

RADIO EPISODE 12: PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people with disability are more vulnerable to infection and other related risks than the general population. How can they protect themselves at this time and how can others support them?

RADIO:

Start with playing the 'COVID-19 – Together we can beat it' song.

Welcome to the 11th of our 'COVID-19 – Together we can beat it' radio programmes. Keep listening so that you know how to protect yourself, your family and friends against the many challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic brings.

Feel free to ask questions and share your experience. Phone us on XXX, SMS us on XXX or send a WhatsApp message on XXX to be part of this conversation.

Over the last eight weeks, we found out more about the Coronavirus, the COVID-19 disease and the five Golden Rules which can protect us. Remember to follow them!

We are now looking at the many related challenges which the COVID-19 pandemic has brought. Last week we spoke about schools reopening. There was huge interest in the topic and so we will discuss it again next week. Remember to tune in!

Today, we want to look at the many challenges that face people with disabilities during COVID-19, and discuss what support they need.

We are very fortunate to be joined today by a panellist/panellists who can help us to understand what it is like to be disabled in the time of COVID-19.

<Introduce panellists>

Be part of the conversation! Call us on XXX, or send a SMS or WhatsApp to XXX.

So, let's talk about it!

About 1 in 7 people across the world has some form of disability. And they are always more vulnerable in a number of ways than the general population.

When COVID-19 hit the world with an unprecedented impact, governments had to make rapid plans to protect populations. People with disability should ideally have received more support and protection. They needed it.

But most governments battled to put the basics in place to cope with this brand-new threat.

Few had the capacity to focus on the special needs of the disabled. They were again left behind.

Kenyan Paralympian Anne Wafula-Strike has had this to say: "People with disabilities are relegated to the background. The pandemic simply worsened an already bad situation."

For those of us who are not disabled and do not know someone who is, it is hard to imagine what it must be like to be disabled at this time of COVID-19.

How do you get basic information or avoid infection if you cannot see or hear? How do you get around or access services if you are in a wheelchair? What do you do if you are reliant on a caregiver who cannot get to you?

Fortunately, our panellist/panellists can give us some idea of what it is like to be disabled in the time of COVID-19. And as always, we would LOVE to hear from you - so phone or message us to share your experience.

But first, let me share a few facts with you:

<Host can select from the information below>

FIRSTLY, THE DISABLED GENERALLY GET A BAD DEAL:

- They face stigma and discrimination.
- They often battle to access sexual and reproductive health services.
- Women and girls with disability are at a far greater risk of gender-based violence and unwanted pregnancies.
- Adults with disabilities are 3 times more likely to have heart disease, stroke, diabetes, or cancer.

NOW, COVID-19 HAS MADE IT EVEN TOUGHER FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:

- Gender-based violence against women and girls with disability increased more than for the general population.
- Overall, people with disabilities have been 3 times more likely to be victims of violence.
- Some have battled because caregivers could not get to them.
- Children with disability have felt isolated because they could not connect physically with friends.
- People with mental disabilities find it hard to understand how to stay safe.
- It's harder for the disabled to access transportation or vital information, or to let others know of their needs.
- People with visual or physical disabilities may need to touch things to get information from their environment or for physical support. This increases their risk.
- Disabled people are also more at risk of COVID-19 infection. And if they get infected, other underlying health conditions can put them at risk of getting very sick or dying.
- People with limited mobility often can't avoid close contact with others who may be infected.

HOW SHOULD SOCIETY SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY?

We could do the following...

- Involve disabled persons' organizations and networks in decision-making at local and national level.
- Make information about COVID-19, infection control efforts and public health measures accessible to people with different disabilities.
- Encourage and help children with disability to continue playing, reading, learning and connecting with friends by telephone or other media.
- Help to ensure support of essential caretakers and trusted service providers.
- Prioritise protection from gender-based violence.
- Ensure that hotlines and protection services are accessible to people with disabilities.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS TO THE PANEL:

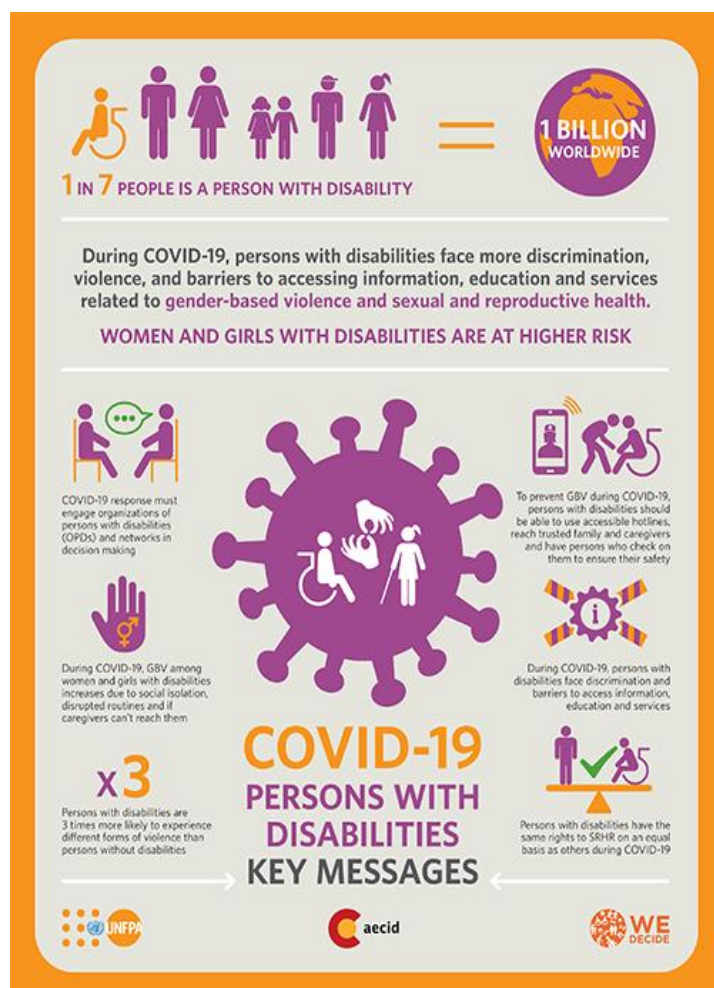
To the panellist with a disability or representative of an organisation for the disabled:

- 1 Please tell us what it is like for a person with disability at this time.
- 2 What are the biggest challenges?
- 3 What could our government do to give more support to people with disabilities?
- 4 And what can the rest of us do?

To the youth facilitator (if on the panel)

- 1 Do you have any personal experience of how it has been for persons with disability during COVID-19?
- 2 Do you have ideas for how you, or young people like you, can support persons with disability in schools or communities?

Sources of information in this script: World Health Organisation, UNFPA, AFRICA RENEWAL, African Journal of Disability; US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.



SMS TOPIC 13:

One in every 7 people globally has a disability. And during COVID-19, people with disabilities are far more at risk than others. Be a leader and support people with disability around you. Find out how to help. Or if you have a disability, make your voice heard. Tune in to XXXXXXXX THIS XXXXday from XXXXXXXX, to hear more. To opt out send 'stop' to XXXXX (292 characters no spaces)