

# Life Esidimeni – Lessons for Us

LIFE ESIDIMENI 94+



# Deborah \* Phehla (45)



Diagnosis:

**Intellectual disability**

36 years in Life Esidimeni

Moved March 2016

**Died: 26 March 2016**

Death certificate :‘unnatural causes’

Notice of Death: ‘asphyxia due to the aspiration of blood’

# **Christopher \* Mogoerane (55)**

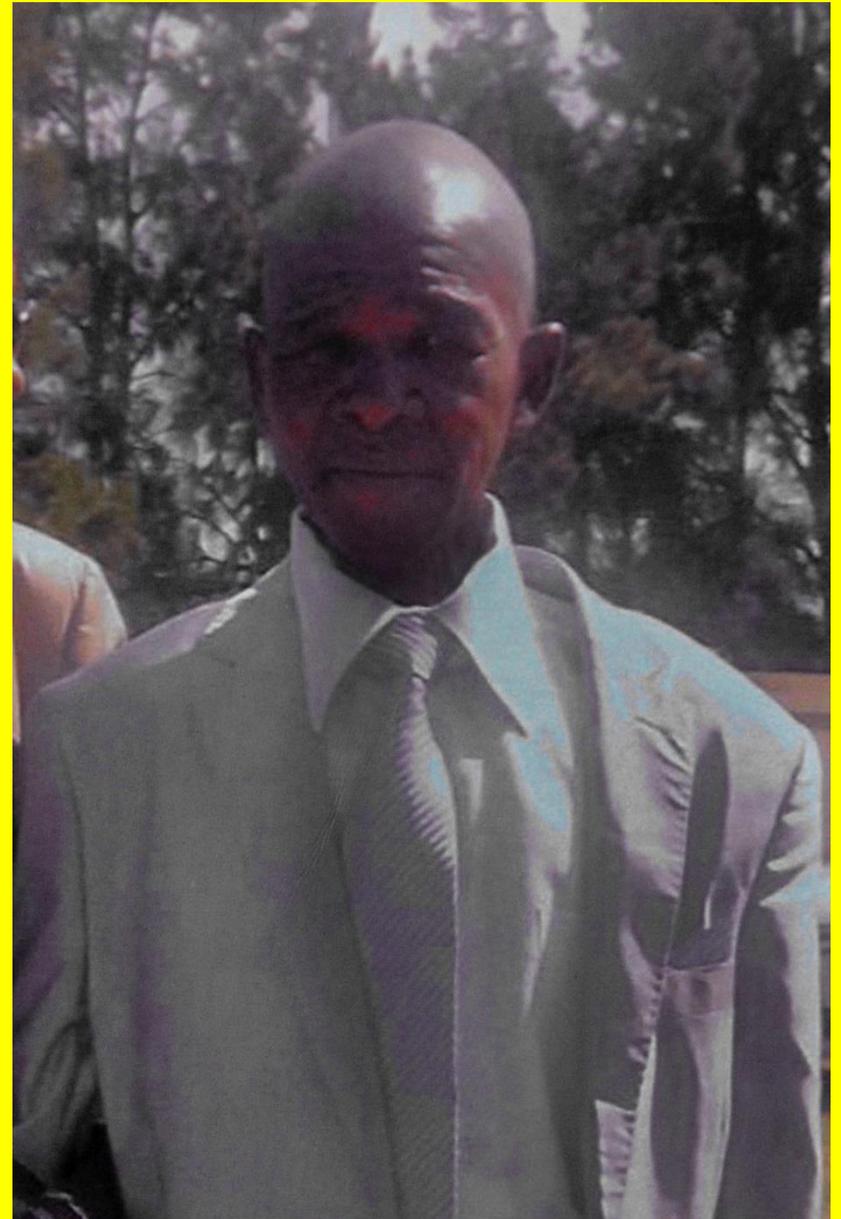
Diagnosis: **Schizophrenia**

Many years in Life Esidimeni

Moved end of May 2016

**Died: 15 July 2016**

Death certificate: 'natural  
causes'



# **Bheki Robert \*** **Sithole (58)**

Diagnosis: **Unknown**

10 years in Life Esidimeni

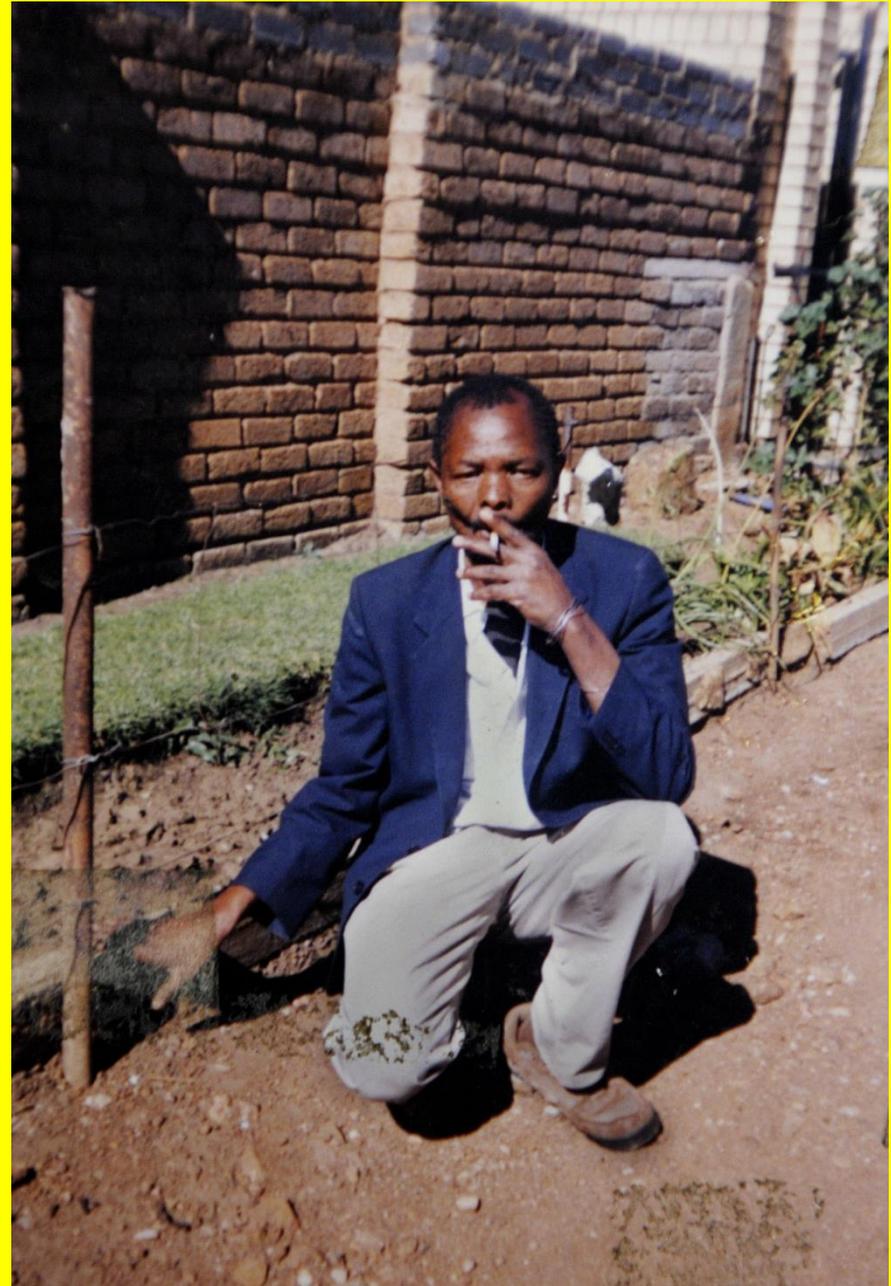
Moved end of June 2016

**Died: 18 July 2016**

Death certificate: 'natural  
causes' and

death notice:

'cardiopulmonary arrest'



# Bheki's Brother's Account \*

- Bheki had psychotic behaviour since 18 years
- Ten years in Life Esidimeni
- In June family was told Life Esidimeni would shut down and **could he take his brother home.**
- **Family did not have the means or capacity** to take care of Bheki, who needed the help of professionals.
- **Bheki was then transferred to an NGO.**
- Family **visited and saw him chained** to his bed, with the shackles **causing wounds on his ankles and wrist.**
- The next communication received about his brother “was to say **he was dead**”.
- Just three weeks after the move Bheki had died.
- Family **suspected this maltreatment caused his death.**
- **“We buried him with those wounds.”**

# **Ranthodi 'Billy' \* Maboe (52)**

**Diagnosis: Unknown**  
15 years in Life Esidimeni  
Moved mid-June 2016

**Died: 22 July 2016**

Death certificate: 'natural  
causes'  
Notice of Death : 'lower  
respiratory tract infection'



# **Frederick \* Colitz (61)**

**Diagnosis: Depression**

Three years in Life Esidimeni:  
Moved Second week of  
January 2016

**Died: 7 August 2016**

Death certificate: 'natural  
causes'



**Virginia \***  
**Machpelah (50)**

Diagnosis: **Alzheimers**

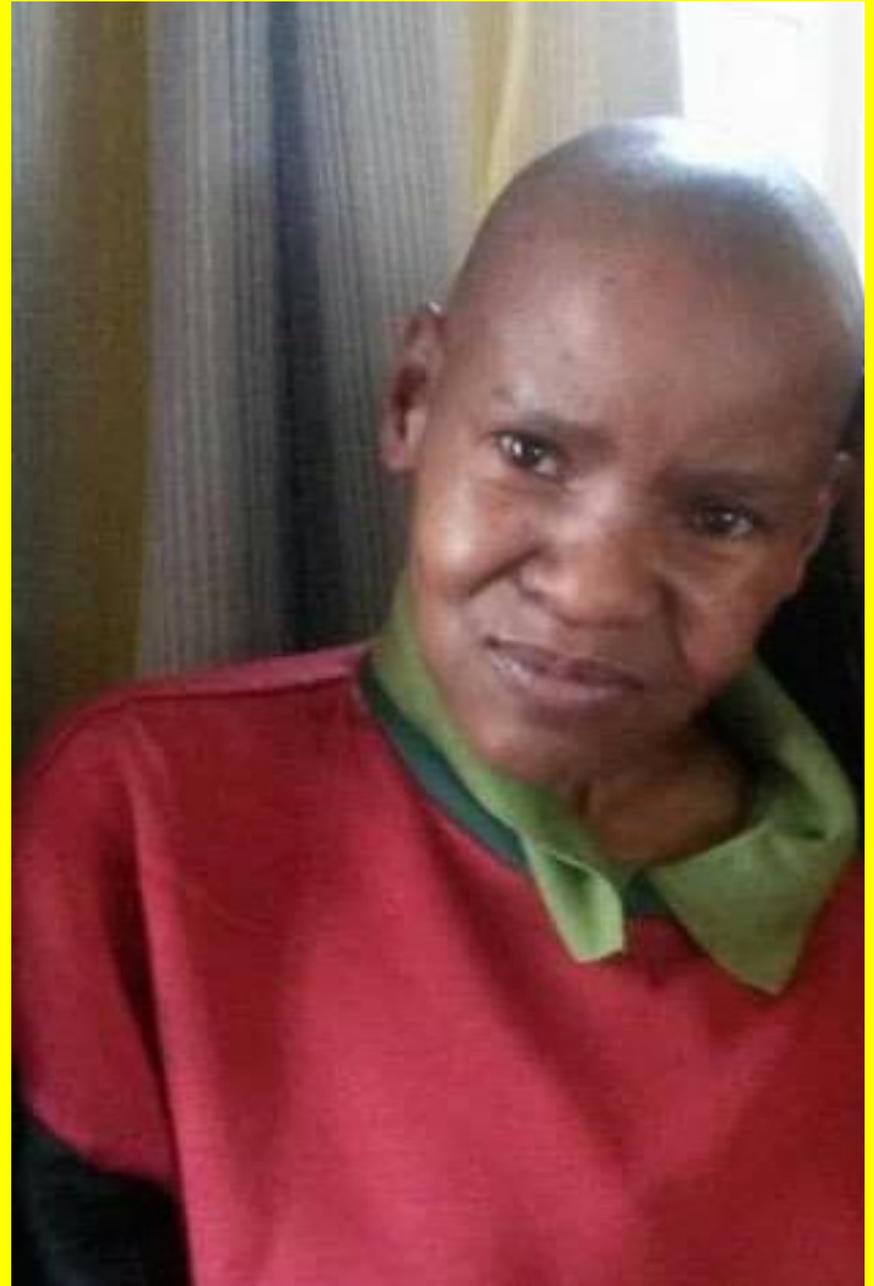
Two years in Life Esidimeni

Moved June 2016

**Died: 15 August 2016**

Death certificate states:  
“Under investigation”.

A post mortem was  
conducted, results not  
communicated to her family.



# Western Cape and Life Esidimeni

- Western Cape health authorities have extended a contract with the Life Esidimeni medical group to avoid a repeat of the Gauteng tragedy in which patients died after they were moved to NGOs.
- The contract of Life Esidimeni, which provides care for approximately 200 psychiatric patients, ended in August, but was extended until the end of December.
- Botha said the move would give the new service's personnel an opportunity to familiarise themselves with both the patients and the facility.

# Gauteng and Life Esidimeni

- The three Life Esidimeni homes looked after severely mentally ill patients at a cost of R320 a day.
- It emerged that R190-million had been budgeted for NGOs, but R176-million was being paid for Life Esidimeni homes in 2015.

# Conclusion

- People with intellectual disability and people with mental disorder are extremely vulnerable
- Mental healthcare users need professional care, for de-institutionalised care, support needs to extend to homes and families
- More specialist residential care for people with intellectual disability is needed

**MEND:  
Mental Health  
Education and  
Networking  
Drive**



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George