



The Torch



Ian Fraser Students 2021



Nkoshinathi is 33-year-old and studying toward a BA Social Work Degree at the University of Kwazulu Natal. He is totally blind, and he chose this field of study because he wants to improve the lives of others. He wants to influence the minds of the youth by teaching that education, together with a good heart goes a long way.

His other interests include business, particularly logistics. The person with that he admires most in life is one of his previous teachers.

One of his biggest challenges is studying online, however as an empowered person, he took it upon himself to inform his lecturers about his specific needs which led to greater support and understanding.



Benedict is studying toward his MasterPhilosophy in Disability Studies at UCT. He is 38 years old and is totally blind. His dream is to create a foundation for a harmonious society that is free of discrimination. He also wants to educate people around disability inclusion. His biggest struggle is to suffer under the misconception people have about those who are blind. He lists his biggest influencers as Dr Brian Watermeyer, a blind psychologist, academic, author, scholar and senior researcher. Jeremy Opperman and Vincent Daniels for disability activism. And lastly the first female UCT Vice Chancellor Dr Mamphela Ramphele because of her excellent character.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month: Here are Insider's best tips, resources, and services to maintain and manage mental health year-round.

It's been a challenging year for mental health. The global pandemic has been rightfully difficult for so many, and it's completely reshaped the way many of us view, manage, and maintain our emotional balance.



But a small silver lining of one of the hardest times in recent history is that everyone now seems far more comfortable openly discussing and prioritizing their mental health — be it commonplace anxiety or more serious clinical depression. With teletherapy and online courses, treatment is more accessible than ever, resources are more widely spread, and talking about your well-being on a regular basis is becoming more common.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and it's also a worthy reminder that prioritizing your mental health is a 365-day affair. Just as everyone needs to care for their physical health even when they're not physically ill, mental health is something everyone should think about, regardless of whether they experience mental illness.

If feelings of anxiety, depression, loneliness, or despair infiltrate your everyday life, you're far from alone, and it's important to know there's no one-size-fits-all approach to caring for one's mental health. Some may listen to positive podcasts, learn science-backed ways to be happier, or take up meditation, while others could benefit from seeking therapy or looking into other professional treatment programs.

Below, we've outlined the resources, services, and products that have best helped our team here at Insider manage our own mental health. Of course, products or services are not supplemental to mental health treatment. However, many of the below resources can be helpful in accessing treatment or can be used alongside treatment.

Here are our best resources for mental health support:

Setting healthy habits and positive routines

Self-care is often depicted as face masks and exercise routines. While that can be true for some, healthy coping strategies span far beyond #selfcare.

True self-care really just means checking in with yourself and considering what your mind and body need for the day. For some, that may mean getting feelings out via journaling; for others, logging into a therapy session or learning how to meditate.

Discovering the coping strategies that work for you is a process of trial and error, and it often comes with a bit of productive discomfort. This may take some time and effort, which is why it's important to try to be as kind to yourself as possible when exploring what does (and doesn't) work for you.

The avenues of support are many, too. If you're recovering from alcohol addiction, there are apps designed to help you stay sober. For families, there are therapist- and education expert-backed products that can reduce stress around the house. Consider using a planner to stay organized, or download a wellness app to help improve your wellbeing. Social media can play a huge role in someone's mental health, so it's important to know how to take a break from that when you need to.

If you're interested in taking online classes, there are plenty of affordable courses that can help improve your mental health, such as Yale's free positive psychology course. There are even some free and affordable online classes designed to teach people how to be happier.

Of course, self-compassion is also a skill that takes time, so be patient with yourself to the best of your ability.

Figuring out how you feel

- Let's be clear: You should not be self-diagnosing any mental health conditions.
- However, there are many resources available that can help you better understand what exactly you're feeling and why you're feeling the way you are. These can help you make an informed decision about what avenue of support may work best for you.
- Maybe you'd like to get better sleep while managing anxiety and stress, or perhaps you're interested in learning more about self-love and its benefits. There are even resources dedicated to teaching people how to feel happier every day and the kinds of grounding exercises that can help manage PTSD, stress, and anxiety.
- We've also connected with experts on the benefits of mindful breathing, how adding Vitamin D to your diet can help regulate your risk of depression, and how to recognize the signs of body dysmorphia and where to get help.
- Seeking professional treatment

The idea of professional mental health treatment can feel intimidating, but it's really not as intense as it sounds. Allowing a professional to listen to your concerns and give you unbiased (and science-backed) advice can be incredibly beneficial, enlightening, and in some cases, life-saving.

The kind of professional treatment that works best for you may vary. It can involve everything from talk therapy to medication to a combination of the two. The process of finding a therapist that's right for you can also feel quite overwhelming, which is why we've laid out exactly how to do it, step-by-step.

Free resources

- Call 0800 567 567 with any form of depression and anxiety for the South African Depression and Anxiety Group
- Call 0800 055 555 with any crisis of a child in need via Child Line South Africa
- Call 0861 322 322 for challenges such as trauma, suicide, and relationship via Health Line South Africa

- Call 0800 150 150 for help with domestic abuse via Health Line South Africa
- Call 0800 012 322 if you are affected or infected with HIV/AIDS via Health Line South Africa
- Call 0800 12 13 14 for alcohol and substance abuse rehabilitation and helpline via the Department of Social Development
- Call 0800 012 322 for counselling for those who have been physically, emotionally, sexually, or financially abused via Gender Based Violence Line
- Call 012 338 2543 for support groups for individuals over the age of 18 who are struggling with anorexia nervosa or bulimia nervosa via EDSA
- Call 021 447 9762 for offers healing to rape survivors and works towards legal reforms that will ensure perpetrators are brought to justice. Services include counselling, court preparation, support groups, important contact numbers via Rape Crisis.

Source: [The Insider](#)

Intel AI-Powered Backpack Helps Visually Impaired Navigate World



Jagdish K. Mahendran models his AI-powered, voice-activated backpack that can help the visually impaired navigate and perceive the world around them. (Graphic: Business Wire)

SANTA CLARA, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--What's New: Artificial intelligence (AI) developer Jagdish K. Mahendran and his team designed an AI-powered, voice-activated backpack that can help the visually impaired navigate and perceive the world around them. The backpack helps detect common challenges such as traffic signs, hanging obstacles, crosswalks, moving objects and changing elevations, all while running on a low-power, interactive device.

“Last year when I met up with a visually impaired friend, I was struck by the irony that while I have been teaching robots to see, there are many people who cannot see and need help. This motivated

me to build the visual assistance system with OpenCV's Artificial Intelligence Kit with Depth (OAK-D), powered by Intel."

—Jagadish K. Mahendran, Institute for Artificial Intelligence, University of Georgia

Why It Matters: The World Health Organization estimates that globally 285 million people are visually impaired. Meanwhile, visual assistance systems for navigation are fairly limited and range from Global Positioning System-based, voice-assisted smartphone apps to camera-enabled smart walking stick solutions. These systems lack the depth perception necessary to facilitate independent navigation.

"It's incredible to see a developer take Intel's AI technology for the edge and quickly build a solution to make their friend's life easier," said Hema Chamraj, director, Technology Advocacy and AI4Good at Intel. "The technology exists; we are only limited by the imagination of the developer community."

How It Works: The system is housed inside a small backpack containing a host computing unit, such as a laptop. A vest jacket conceals a camera, and a fanny pack is used to hold a pocket-size battery pack capable of providing approximately eight hours of use. A Luxonis OAK-D spatial AI camera can be affixed to either the vest or fanny pack, then connected to the computing unit in the backpack. Three tiny holes in the vest provide viewports for the OAK-D, which is attached to the inside of the vest.

"Our mission at Luxonis is to enable engineers to build things that matter while helping them to quickly harness the power of Intel AI technology," said Brandon Gilles, founder, and chief executive officer, Luxonis. "So, it is incredibly satisfying to see something as valuable and remarkable as the AI-powered backpack built using OAK-D in such a short period of time."

The OAK-D unit is a versatile and powerful AI device that runs on Intel Movidius VPU and the Intel® Distribution of OpenVINO™ toolkit for on-chip edge AI inferencing. It is capable of running advanced neural networks while providing accelerated computer vision functions and a real-time depth map from its stereo pair, as well as color information from a single 4k camera.

A Bluetooth-enabled earphone lets the user interact with the system via voice queries and commands, and the system responds with verbal information. As the user moves through their environment, the system audibly conveys information about common obstacles including signs, tree branches and pedestrians. It also warns of upcoming crosswalks, curbs, staircases and entryways.

About Intel

Intel (Nasdaq: INTC) is an industry leader, creating world-changing technology that enables global progress and enriches lives. Inspired by Moore's Law, we continuously work to advance the design and manufacturing of semiconductors to help address our customers' greatest challenges. By embedding intelligence in the cloud, network, edge and every kind of computing device, we unleash the potential of data to transform business and society for the better. To learn more about Intel's innovations, go to newsroom.intel.com and intel.com.

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applications that do not cause or contribute to a violation of an internationally recognized human right.

Source: [Businesswire](#)

"Seeing-eye shoes" for the blind to be enhanced with onboard cameras



Manufactured by Austrian startup Tec-Innovation, the InnoMake shoe uses ultrasound sensors to warn blind users of obstacles in their path. The footwear may soon become even more capable, though, thanks to integrated cameras.

Like the Indian-designed Le Chal shoe, each InnoMake shoe features a toe-mounted proximity sensing module that emits ultrasound pulses, then receives the echoes of those pulses off of objects lying ahead.

In this way, it can detect potential obstacles located up to 4 meters (13 ft) in front of the user. That person is warned via a haptic feedback system that causes the shoe to buzz their foot, along with an audible alert sounded on a Bluetooth-linked smartphone. Additionally, LEDs on each sensor can be set to flash whenever an obstacle is detected.

The shoe was designed in partnership with Austria's Graz University of Technology. Now, scientists at that institution are developing a camera-equipped version of the shoe's removable sensor module. Output from the camera is analyzed by deep-learning algorithms, to two ends.

First of all, the video is used to complement the ultrasound system, ensuring that the path ahead is obstacle-free. Additionally, when an obstacle is detected, the video is utilized to determine if it's something that the user should step up over (like a rock), avoid stepping down into (like a pothole), or avoid running into (like a wall). They're warned accordingly.

Plans also call for the app-connected new sensor units to share data via the internet. In this way, "obstacle maps" of different cities could be created, providing blind people with an advance warning when approaching the locations of known hazards.

There's currently no word on when the camera-equipped InnoMake shoes may be available. In the meantime, interested parties can purchase the existing version from the company website for €3,200 (about US\$3,840) a pair.

Source: [TU Graz](#)

Youth Day 2021

There is a plethora of reports detailing the suffering of South African children, yet we commemorate their struggle without fail each year with no significant change in their lives. The situation of children across the African continent is not much better either, and many continue to have their human rights violated.

On Wednesday, 16 June 2021, South Africa and the world will commemorate the 45th anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising, the day now known as Youth Day in South Africa. The day is also recognised as International Day of the African Child, which focuses on the barriers African children face when it comes to receiving a decent education.

This year's theme for the International Day of the African Child is "30 years after the adoption of the Charter: accelerate the implementation of Agenda 2040 for an Africa fit for children".

As we are about to mark Youth Day, I would like to speak on behalf of every child in South Africa and every youth who is denied full enjoyment of the privileges, freedoms and rights guaranteed in the Constitution of 1996.

The main question is whether there is anything the youth of this country need to do other than remember the lives lost on that day 45 years ago. Specifically, we must determine whether the contentious issues that led to nearly 30,000 pupils from Soweto joining hands in a historic protest march and locking horns with the apartheid police – with about 700 people losing their lives and considerable destruction of property – have been resolved.

The [Daily Maverick](#) article on 12 June 2021 by Greg Nicolson and Bheki Simelane, "Young, gifted, black and still left behind: South Africa's youth struggle continues 45 years later", is among those related to June 16 that caught my attention. Three issues stuck out. First, and as expected, the iconic Sam Nzima photo of the lifeless body of 12-year-old Hector Pieterse being carried by Mbuyisa Makhubu, his distraught sister Antoinette Sithole by his side, at the start of the 1976 Soweto uprising.

The iconic picture in *Daily Maverick* is contained in a larger image showing a young child with his hands behind his back as though the child is marvelling at the picture. The second is the blurb of the article: "Anger and bitterness linger on the anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising. Some say the youth have it better than then; others say there's just a different oppressor."

The third observation is that the title of the article borrows, in part, from the title of the song by the magnificent songstress Nina Simone, “*To Be Young, Gifted and Black*”, with a twist, telling of what the authors are about to relate.

The comments that followed this article are very interesting, indicative of both the unity and division in the country when it comes to apartheid’s sins and the failures of successive post-1994 administrations led by the ANC.

You know we are still far from redressing the crimes of apartheid when there is a demeaning comment that considers decolonisation of education to mean “re-establish the old tribes and go back to the ‘old ways’ ”.

Back to the song, “*To Be Young, Gifted and Black*”, and what it means to the youth of today, particularly the black youth: most of our young people will know little about this song by Simone, and some might not ever have heard it. The song, originally recorded and released by Simone in 1969 and later considered an anthem of the civil rights movement in America, has been covered by notable artists including Houston Person, Donny Hathaway and Aretha Franklin. What’s interesting about Franklin’s rendition of Nina Simone’s masterpiece is that her singing in one verse will remind you of the energy in some of the singing in the movie *Sarafina*.

Two verses from “*Young, Gifted and Black*” are relevant to the question I posed at the beginning of this opinion:

“You are young, gifted and black
We must begin to tell our young
There’s a world waiting for you
Yours is the quest that’s just begun

“How to be young, gifted and black?
Oh, how I long to know the truth
There are times when I look back
And I am haunted by my youth.”

How I wish Simone was also right about South Africa’s young, gifted and black children — that there is a world waiting for them and sanctuary for them when they are feeling low.

The truth is that there is generally no better world waiting for them: even our government never hesitated to stop the world to wait and provide relief to victims of apartheid. In 2003, and widely [reported](#), former president Thabo Mbeki publicly decried as completely unacceptable the adjudication of apartheid crimes in “foreign courts which bear no responsibility for the wellbeing of our country and the observance of the perspective contained in our Constitution of the promotion of national reconciliation”.

In Mbeki’s view, the South African government was best suited to address apartheid’s legacy. But so far, the legacy of the June 16 massacres has not been dealt with convincingly and satisfactorily.

The South African government at the time considered foreign investment more important than redressing injustices of the past. The minister of justice at the time,

Penuell Maduna, filed a declaration with the US district court discouraging the court from hearing the case, claiming the litigation would potentially discourage foreign investment in South Africa.

The only solace was that this position was not supported by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The chairperson of the TRC, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, submitted a brief stating “there was absolutely nothing in the TRC process, its goals or the pursuit of the overarching goal of reconciliation, linked with the truth that would be impeded by this litigation. To the contrary, such litigation is entirely consistent with these policies and with the findings of the TRC”.

As if running from apartheid brutality was not enough, South African children and youths still have to run from the hardships visited upon them under the democratic government, whether it is being forced to learn Afrikaans or study under trees or in dilapidated school structures.

Without absolving the apartheid government for the inhumane way in which the black population of the country was treated, an indisputable reality is that there are intermittent failures in leadership at the moment — failures to meaningfully alleviate and redress the challenges faced by our country’s children and youth. Some may say, however, that this criticism is unfair given the strides made by the ANC-led government to improve the lives of many black South African children and South Africans in general.

However, recognising the validity of this criticism, a court in [*Equal Education and Others v Minister of Basic Education and Others*](#) (17 July 2020) rebuked the government for failing to look after the best interests of the children. In this case, the organisation Equal Education and others approached the court for an order to be issued against the minister of basic education and the MECs of education of eight provinces, declaring that they are in breach of their constitutional and statutory duty to ensure that the National School Nutrition Programme provides a daily meal to all qualifying learners, whether they are attending school or studying at home as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Western Cape did not receive the same rebuke from the court because its government had publicly committed to providing a daily meal to all qualifying learners, “whether they have returned to class as Grade 7 or 12 learners”. Sadly, in the case of the other eight provinces, delinquent MECs only started acting when court papers were served on them.

“The fact that only court papers spurred on activity to feed hungry children, leaves doubt with this court whether, on its own, the department will perform.

“Continued breach by the minister and MECs will leave millions of children hungry through the cold winter and as long as lockdown lasts.

“Hunger is not an issue of charity, but one of justice,” said the court, correctly observing that “children are categorically vulnerable... Poor, hungry children are exceptionally vulnerable. The degree of the violation of their constitutional rights is thus egregious.”

The order of the court demonstrated the suspicion with which the word of the government must be viewed. Even the courts cannot trust the government because it tends to say one thing but does another.

There is a plethora of reports detailing the suffering of South African children, yet we commemorate their struggle each year without fail, with no significant change in their lives. These reports include Amnesty International's report, aptly titled, [*Broken and Unequal: The State of Education In South Africa*](#), which essentially attests that even today "a child's experience of education in South Africa is still dependent on where they are born, how wealthy they are and the colour of their skin".

A further example, [*Child Poverty in South Africa: A Multiple Overlapping Deprivation*](#), released by Unicef in July 2020, narrates a story of poor children overwhelmingly located in rural areas and living in the traditionally poor provinces of Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo in households headed by black African women.

So, what gains are we celebrating on June 16?

Perhaps the commemorations and celebrations should highlight the challenges South African youths still face.

Given a platform to express my views on the day, I would quote the Unicef report that "black African children experience poverty rates between 65% and 70%, which is almost double that of coloured children (38% on average).

"White children have the lowest deprivation headcount ratio, and only 9.2% of these children between the ages of 13 and 17 are considered deprived (having at least three deprivations across the seven dimensions)."

So, the inequalities of the apartheid past are still much alive, even after the dawn of non-racial democracy.

The situation of children across the African continent is not much better either. Like South Africa's Youth Day, the Day of the African Child will see little more than hollow celebrations.

For instance, at a continental level, several of the 10 aspirations identified by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, as part of the theme for the commemoration of the Day of the African Child in 2021, are largely unfulfilled.

These aspirations include that every child must be assisted to survive and have a healthy childhood; be allowed to grow up well-nourished and with access to the necessities of life; benefit fully from quality education; be protected against violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse; and be free from the impact of armed conflicts and other disasters or emergency situations.

African children continue to have their rights violated, despite the many continental instruments conferring on them key human rights and freedoms.

As they celebrate or commemorate Youth Day and the Day of the African Child, my advice to our children — black and white — is that they must play this great song by

the great songstress, Nina Simone. They must internalise what it meant or should mean, irrespective of their colour. Finally, they must be prepared to face the possibility of having to reflect in the future on the same sentiment as did many of us from the old generation: “There are times when I look back, And I am haunted by my youth.”

To the ANC-led government and all opposition parties: please, for once do something or say something that will end with tangible results. It is no use politicising the challenges faced by our youth today when you are doing nothing about it. Think positively and act positively.

I know as politicians you are fond of singing. Let me help you along by asking you to sing or listen to the 1971 song by John Lennon, *Imagine*, released five years before the 1976 Soweto uprising.

If you can imagine a new South Africa and want to help our youth as you always promise to do, you can make a start by considering what is in the best interest of South African children. **DM**

Source: [The Daily Maverick](#)

Beneficiary News



More than 445 days in lockdown

For those of you who do not know us James was war blinded (A St Dunstan’s beneficiary). I have a physical disability that affects my ability to walk. I like to say I do the wobble dance. We have been in a relationship for over 30 years We have not been out since March 2020. That is more than 445 days with more to come.

Often when we tell people we haven’t been out they think we mean we haven’t been out except for shopping etc. I mean we have not been out our gate. I went with James once to look at the water metre. James puts out the trash every two weeks. Fortunately, we stay in an area where everybody delivers.

We have been doing online shopping for years. Even before Covid. Like most ladies I really enjoy retail therapy (shopping) but I can’t be using my limited energy on buying the boring necessities

washing powder, milk etc. If I'm going to walk let it be a slow stroll passed the good stuff, chocolates etc. Oh, the joy of shopping at Woolworths with the click of a mouse in the comfort of our home.

We have always found that humour is a positive way of coping. So let me share two of my online shopping blunders. I enjoy Willards cheese curls. I thought I was buying 4 X4 that is 16 packets instead I got 4X4X25 that is 400 packets. I also ordered Sambuca and instead of getting one bottle I got 1X6. Those of you who like liquorice I can recommend Sambuca and lemonade in a tall glass.

I learnt young that physically we all have limitations. The great thing is that while your body can only be in one place, you can take your mind anywhere you want to. Let me share a personal example. Before I retired, I worked for a Chinese company. In the Chinese culture it is considered powerful and acceptable to shout at colleagues at work. I felt uncomfortable at work when people shouted at me or at others. So, I just took my mind somewhere else. One of my favourite places to go in my mind is to drink cocktails with James in Mauritius. We have been blessed to enjoy some spectacular holidays.

Remember it is ok to:

Avoid the news.

Feel upset that you are missing out on things you were looking forward to.

Wish things would go back to normal.

Miss your family and friends.

Recognize your mental health is being negatively impacted.

Feel sad you can't go out.

Things I miss and how I've adapted.

One of the things I really enjoy is eating drinking and being merry with family and friends. I have increased my email, telephone, and SMS buddies. During covid I have discovered zoom. Ironic that I have seen some overseas friends and family and not people down the road.

I miss the sea; it is good for my soul. Google and technology are my new best friends. Google has loads of great videos of the sea that I watch on my laptop.

I miss getting my haircut, so now I cut my fringe regularly and James has cut the back of my hair once. He has been cutting his own hair for years. He did a good job of cutting the back of mine. Like all things the more I practise the better I get

Things that have helped me when things seem tough.

When I feel negative, angry etc I allow myself to feel that. In my experience if I want to get over any negative feeling, I need to first acknowledge it. Then I try to do something to distract myself. Watch a movie, listen to music etc. Do something that makes my heart smile.

I can take my mind anywhere I want to. When my mind or emotions start going to negative places I try and bring them back and take them to a happy place.

I am mindful of how blessed I am. I have a lot to be thankful for. I try and focus more on what I have and what I can do, rather than on what I cannot do or don't have.

It seems fitting to end with two of my favourite lockdown jokes.

Being quarantined with a 3-year-old is like having an insane parrot glued to your shoulder.

I never thought the comment "I wouldn't touch them with a six-foot pole" would become a national policy, but here we are!

Pieter is staying positive.



Two Scalectric cars on their tracks

Pieter shared some tips with us on how to stay positive during lockdown. He encourages everyone to be grateful for the smallest things they have. "Listen to how beautiful the birds are singing. They do not have any worries because tomorrow will take care of itself" he says.

“Keep yourself occupied and keep the mind healthy”. Pieter continued his hobbies of Scalectric (A brand of slot cars and slot car racing sets which first appeared in the late 1950s) and building mini DIY train tracks and sceneries, but most of all he is grateful for another day spared and being able to do the things he enjoys.

Not everyone is the same, but we can all share be grateful for the little things such as food and water, your family and fresh air.

If you feel down on certain days, socialise with people that have a positive influence and can enlighten your mood. This way you will be more positive and see the better side of life. Everyone has good days and bad days, let the good always guide you.

Congratulations Katie.



Katie with her silver medal and certificate

Katie won the silver medal at the provincial gymnastics – level 3 for the KZN team. We wish her all the best for the future.