line managers from my side to try and approve the request. Eventually I had one line manager agree if we send him to the Eskom doctor. The Eskom Doctor one liner report came back saying “ line manager to make a decision”</p> <p>“So it really doesn’t make sense if the process guides you to the Eskom Dr to get involved. Then Eskom Dr turns around and says line manager must make a decision.”</p>
P6	“I would like to be able to consult and be advised. I don’t have to know everything. Disability is progressive; we need help over time to adjust to the needs to the employees as the disability worsens with time. “
P7	“She said there are lot of managers that don’t read policies on disabilities. And I looked at myself. And you know what I went to Hyperwave and I searched for all the disability related documents. I was like, she is right. You have this person and the workplace has policies and procedures, and I have never seen it or gone through it. What is actually required as a manager? So I downloaded all those documents. So I needed to study this, I had a person but I didn’t know. She mentioned it, saying, you know what the managers don’t know all these policies Eskom has for persons with disabilities.”
P8	“Package a toolkit can be part of the training module”
P10	“For me what worked best was observing his reactions to other people. I haven’t been for awareness”

8.3. Sub-theme: Lack of skills/knowledge to manage employees with disability confidently.

P	Direct quotations
P1	<p>“I have a person reporting to me who has a mental health disability, what do I do, what don’t I do? What am I allowed to do, what am I not allowed to do. How far do I push? Do I push at all?”</p> <p>“When do we reach to the point to say that enough now? That’s where the uncertainty comes from.”</p> <p>“Help me to manage this person. Because at the moment I’m sitting there saying I have literally exhausted all avenues, I’m still not getting results. Still not getting attendance, still not getting a simple response to an email.”</p>
P2	<p>“Surely, there must be an intervention when a person comes back to work, psychologically, is he prepared for it after a year of not being at work and so his responses to work, someone could have said in the these circumstances you can expect the employee to behave like this or respond like that. Don’t do this because this is how it will affect a person.”</p>
P3	<p>“I think more should be done to equip managers to manage people.”</p>
P4	<p>“I hope no one is going to say why have you allowed this person half day? Well I have tried to complete the process and I don’t want to disadvantage the person and delays from getting their therapy treatment.”</p>
P5	<p>“Then we would have never gone to Eskom doctor, we would have made the decision ourselves a long time ago. It depends on line manager to get a doctors referral.”</p>
P6	<p>“I feel we are not protecting the dignity of employees because when they face challenges they have to disclose everything to us. There needs to be more separation, advice, sensitivity training on the part of the business”.</p>
P7	<p>“Sometimes I don’t get work and I see myself being lenient. You don’t know that its’ wrong you have done this and not that. Part of training how do you treat them like any other employee. ....This is what you do and this s what you don’t do.? Even high level on this is what you do. Getting equipped is needed. Like go here when this is happening.”</p>

P8	<p>“Educating managers in terms of about that the person’s physical disability does not prevent the person from adding value to the organisations and unless you have personal experience you could never relate to it. So I believe training is needed for management and it should start at the top. Because if our leadership drives the value of disabled people then the employees would embrace the working relationship.”</p>
P9	<p>“If you place a person with disability in an area. Training and make the manager ready and able to accommodate what is coming. You may find that it creates problems, unhappiness to the manager who may be blamed when issues come up and issues with employee and other staff members and yet no one was trained. It’s not something that one can claim and say I am born with the ability to manage persons with disabilities. You need to be guided. You need to be given tools and skills and an explanation. It’s not like you are in a family and you have a sibling who has a disability and now you have to accept. This is the workplace. We are paid to manage employees and the duty of the employer includes equipping us for every task we have to accomplish.”</p>

#### 8.4. Discussion of theme 8 and sub-themes

Managers are not being equipped, trained, nor supported in the management of employees with disabilities. Training is required to increase managers’ ability to realise the opportunity of employing persons with disabilities. There is a degree of frustration that managers experience when they find themselves not doing their jobs well due to lack of information.

Disability awareness and training for managers is key to better outcomes in disability management, according to both the literature and the empirical study, it is found that the lack of knowledge regarding disability creates barriers in the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market and this should be addressed through awareness, specifically in a training programme for employers (Naudé & Delpont, 2004:271, 280).

Jans et al., (2011:536) said there is a lack of awareness on how to manage employees with a disability. Some of these training topics and elements were identified in the study by managers such as;

- a. Managers need to be coached on skills to engage employees on sensitive disability issues.
- b. Managers need access and awareness of internal policies and procedures.
- c. Managers need to develop their confidence on disability related matters
- d. Managers need training on inclusive values and behaviours
- e. Managers need clear role clarity at each stage in the disability management process
- f. Managers need an on-going support system
- g. Managers need disability sensitivity training
- h. Managers need guidance on reasonable accommodation requirements and requests
- i. Managers need expert advice i.e. some medical advice on establishing employee's functional capacity to ensure better job fit.
- j. Managers need psycho-social support

#### 4.6.4. Findings on the potential role of EAP in support of managers of employees with disabilities

##### Theme 9: Line managers think EAP can play a role in supporting disability management

Managers were aware of the known EAP role. However they did not know what role EAP could play to assist them with regards to disability management. The researcher explained that the role was envisioned and should be based on how they think EAP can assist based on their current experiences. The following sub–themes were identified in the data.

##### 9.1. Sub-theme: Conduct diversity training

Participant P3, P5, P8, and P10 identified a need for training on communication barriers, myths and fears regarding disability, creating a diversity culture, team cohesion, EAP services and skills to engage on difficult conversation.

P	Direct quotations
P3	“The more different the disability the great the need to address communication barriers ,diversity issues , Work distribution and Team cohesion will take knock because as I said people are scared of disability.”
P5	‘We all get trained in theory knowledge on the subject matter experts that we are, but not on that soft side. I think the Middle Management Programme and may be can have something specifically EAP related...’
P8	“Managers should have the mandatory training in terms of the offerings from EAP. In terms of counselling, coaching, cultural. Remember the manager brings the culture to the environment and a team will follow the culture the manager instils. So it starts with the manager.”“ EAP training should be as formal as the Middle Management Programme, mandatory for all managers at all levels to do, as part of their career development and Individual Development Plan in Eskom.”
P10	“Other than, training, I have no idea” “I would get help for those employees who are unapproachable.”
P8	“Managers don’t get trained on how to instil a culture of respect.”  “It should be compulsory because cultural change, behavioural change in the work environment is as important as complying to Safety, Health, Environment & Quality regulations.”  “And I’m not saying managers should be counselling but it is good to be able to have the skills to engage.”

## 9.2. Sub-theme: Coaching

P3, P5, P9 mentioned coaching, scenarios and one on one.

P	Direct quotations
P9	“How we refer, it can create a problem when someone with disability tells you have a problem and you want to refer them to EAP.”
P3	“EAP would come in on one and you and the other subordinate as a group to teach everybody how to work with this individual. I think the biggest issue as I said when we started is that people become afraid.”

P5	“Saying that managers need to be trained or equipped in situations or scenarios, this is what can happen. How do we treat this? How do we look at and how do we then act on it.”
P9	<p>“I think I could have called EAP to coach me on how to approach a sensitive issue with a person with disability that I had, to advise me and say in this instance when you address a situation address it like this, when you want to say something, say it like this.....”</p> <p>“I can have a person to fall back on and consult and I think it would really help because people with different disabilities are not the same and should not be treated the same as well. There scope is wider for EAP support in the regard.”</p>

### 9.3. Sub-theme: Mediation

P1 mentioned mediation between employee and manager.

P	Direct quotations
P1	“We’ve had mediations sessions and I think they are beneficial.”

### 9.4. Sub-theme: Managerial consultation and advise

P1, P2 mentioned reintegration of employees after disabling injury.

P	Direct quotations
P1	“I think it’s a challenge here, because I would say the manager can phone EAP and they can give be advise on how I can better deal with the situation.”
p2	“If consultation with EAP would have assisted to identify the needs of the employee it would have helped”



### 9.5. Sub-theme: Psycho – social support

P1, P6, P7 mentioned that there are aspects of the job that are stressful and would like to speak with someone who'll support them.

P	Direct quotations
P1	<p>“It’s emotionally taxing. When you possibly could be the reason why an employee might or might not lose her job.”</p> <p>“It is stressful”</p>
P6	<p>It would be helpful to just speak about issues with somebody, I want to protect them and there are a lot of unfair things, but sometimes I just want to have an uncensored discussion about them at an EAP level. “</p>
P7	<p>“Like the coaching and support. I always say, I am also the employee. I might be a manager but I am also the employee. I’ve got feelings the same as you. So because I’m in middle management you get pressure from the top and from the bottom. From the tops they say you are not managing your people, from the bottom the employee wants to take you for a grievance for trying to manage them. So you also need that support.”</p>
P7	<p>“There is a role EAP can play in supporting managers to deal with employees with disabilities. Each time I deal with the employee she is the one going to EAP. As if you have done something wrong a manager. But you also as a manager actually needs to go to EAP to say ok, someone to assist as to how to handle this situation, maybe you could have handled it like this way.”</p>

### 9.6. Discussion of theme 9 and sub- themes

The potential role of EAP as identified by line managers of employees with disabilities in the study is based on the needs and challenges identified during the discussions. Naudé and Delport (2004:281) wrote about relevant role of social workers in assisting organisations with the task of integrating employees with disabilities.

The lack of preparation and training of managers of employees with disabilities was the strongest convergence of views by the participants. All participants felt strongly

that they were not adequately equipped by the organisation to manage employees with disabilities in many aspects.

The managers identified a role of EAP to conduct training in the management of employees with disabilities. There is literature that concurs stating EA Professionals will have to intervene in organisations to instil knowledge of diversity, discrimination and empowerment. In addition to initiate interventions on diversity training, support and mentorship programmes (Bhoodram, 2010: 76). The trainer's role includes sensitivity, and is included in supervisory training to help supervisors recognise the rights of the person with disabilities in the workplace, based on EAP knowledge of reasonable accommodation from needs of employees with disabilities.

EAP can coach managers and prepare managers by presenting scenarios and case studies that may occur in the workplace. Coaching is a role for EAPs not previously detailed in literature. Mathaphuna (2007:102) mentioned a mediator/facilitator/job-coach role player should remain involved during this whole process supporting managers of employees with disabilities. Angeloni (2013:6) mentioned that EAPs can provide supervisory consultation and educational services on an on-going basis which is aligned to coaching. Also aligned to coaching, Akabas and Gates (2002:1) said EAP can prepare the workplace to be responsive to the needs of people with mental health conditions (as well as other disabilities) and prepare the managers and employees to meet workplace expectations by helping to identify and negotiate appropriate accommodation.

EAP can provide mediation services. EAP can play a mediator role between the persons with disabilities and the employer/management (Mathaphuna, 2007:102). Mediation can be identified as that bridging role as well where bridging relationships, bringing diverse people into contact and these relationships may be especially important in improving employment success for persons with disabilities (Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek and Leahy, 2015: 22). The social dimensions necessitate that the considered needs of a person with a disability should harmonise with the policies and procedures of the workplace as well as the needs of supervisors and co-workers (Gates, 2000: 86).

EAP can provide managerial consultation and advice as was identified by participants. Akabas and Gates (2002:7) state that a company's bottom line can be affected by employee morale and morale is affected by the quality of the supervisor. When EAPs help supervisors to be more responsive to employees with disabilities, the quality of work life for the individual with a disability is improved and the work group feels that the supervisor is more supportive. The researcher is of the opinion that the collaborative, consultative, mediator and programme developer roles all fit within organisational consultation core technology. Naudé and Delpont (2004:281) said social workers are well positioned to be specialised consultants to employers in the workplace. The researcher believes that case management core technology according to the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010:1) may be used as a tool to address the most suitable implementation of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities and the evaluation of manager practices and decisions regarding reasonable accommodation on a case by case basis.

EAP can provide psycho-social support to participants. Participants mentioned that there are aspects of the job that are stressful and would like to speak with someone who'll support them. This finding addresses the need to look after the wellbeing of the manager which was not identified in literature but rather the focus of literature is on the stress of employees with disabilities in the workplace. The researcher believes that if an employee is expected to perform a task they are neither trained nor prepared for, with elements of perceived unfairness or conflict, the situation will cause occupational stress. Cummings and Worley (2015:509) supports that stating that negative workplace experiences such as unfair treatment, poor peer and boss relationships, lack of support, role conflict, lack for training/skills to carry out the work and ambiguity are workplace stressors. The researcher concludes that the negative workplace experiences such as a perception of unfair treatment by subordinates, lack of support and lack of training/skills to carry out the work is a workplace stressor.

The researcher believes that provision of EAP support of managers of employees with disabilities will be a reactive measure. A dynamic, proactive and preventative measure would be to prevent occupational stress, thus requiring the EAP to ensure

training and coaching of managers on disability management is done, in this manner occupational stress is likely to be reduced.

The researcher believes there needs to be EAP record of specific information detailing the types of workplace issues experienced by employees with disabilities and managers incorporated into EAP reporting, which will enable further tailor-made interventions on the role of EAP on disability management.

#### 4.7. CONCLUSION ON THEMES

The researcher can conclude that while managers experience challenges with managing employees with disabilities, there are areas of success in managing employees with disabilities such as;

- Managers are accepting of diversity and do not have negative attitudes towards disability and employees with disabilities.
- Managers perceive employees with disabilities to be good performers and
- Managers support and implement reasonable accommodation measures for their employees with disabilities.

Managers experience challenges and require support. Managing employees with disabilities is not the same in all aspects as managing other employees. There is a need for training, transfer of values and skills as well as support required for managers to capably manage employees with disabilities. Although it was found that managers experience disability as a phenomenon close to them and are accepting of the differences between people in the workplace, additional tools and guidance is required.

Some of the challenges were that:

- Managers did not trust the motives of employees with disabilities and would need guidance on these aspects to be considered in the process of creating equality in the workplace.
- Managers were perceived to be victimising when performing duties of managing performance, absenteeism and making reasonable accommodation reviews, this is an aspect of the job that is stressful.

- Managers did not have clarity on the process required to establish the employee's ability to work.
- Managers were not trained, skilled nor supported in the management of employees with disabilities
- Managers identified potential roles for EAP in support of managing employees with disabilities.

In the study these key findings met the objectives of the study and placed the researcher in a position to make recommendations.

## CHAPTER 5:

### KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the key findings, conclusions and recommendations will be discussed. The researcher will also discuss how the goals and objectives of the study were achieved.

The main goal of the study was to identify and describe the challenges experienced by managers of employees with disabilities. The study was motivated by lack of availability of research on experiences and challenges of managers specifically the disability management aspect of their work. The EAP study was motivated also by the minimal research on the involvement of EAP in disability management in the workplace.

#### 5.2. KEY FINDINGS

- 5.2.1 Managers were found to be accepting of diversity and did not have negative attitudes towards disability as a phenomenon. Managers were found to be addressing issues of social integration amidst diversity. Managers also expressed having to take steps to achieve social integration by overcoming their initial insecurities about the unknown task of managing employees with disability.
- 5.2.2 Managers treated employees with disabilities in an inclusive manner demonstrating a value for diversity. This was consistent with a social model of disability which recognises one's own behaviour as a determinant of the degree of the other's disability.
- 5.2.3 Managers expressed that the employees with disabilities are capable and good performers despite limitations. The researcher found that one of the key contributors to good performance was that managers were supportive and had implemented reasonable accommodation measures for those employees. According to the SAHRC (2017:17) being reasonably accommodated is not conditional on the good performance of an

employee; on the contrary, it is the provision of the appropriate reasonable accommodation such as equipment that enables productivity.

5.2.4 Managers implemented reasonable accommodation measures. They made these work adjustments with care and consultation with employees with disabilities. Therefore managers view the implementation of reasonable accommodation as part of what is required and necessary to manage employees with disabilities effectively. Managers implemented the following adjustments for employees with disabilities;

5.2.4.1 Adjustment of work deadlines to accommodate a shorter week which the employee worked.

5.2.4.2 Adjustments to employee outputs were required in order to facilitate the productivity of the employees and to avoid limitations.

5.2.4.3 Alternative work placements or sites such as secondments, working at a site close to home and working from home were implemented.

5.2.4.4 Managers focus on the skills, abilities and strengths of the employees when allocating work. Managers remove those outputs that were limiting. Employees with disabilities are able to work; this is achieved by focusing only on their abilities.

5.2.5 Managers were found to distrust the motives of employees with disabilities in some instances. A minority (three participants) of managers said employees with disability cherry pick when they seek to be seen as equal, based on the situation. Of those, two of the managers said they perceive that this is done more often to avoid accounting for deliverables. Another said they were concerned regarding instances when they were made to feel guilty. This manager referred to an instance when they were accused of trying to make employees suffer after making a management decision about the employee. The relationship dynamics involved with managing persons with disabilities can be complex and require deconstruction utilising intervention from EAP.

5.2.6 Managers were challenged by the perceptions of persons with disabilities about them. Managers perceived that employees with disabilities perceive that they are victimising when performing their management duties. Managers experienced challenges when engaging employees on poor performance, absenteeism and reviewing of reasonable accommodation

arrangements. Managers perceive themselves to be doing their job and being treated unfairly by employee's accusations because all three areas are within the manager's domain of responsibility to manage.

- 5.2.7 Managers have challenges with determining the employee's ability to do work and yet management includes the expectation for them to manage employee performance. They indicated they are ill equipped to understand instances when employees are unable to work due to functional limitation. They are ill equipped to understand when the employee is unable to work due to the employee's own over estimation of ability. Managers also perceived that they did not have adequate support to make these determinations.
- 5.2.8 Managers face the challenge of not being equipped, trained nor supported in the management of employees with disabilities. The absence of various types of training that are intended to equip managers such as induction, awareness and skills transfer were mentioned repeatedly by all (100%) of the participants. The following training topics were mentioned, managers need;
- 5.2.8.1 To be coached on skills to engage employees on sensitive disability issues.
  - 5.2.8.2 Access and awareness of internal policies and procedures.
  - 5.2.8.3 To develop their confidence on disability related matters.
  - 5.2.8.4 Training on inclusive values and behaviours.
  - 5.2.8.5 Clear role clarity at each stage in the disability management process.
  - 5.2.8.6 On-going support system.
  - 5.2.8.7 Disability sensitivity training.
  - 5.2.8.8 Guidance on reasonable accommodation requirements and requests.
  - 5.2.8.9 Expert advice on establishing employee's functional capacity to ensure better job fit through a job and work analysis.
  - 5.2.8.10 Managers need psycho-social support.
- 5.2.9 Managers believe that EAP can play a role in supporting disability management. The potential role of EAP was identified by line managers of employees with disabilities in the study as follows; managers suggested that EAP:



5.2.9.1 Should conduct training in the management of employees with disabilities on diversity and inclusion. EAP should provide training on the following disability management content;

- Awareness and on the application of internal policies and procedures
- Skills to engage on sensitive disability issues
- Develop manager confidence on disability related matters
- Teaching inclusive values and behaviours, as well as on hidden bias
- Create role clarity at each stage in the disability management process
- Promote the avenues available to managers to access on-going support
- Guidance on reasonable accommodation requirements
- Guidance on the process of establishing employee's functional capacity to ensure better job fit.

5.2.9.2 Can coach managers and prepare managers by presenting scenarios and case studies that may occur in the workplace. EAPs can provide supervisory consultation and educational services on an on-going basis which is aligned to coaching.

5.2.9.3 Can provide mediation services.

5.2.9.4 Can provide managerial consultation and advice to managers

5.2.9.5 Can provide psycho-social support to participants. Participants mentioned there are aspects of the job that are stressful and would like to speak with someone who'll support them.

### 5.3. CONCLUSIONS

The study gives a view of the experiences and attitudes of managers of employees with disabilities as described by themselves toward persons with disabilities and regarding their challenges in managing employees with disability.

5.3.1 Managers were found to be accepting of diversity and did not have negative attitudes towards disability as a phenomenon. The response from all (100%) participants regarding their view on the phenomenon of disability included a reflection upon their treatment of persons with disabilities. It was found that participants perceived themselves to treat employees with disabilities the same as other employees. Therefore managers do not hold prejudices (which are negative attitudes towards others based on a prejudgment about those individuals rooted upon little prior knowledge or experience) against persons with disabilities (Encyclopaedia, 2017:1).

5.3.2. Managers treat employees with disabilities in an inclusive manner therefore demonstrating a value for diversity.

5.3.3. Managers mentioned that they are satisfied with their employees' performance. Managers describe that there are clear benefits to employing persons with disabilities, confirming findings by Maja et al. (2008:24) stating that managers acknowledge the positive contribution made by the employees with a disability. The researcher found that one of the key contributors to good performance was that managers were supportive and had implemented reasonable accommodation measures for the employees.

5.3.4. The researcher found that all (100%) the managers implemented reasonable accommodation of their subordinates with disabilities with care and consultation. Section 15 of the EEA (1998:16- 17) states that; affirmative action measure implemented by a designated employer must include .... c) Making reasonable accommodation for people from designated groups in order to ensure that they enjoy equal opportunities. This means that employers must not discriminate against any person, should reasonably accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities (Thomas, 2002:4, 232; Crane and Matten, 2010:294) as demonstrated in these

findings. Contrary to literature where Kulkarni and Lengnick-Hall (2014:166) suggested that being reasonably accommodated was difficult because the manager may attribute the requester to be exploiting the legislation by asking for unwarranted time off. Persons with disabilities are reasonably accommodated by the majority of participants in this study.

The researcher found that managers understood that an enabler of employees performing their duties productively was that employees with disabilities should be afforded reasonable accommodation; this was aligned also to core requirements stipulated in the EEA (1998:17).

The Code of Good Practice on Key Aspects on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities (2002:9-10) states that reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities entails the following aspects which were implemented by managers of employees with disabilities in this study;

- Adjustment of deadlines
- Adjustment of outputs and support to avoid limitations
- Alternative work placements/sites
- restructuring jobs so that non-essential functions were re-assigned and manager focuses only on those abilities as was found in the study

5.3.5. Managers indicated that they do not trust the motives of employees with disabilities.

Lewicki and Tomlinson (2003:1) defined distrust as the confident expectation that another individual's motives, intentions, and behaviours are sinister and harmful to one's own interests. This expectation will consequently lead to conflict.

Managers' distrust confirms findings by Ximba (2016:142) that employees with disabilities felt that management connections with them were lacking. Furthermore those managers should create a trusting environment where persons with disabilities feel valued for their contributions.

Therefore managers who do not trust the motives of employees with disabilities would need guidance on these aspects to be considered in the process of creating

equality in the workplace. Wendell (1996:66) says there are still many obstacles to thinking clearly and accurately about the needs and claims of persons with disabilities that it seems too early to attempt to weigh them in relation to the needs and claims of others. Therefore, the researcher concludes that the needs of employees with disabilities should not be weighed or compared with those of non-disabled employees in a workplace where a balance in equality has not yet been established.

#### 5.3.6. Managers did not want to be accused of victimising employees with disabilities.

Managers did not have a person to consult with to raise these concerns when they arose. Furthermore managers should be trained on how to handle these circumstances. Cummings and Worley (2015: 503) states that diversity interventions showed positive attitudinal changes over a period of time in respect to reduction of emotional reactions, making judgements, behavioural reactions on diversity issues creating significant organisational impact.

The researcher believes that managers should be assisted by diversity sensitive and clear internal human resource process that addresses both the complaints of employees with disabilities and needs of managers, without escalation to accusations of discrimination and grievances. Naudé & Delport (2004:271, 280) found that employers do not have these skills required to integrate persons with disabilities in the workplace.

#### 5.3.7. Managers did not have clarity on the process required to establish the employee's ability to work.

The researcher believes that making assumptions and uninformed decisions about the employee's capabilities; the type of work they should and should not do is likely to lead to discriminatory practices. Therefore managers need expert advice, including the input of persons with disabilities, on these aspects of employment of persons with disabilities. In the absence of assistance, the researcher agrees that suitable working environments are not always provided to employees with disabilities, those which would empower them to do their work effectively and

efficiently as indicated by Ximba (2016:142). The researcher agrees with Gates (2000:86) suggestion that the skilful collaboration and consultation regarding the needs of the employee with disability, organisational policies and procedures, manager of the employees as well as the co-workers of the employee is required. Skilful collaboration and consultation would ensure that the functional capacity limitation caused by the disability condition does not interfere with meeting job requirements.

Mathaphuna (2007:102), mentioned a key factor with regards to job fit, that training should be extended to recruiters in the organisation, where assistance is offered in the process of hiring persons with disabilities and where the need is identified for continuous training and support for persons with disability employed in their organisation. The researcher believes reasonable accommodation will always be inadequate in the absence of appropriate job fit, work analysis, design and environment fit.

5.3.8. Managers were not being equipped, trained, nor supported in the management of employees with disabilities.

Training is required to increase managers' ability to realise the opportunity of employing persons with disabilities. Disability awareness and training for managers is key to better outcomes in disability management, according to both the literature and the empirical study, it is found that the lack of knowledge regarding disability creates barriers in the integration of persons with disabilities into the labour market and this should be addressed through awareness, specifically in a training programme for employers (Naudé & Delpont, 2004:271, 280).

The researcher concludes that many of the management challenges identified in the study are driven by an absence of appropriate training and support for managers of employees with disabilities.

5.3.9. EAP have a role to play in assisting managers with the challenges they face in managing employees with disabilities in the workplace.

The researcher believes that this study proves that the meaningful employment, inclusion and capable management of employees with disabilities in the workplace are an Employee Assistance Programme and practitioner's concern.

The potential role of the EAP regarding the challenges faced by line managers in managing employees with disabilities in the workplace as identified by managers was established.

#### 5.3.9.1 EAP should conduct diversity training

There is literature that concurs stating EA Professionals will have to intervene in organisations to instil knowledge of diversity, discrimination and empowerment and initiate interventions on diversity training, support and mentorship programmes (Bhoodram 2010: 76). The trainer's role includes sensitivity, and is included in supervisory training to help supervisors recognise the rights of the person with disabilities in the workplace, based on EAP knowledge of reasonable accommodation of the needs of employees with disabilities based on interactions with employees, ability to network with experts and realise health benefits.

EAP should potentially mitigate inevitable work-related issues that result from a lack of capable management of persons with disabilities by ensuring managers receive the training they need to enable them to confidently manage employees with disabilities.

#### 5.3.9.2 EAP should coach managers

EAP should coach managers and prepare managers by presenting scenarios and case studies that may occur in the workplace. Angeloni (2013:6) mentioned that EAPs can provide supervisory consultation and educational services on an on-going basis which is aligned to coaching. Also aligned to coaching, Akabas and Gates (2002:1) said EAP can prepare the workplace to be responsive to the needs of people with mental health conditions (as well as other disabilities) and prepare the managers and employees to meet workplace expectations by helping to identify and negotiate appropriate accommodation.

#### 5.3.9.3. EAP should provide mediation services

EAP should provide mediation services. EAP can play a mediator role between the persons with disabilities and the employer/management (Mathaphuna, 2007:102). Mediation can be identified as that bridging role as well where bridging relationships, bring diverse people into contact and these relationships may be especially important in improving employment success for persons with disabilities (Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek and Leahy, 2015: 22). The social dimensions necessitate that the considered needs of a person with a disability should harmonise with the policies and procedures of the workplace as well as the needs of supervisors and co-workers (Gates, 2000: 86). EAP can create this balance.

#### 5.3.9.4. EAP should provide managerial consultation and advice

EAP should provide managerial consultation and advice as was identified by participants. Akabas and Gates (2002:7) state that a company's bottom line can be affected by employee morale and morale is affected by the quality of the supervisor. When EAPs help supervisors to be more responsive to employees with disabilities, the quality of work life for the individual with a disability is improved and the work group feels that the supervisor is more supportive. According to the researcher, the collaborative, consultative, mediator and programme developer roles all fit within organisational consultation core technology. Naudé and Delport (2004:281) said social workers are well positioned to be specialised consultants to employers in the workplace. The researcher believes that case management core technology in Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2010: 1) may be used as a tool to address the most suitable implementation of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities and the evaluation of manager practices and decisions regarding reasonable accommodation on a case by case basis.

#### 5.3.9.5. EAP should provide psycho-social support for managers

EAP should provide psycho-social support to participants. It was not anticipated by the researcher that the impact of this inability to manage employees would have an emotional/stress related effect on the managers themselves.

Participants mentioned there are aspects of the job that are stressful and would like to speak with someone who'll support them. This finding addresses the need to look

after the wellbeing of the manager which was not identified in literature but rather the focus of literature is on the stress of employees with disabilities in the workplace.

The researcher believes that if an employee is expected to perform a task they are neither trained nor prepared for, with elements of perceived unfairness or conflict, the situation may cause occupational stress. Cummings and Worley (2015:509) supports that stating that negative workplace experiences such as unfair treatment, poor peer and boss relationships, lack of support, role conflict, lack of training/skills to carry out the work and ambiguity are workplace stressors. All the above elements are applicable to managers of employees with disabilities, which cause occupational stress.

#### 5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Although this study proved that managers do have a good theoretical concept of managing employees with disabilities, in order to ensure sustainability and uniformity in behaviour of managers, organisations should take more deliberate steps to train managers on inclusive attitudes, behaviour, legislation governing the employment and treatment of employees with disability in the workplace.

The researcher has referred to legislation and codes of good practice regarding disability to outline the processes to be followed when recruiting, appointing, retaining, training, advancing and exiting employees with disabilities. However these documents are not utilised by organisations, the researcher believes this information should form part of line manager training.

EAP can play a role regarding the evaluation of employer's current hiring, remuneration, promotion, retention and termination practices of employees with disabilities as in these areas there are challenges in equal treatment and upholding equitable rights amongst all persons with disabilities. These processes lack a crucial element of determining clear roles and responsibilities for human resources managers, labour relations officers, line managers in disability management (Van Staden, 2011:327).



Managers were perceived to be victimising when performing duties of managing performance, absenteeism and making reasonable accommodation reviews which is reported as being a stressful aspect of managing. Organisations should have support mechanisms for both employees and subordinates regarding disability management.

Managers do not have clarity on the process required to establish the employee's ability to work. The researcher supports a recommendation by Cummings and Worley (2015:502) stated that performance management interventions, including goal setting, monitoring, and coaching performance, must be aligned with the workforce's characteristics are important for persons with disabilities.

The researcher believes performance management should be used as informative analytical data to place employees in better fitting jobs in the organisation rather than as ammunition to presumptuously label employees with disabilities as poor performers.

Managers neither were trained, skilled nor supported in the management of employees with disabilities. The development of a toolkit to equip managers to manager employees with disability will be the most impactful preventative measure/intervention that the organisation can implement to address the challenges of managers and improve the lives of managers and their subordinates at work.

## 5.5. IMPLICATIONS FOR EAP

EAP is an adaptable and changing service, able to provide additional services, responding to organisational needs. These services/potential roles can be aligned to the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2015:1) core technologies.

Social workers have, indeed, articulated the importance of inclusion and accommodation for individuals with disabilities; however, they have largely stayed away from active involvement in the disability rights movement that has been initiated by persons with disabilities and their advocates (Hiranandani, 2005:3).

Social worker's involvement would have a positive impact on the following areas of concern regarding the management of employees with disabilities based on the

recommended role for EAP. The interventions would have a direct impact on improving these challenges found in literature such as the;

- Lack of equal treatment of persons with disabilities.
- Challenges with finding and providing appropriate employment for persons with disabilities;
- Challenges caused by an inappropriate working environment for persons with disabilities;
- Negative attitudes by the employers toward persons with disabilities;
- Negative experiences by persons with disabilities as employees at work;
- Lack of support, inclusion or acceptance by managers;
- Lack of training for management on how to manage employees with disabilities.

EAP therefore has potential to extend valuable inputs to disability management in the workplace through utilising of core technologies especially since the challenges facing managers of employees with disabilities are known.

In the study, a link between what managers believe they need from an EAP and the service implications required from EAP core technologies in order to optimise the benefits to both managers and PWDs employed in such organisations has been established.

The identified EAP roles and services have been aligned to the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2015:1) core technologies by both internal and external EAP. There is capacity to do this at Eskom.

#### 5.5.1 Marketing

EAP should market and promote EAP services (availability and guarantees, i.e. confidentiality) to management, supervisors, unions, employees and their family members regarding evolving role of EAP into disability management.

### 5.5.2. Consultation with work organisations

EAP should collaborate, consult, mediate, coach and develop a programme on Disability management. EAP should deliver managerial consultancy services to the managers of employees with disabilities.

### 5.5.3 Training and development

EAP should address developmental and training gaps by increasing skills and capability of managers in managing employees with disabilities to enhance job performance.

EAP should support diversity and enhance inclusive workplace practices (Mor Barak, 2000:339). Prepare the managers and employees to meet workplace expectations by helping to identify and negotiate appropriate accommodation (Akabas & Gates, 2002:1).

EAP should provide training on the following disability management content;

- Awareness and application of internal policies and procedures
- Skills to engage on sensitive disability issues.
- Develop manager confidence on disability related matters
- Teaching inclusive values and behaviours, as well as on hidden bias
- Create role clarity at each stage in the disability management process
- Promote the avenues available to managers to access on-going support
- Guidance on reasonable accommodation requirements
- Guidance on the process of establishing employee's functional capacity to ensure better job fit.

### 5.5.4 Case management

EAP should use case management to assist managers to find the most suitable reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities and the evaluation of manager practices and decisions regarding reasonable accommodation on a case by case basis.

EAP should use case management to provide counselling, psycho-social support for managers of employees with disabilities experiencing work stress. The researcher believes support of managers of employees with disabilities will be a reactive measure. A proactive and preventative measure to prevent occupational stress would require the EAP to ensure training and coaching of managers on disability management, therefore the occupational stress is likely to be reduced.

#### 5.5.5 Networking

EAP should establish lines of communication between relevant stakeholders that promote understanding and thus reduce the stigma experienced by many workers with disabilities (Akabas & Gates, 2002:1). Networking will enable the collaborative and integration of the human resources value chain in disability management.

#### 5.5.6 Monitoring and evaluation

EAP should keep records of disability related cases on EAP reports to;

- Enable access to disability related EAP trends
- Enable more EAP research regarding disability in the workplace to be done on the basis of data and analysed trends
- Enable organisational consultations on the data and trends picked up by EAP
- This will enable the evaluation of the impact of EAP on disability management in the workplace.

## 5.6. STUDY OBJECTIVES

The following objectives of the study were achieved through the literature review as well as through the empirical findings whereby themes and sub-themes were identified. The researcher concludes describing how these objectives were achieved through the study.

### 5.6.1. OBJECTIVE 1: Theoretically conceptualise the management of employees with disabilities

The aim of this objective was to theoretically conceptualise the management of employees with disabilities. This was achieved through a literature review and empirical findings.

In the literature review the researcher discussed the management of employees with disabilities in the workplace. The fundamentals of management of employees with disabilities are birthed from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, which “promised to establish a society based on social justice, to improve the quality of life of all citizens and to free the potential of each person” (Setlalentoa, 2015:5). In order to achieve these ideals, the Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998) was legislated to achieve equity and promoting equality, fair treatment in the labour market.

The theoretical conceptualisation of the management of employees with disabilities was also established in the study through understating the manager’s views on managing employees with disabilities. In this study the experiences and attitudes of managers of employees with disabilities as described by themselves toward persons with disabilities was established.

Managers were found to have a good concept of managing employees with disabilities. Managers were of the view that employees with disabilities were treated equally; this is aligned with the EE Act no 55 of 1998 goals in South Africa.

Management of employees with disabilities can be theorised as mainly:

- Managers were found to treat employees equally

- Managers were recognising the contribution of employees with disabilities as good performers at work.
- Managers were implementing reasonable accommodation measures for employees with disabilities with care and consideration.

#### 5.6.2. OBJECTIVE 2: Identify and describe the challenges faced by managers of employees with disabilities.

This objective was achieved in the study when the participants were requested to describe the challenges they face when managing of employees with disabilities.

In the study the following challenges were identified and explored:

- Some managers do not trust the motives of employees with disabilities. Although a less dominant theme, it revealed that some managers do have poor relationships with persons with disabilities, because they lack the information they need to manage them effectively.
- Some managers were perceived to be victimising PWDs when performing their duties. These managers do not want to be accused of victimising employees with disabilities. Managers do not have a person to consult with to raise these concerns when they arise. Moreover, managers are not supported, guided nor equipped to deal with these situations. Participants expressed that they were still unsure if they made the right decision or handled the situation appropriately because there were elements of role ambiguity regarding establishing the functional work capability of employees, legitimate absence, and necessity of some reasonable accommodation arrangements.
- Managers did not have clarity on measures required to establish the employee's functional ability to work. The researcher concludes that managers do lack prior knowledge of disability management and expert advice and as a result managers are unable to make informed decisions regarding abilities of employees.

- All managers neither were trained, skilled nor supported in the management of employees with disabilities. This was a dominant theme in the study because managers were of the view that they need induction, training and skills to empower them to manage employees with disabilities.

The researcher believes that identifying barriers to fair and equal treatment of all employees is crucial. This is done by understanding the challenges faced by management and finding out the barriers they face to effective and successful disability management. The key barrier identified in the study is lack of training, skills and support.

5.6.3. OBJECTIVE 3: Describe the potential role of the EAP regarding the challenges faced by line managers in managing employees with disabilities in the workplace.

In this study, the role of EAP as determined directly by the line managers as a result of their experiences and challenges in managing employees with disabilities has been established.

Mathaphuna (2017:102) researched the perceptions and experiences of employees with disabilities and uncovered the following EAP roles from the vantage point of employee experiences

- The collaborative role of EAP within HR;
- The consultative role;
- An evaluator of its application and the legislation's role;
- The mediator's role between the persons with disabilities and the employer
- The programme developer's role;

- The trainer's role where training includes sensitivity, and is included in supervisory training to help supervisors recognise the rights of the person with disabilities in the workplace, based on their knowledge of reasonable accommodation of their needs and health benefits. These roles were linked to the EAP core technologies by the researcher in the text.

In this study, the potential role of EAP was identified by line managers of employees with disabilities and based on the needs and challenges identified during the discussions. The researcher found that the role uncovered by Mathaphuna (2007:102) had identified similar roles for EAP as found in this study as follows;

- Conduct diversity training
- Mediation between employee with disabilities and employer
- Managerial consultation and advisory services to line managers

The following roles were uncovered in this study;

- Psycho-social support for line managers
- Coaching

The job-coach role was similarly described by Naudé and Delport (2004: 280), that social workers should remain involved during the employment process of employees with disabilities. However, in this study a coaching role was identified with reference to coaching line managers on how to carry out the role in disability management.

5.6.4. OBJECTIVE 4: Outline implications for EAP practice concerning issues affecting disability management.

In the study, a link between what managers believe they need from an EAP and the service implications required from EAP core technologies in order to optimise the benefits to both managers and PWDs employed in such organisations has been established. The services and potential roles in practice were aligned to the Standards Committee of EAPA-SA (2015:1) core technologies.



The researcher believes that this study proves that the meaningful employment, inclusion and capable management of employees with disabilities in the workplace are an Employee Assistance Programme and practitioner concern and practice area.

## 5.7. CONCLUSION

The study makes a valuable contribution to the management of employees with disabilities at Eskom by highlighting challenges experienced by managers.

The study served the purpose of reflecting on the effectiveness of Eskom's workplace strategy on the management of disability and assisted to provide guidance on where improvements can be made. This is in line with the requirements of the International Labour Organisation (2002:19) that states that organisations should engage in processes of reflecting on their efforts regarding disability management.

One of the dominant themes was that managers were not equipped, trained, skills nor supported to manage employees with disabilities. The researcher concludes that the challenges experienced by managers are as a result of not being equipped, trained, and skilled nor supported to manage employees with disabilities. It was not anticipated by the researcher that managers would express so great a need in the area of support and training.

The researcher found that the organisation needed to equip managers to enable them to make informed decisions, meet the legislative obligations and create greater understanding regarding the requirements for disability management practice as well as enhance organisational value of respecting and upholding diversity with confidence.

Managers see themselves being supported by EAP via mainly diversity training, coaching, counselling and managerial consultation. It was not anticipated by the researcher how significant the role of EAP in addressing the challenges identified by managers would be. It is established that there is a role for EAP in disability management in the workplace and therefore definite EAP practice implications.

The workplace is a highly contested and competitive environment. A suitable working environment that empowers both managers and employees with disabilities to do

their work effectively and efficiently requires a deliberate strategy, processes and support. Organisational process and culture need to support the management of persons with disabilities. The support and culture should result in employees with disabilities finding themselves part of the workplace contest, succeeding in their careers and making a contribution in the workplace, thereby attaining equity and equality in the workplace.

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## ANNEXURES

Annexure A: Proof of ethical clearance.....

Annexure B: Debriefing services for participants.....

Annexure C: Request to permission to conduct an empirical study at Eskom.....

Annexure D: Permission to conduct study.....

Annexure E: Data collection Instrument .....

Annexure F: Data storage form.....

Annexure G: Informed consent form .....

## Annexure A: Proof of ethical clearance



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities  
Research Ethics Committee

1 October 2018

Dear Ms Solombela

**Project:** Management challenges regarding employees with disabilities at Eskom, Gauteng: An EAP experience  
**Researcher:** B Solombela  
**Supervisor:** Prof LS Terblanche  
**Department:** Social Work and Criminology  
**Reference number:** 12309142 (GW20180925HS)

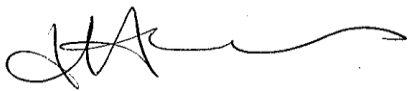
Thank you for the application that was submitted for ethical consideration.

The resubmitted application was **approved** by the **Research Ethics Committee** on 27 September 2018. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely



PP. **Prof Maxi Schoeman**  
**Deputy Dean: Research Ethics Committee**  
**Faculty of Humanities**  
**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**  
**e-mail: PGHumanities@up.ac.za**

cc: Prof LS Terblanche (Supervisor)  
Prof A Lombard (HoD)

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe  
Lefapha la Bomotheo

**Research Ethics Committee Members: Prof MME Schoeman (Deputy Dean); Prof KL Harris; Mr A Bizos; Dr L Blokland; Dr K Booyens; Dr A-M de Beer; Ms A dos Santos; Dr R Fassell; Ms KT Govinder Andrew; Dr E Johnson; Dr W Kelleher; Mr A Mohamed; Dr C Puttergill; Dr D Reyburn; Dr M Soer; Prof E Taljard; Prof V Thebe; Ms B Tsebe; Ms D Mokalapa**

## Annexure B: Debriefing services for participants



University of Pretoria  
Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Social Work & Criminology  
Private Bag X20  
Hatfield 0028, South Africa

Enquiries:  
Tel +27 11 800 6412

DEAR PROFESSOR L. S. TERBLANCHE

### **RE: UNDERTAKING TO ASSIST WITH COUNSELLING SERVICES FOR ESKOM EMPLOYEES**

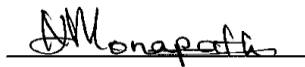
This letter serves to confirm that Eskom offers an Employee Assistance Programme to all its employees. Furthermore, herewith an undertaking to assist the researcher permitted to conduct research at Eskom, Ms Babalwa Solombela, with counselling services for research respondents participating in the study titled: Management challenges regarding employees with disabilities at Eskom, Gauteng: An EAP study

In line with EAP services, a counsellor is available to attend to the counselling of respondents after the researcher has interviewed them. The researcher will debrief the respondents to determine if such counselling will be required. Upon confirmation of services being required, the following Eskom professional internal EAP can be contacted for counselling sessions, details are as follows:

Name and Surname:	Ms Nthabiseng Monapathi
Profession:	Social worker
Professional registration:	SACSSP
SACSSP registration number:	101-13046
Contact number:	011-800 6412 / 082 371 6358

Trust you will find this in order.

Yours sincerely,



Date: 6-9-2018

**Ms Nthabiseng Monapathi**  
**ESKOM: HUMAN RESOURCES**  
**Senior Advisor: Employee Assistance Programme**

Human Resources Division  
Megawatt Park, Maxwell Drive, Sunninghill, Sandton  
P.O. Box 1091, Johannesburg, 2000, SA  
Tel +27 11 800 5710 www.eskom.co.za

Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd Reg No 2002/015527/30

## Annexure C: Request to permission to conduct an empirical study at Eskom



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities

Department of Social Work & Criminology

12/07/2018

Our Ref: Prof L S Terblanche

Tel: (012) 420-3292

E-mail: [lourie.terblanche@up.ac.za](mailto:lourie.terblanche@up.ac.za)

Ref. Babalwa Solombela 12309142

Tel. 0761041063

Fax. 086 863 4461

E-mail: [solomb@eskom.co.za](mailto:solomb@eskom.co.za)

FOR ATTENTION: Eskom Assigned Employment Equity Manager

Dear Dr Cynthia Khumalo

### **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PERFORM EMPIRICAL RESEARCH BABALWA SOLOMBELA (STUDENT NO: 12309142)**

I am a registered student for the following programme at the Department of Social Work, University of Pretoria: **MSW (EAP)**

I am required to write a **mini-dissertation**, resulting from a research project, under the supervision of Professor Lourie Terblanche. The research will only proceed once a departmental Research Panel and the Faculty Research Proposal and Ethics Committee has approved the proposal and data collection instrument(s). The following information from the research proposal is shared with you, although a copy of the **research proposal** will be provided to you if needed:

The envisaged **title** of the study is: **Challenges in managing employees with disabilities at Eskom: An EAP perspective**

The **goal** of the study is to explore and describe those challenges experienced by managers of employees with disabilities in Eskom, Gauteng.

The **objectives** of the study as follows:

- To theoretically conceptualise the management of employees with disabilities;
- to explore and determine the challenges faced by managers of employees with disabilities;
- to describe factors that contribute to meaningful, inclusion employment of persons with disabilities and the potential implications for the organisation/management practices;
- to describe the potential role of the EAP regarding the challenges faced by line managers in managing employees with disabilities in the workplace; and
- to outline implications for EAP practice concerning issues affecting disability management .

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Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe  
Lefapha la Bomotho



The envisaged target group of the study are the line managers and/ supervisors of employees with disabilities in a Gauteng cluster.

I intend to do the empirical part of the study through means of:

- A personal interview according to a semi-structured schedule with employees from your organization as stipulated above.

This request may result in the practical assistance from your staff in availing him /herself for the interview.

The travelling costs will be incurred by this request, which will be paid by myself as the student. No compensation is required.

Possible benefits for your organization can be summarised as follows:

- Findings may strengthen and positively influence the organisational goal of being disability friendly by identifying challenges faced by line managers of employees with disabilities.
- Findings may bring an understanding of challenges therefore ideas on how to address them
- Findings will contribute to the EAP fraternity in the organisation as enablers toward addressing challenges, strengthen efforts and processes.

I undertake responsibility to provide you with a copy of the final report – if required.

It would be appreciated if you will consider this request and grant written permission (on an official letter head of your agency) to proceed with the project, at your earliest convenience. Please indicate whether I may contact the envisaged respondents directly, once you have given permission to proceed – or whether I should liaise with somebody else internal to ESKOM to act as go-between. In such case, please provide me with the necessary contact details.

Kind regards,

.....  
**BABALWA SOLOMBELA**  
**STUDENT**

Kind regards,



**PROF L S TERBLANCHE**  
**SUPERVISOR**

## Annexure D: Permission to conduct study



University of Pretoria  
Faculty of Humanities  
Department of Social Work & Criminology  
Private Bag X20  
Hatfield 0028, South Africa

Enquiries:  
Tel +27 12 484 5226

DEAR PROFESSOR L. S. TERBLANCHE

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PERFORM EMPIRICAL RESEARCH  
BABALWA SOLOMBELA (STUDENT NO: 12309142)**

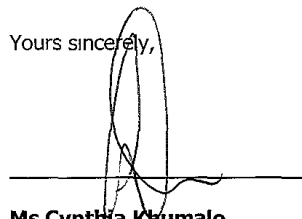
This letter serves to notify that Eskom grants permission to Babalwa Solombela (student no: 12309142) to conduct research for the purposes of meeting the requirement of writing a mini-dissertation toward completing MSW (EAP) degree. The title of the study is: Challenges in managing employees with disabilities at Eskom: An EAP perspective.

The goal of the study is to explore and describe those challenges experienced by managers of employees with disabilities in Eskom: Gauteng. The target group are Eskom line managers and supervisors of employees with disabilities in a Gauteng cluster. The study will be conducted through a personal interview according to a semi-structured schedule with employees from Eskom. We undertake to make our employees available to voluntarily participate in the study. Kindly contact them directly.

We understand there will be no costs incurred during this process for the organisation and there will be no compensation for participating in this research project.

The findings will benefit the Eskom in respect of creating a disability friendly environment. To this end, we acknowledge that a final copy of the research report will be provided to Eskom.

Yours sincerely,



**Ms Cynthia Khumalo**

**HUMAN RESOURCES  
Assigned Employment Equity Manager**

Date: 13/07/2018

Human Resources Division  
Megawatt Park, Maxwell Drive, Sunninghill, Sandton  
P O Box 1091, Johannesburg, 2000, SA  
Tel +27 11 800 5710 www.eskom.co.za

Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd Reg No 2002/016527/30

## Annexure E: Data collection Instrument

Suggested semi-structured interview schedule – based on the goal and objectives

1. How long have you been supervising employees with disabilities?
2. Share your views about the phenomenon of disability in general?
3. Share your views on the management of employees with disabilities in the workplace?
4. Discuss specific challenges do you experience as a supervisor/manager of people with disabilities?
5. Share your experiences about any training with regard to the management of employees with disabilities?
6. What are your views about the role of the EAP in the management of employees with disabilities?

Annexure F: Data storage form



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

**Declaration for the storage of research data and/or documents**

I/ We, the principal researcher(s) Babalwa Solombela

and supervisor(s) Prof. L.S Terblanche

of the following study, titled MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES REGARDING EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES AN EAP EXPERIENCE


will be storing all the research data and/or documents referring to the above-mentioned study in the following department. Department of Social Work and Criminology

**We understand that the storage of the mentioned data and/or documents must be maintained for a minimum of 15 years from the commencement of this study.**

Start date of study: 1 March 2019

Anticipated end date of study: 1 May 2019

Year until which data will be stored: 1 March 2034

Name of Principal Researcher(s)	Signature	Date
Babalwa Solombela		22 May 2019

Name of Supervisor(s)	Signature	Date

Name of Head of Department	Signature	Date

## Annexure G: Informed consent form



**Faculty of Humanities**  
Department of Social Work and Criminology

14/09/2018

Principal investigator: Babalwa Solombela  
Email: solomb@eskom.co.za

### INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

**Participant's name:** .....

I hereby confirm my willingness to voluntarily participate in a study according to the following details:

- 1. Title of the study:** Challenges in managing employees with disabilities at Eskom: An EAP study
- 2. Goal of the Study:** The goal of the study is to explore and describe challenges experienced by managers of employees with disabilities in Eskom: Gauteng
- 3. Procedures:** I will be interviewed according to a semi-structured interview. The interview will take approximately one hour to an hour and a half.
- 4. Risks and Discomfort:** There are no known risks due to participation, but as a manager, may feel discomfort from talking about work challenges. Non-judgemental approach with confidentiality will be assured and counselling offered to all participants.
- 5. Benefits:** The results of the study will assist my employer to gain better understanding of disability management in the workplace. The findings will benefit the Eskom in respect of creating a disability-friendly working environment.
- 6. Participant's Rights:** I may withdraw from participating in the study at any time.
- 7. Financial Compensation:** I understand there is no financial compensation.

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Room 10-15, Level 10, Humanities Building  
University of Pretoria, Private Bag X20  
Hatfield 0028, South Africa  
Tel +27 (0)12 420 3292  
Email [lourie.terblanche@up.ac.za](mailto:lourie.terblanche@up.ac.za)  
[www.up.ac.za](http://www.up.ac.za)

---

**Fakulteit Geesteswetenskappe**  
Departement Maatskaplike Werk en Kriminologie  
**Lefapha la Bomotho**  
Kgoro ya Modiro wa Leago le Bosenyi

**8. Confidentiality:** The interview will be digitally recorded for accuracy. The recording will be listened to only by the researcher and authorized members of the research team at the Department of Social Work and Criminology; University of Pretoria.

The results of the study will be kept confidential unless I ask that they be released. The results of this study may be published in professional journals or presented at professional conferences, but my records or identity will not be revealed unless required by law.

Raw data will be stored at the University of Pretoria for a period of 15 years for archiving and future research purposes.

If I have any questions of concerns, I can call **Babalwa Solombela** : on **078 656 4584** during office hours.

- I understand my rights and responsibilities with regards to my participation in this study.
- I understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done.
- I choose to voluntarily participate.
- I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my own records.

Participant signature: .....

Researcher signature:.....

Date:.....

Place of interview:

.....