

The use of Functional Capacity Evaluations as a self advocacy tool within disability inclusive development by people with disabilities in Umzimkulu, KwaZulu Natal

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Introduction: Functional Capacity Evaluations (FCEs) are used to measure a person's functioning with regard to work in terms of their functional capabilities and limitations, taking into consideration the person's body functions, structures, any environmental factors, personal factors and their health status. Much of the literature around FCEs is about accuracy and technical applicability from health professionals' perspective. Little or nothing has been written on the initiation and application of FCEs by people with disabilities (pwws). The UNCRPD and international disability slogan "Nothing about us without us" has implications for pwws' active engagement and self advocacy in initiating and controlling their own inclusion in society.

Objectives: To determine in what way, and to what extent, 16 pwws in Umzimkulu have made use of the FCEs completed for them.

Method: A qualitative research design was used with purposive sampling (n=16). Two focus groups were conducted with 8 people per focus group. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data and the qualitative data was analysed through thematic content analysis.

Results: This study has shown that the use of FCEs has given pwws a deeper understanding of their own disability and their rights as disabled people. Additionally, they have been able to make use of the FCEs within different components of the World Health Organisation's Community Based Rehabilitation matrix including the health, livelihoods, social and empowerment components.

Conclusion: The use of FCEs is a very useful tool to advocate for themselves and for their rights as pwws.