

Covid-19 taught Lizeth Kruger to adapt to change

By  Nicci Botha

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Out of the three things Covid-19 taught Lizeth Kruger, national clinic manager at Dis-Chem, probably the most important is that you have to adapt to change as quickly as possible.



Lizeth Kruger, national clinic manager, Dis-Chem

The other two are more directly related to her field, namely the important role nursing practitioners play in global pandemic and to keep up to date with new clinical data daily.

Kruger has 25 years' experience in primary healthcare nursing and managing primary healthcare clinics. "I was working on the [Phelophepa health train](#) in my 4th and final year of study and loved it. I realised that primary healthcare is my passion and where I wanted to focus my career."

In her role as national clinic manager, Kruger oversees Dis-Chem's 358 registered nursing practitioners, the clinic call centre and now the Covid-19 testing sites. she describes her typical work day as "never the same!". Her day usually starts before 6am with the nursing practitioners' queries, before moving on to tasks such as confirming that all 300 clinics operational, relocating nurses were needed, planning clinic campaigns, meetings with stakeholders, the Dis-Chem team and executive managers, managing stock levels in clinics and planning and managing new clinics, among other things.

Never give up

One of the knock-on effects of the pandemic is the drop off of other primary healthcare (PHC) services. "Immunisation services dropped by almost 30%. We are waiting for other disease outbreaks, this is probably the biggest challenge in PHC world.

"Patients are really stressed due to finances and uncertain times. This manifests in increased verbal abuse to our nursing practitioners so it's really important, yet challenging, to keep them positive and focused," Kruger says.

The advice she would give young women wanting to enter the nursing field is to never give up. "It is so clichéd, but get up every morning and say: 'I can make a difference'. Show what you are worth, don't always shout. People will have much more respect if they can see what you do. Work hard every day."

Kruger has been married for almost 25 years and has two teenage children. To relax, she says she loves to go to jog, not in the gym but in open air. "It clears my head. I've trained my bull terrier to run eight to 10 kms with me and she is already seven years old. I adore her! She brings some sanity to my life in the way only dogs can."

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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