

79^{of} 100 Tsakane Sono



Here to be Caring

From clinical care to community change: Turning compassion into action.

"In my experience as an occupational therapist, I have seen people at their most vulnerable and dependent. I have seen how society can disregard those that are living with disabilities and the stigma surrounding disabilities and mental health awareness. I decided to use my professional knowledge, clinical experience and my love for the community to make an impact in any way that I can."

For Tsakane Sono, occupational therapy has never been only about treating a patient; it has given her a close view of the realities faced by people living with disabilities, those navigating mental health challenges and

communities that are often overlooked. It is this experience that has shaped her commitment to creating spaces where people feel seen, supported, and empowered.

As an occupational therapist, lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand and founder of the Tsakane Sono Foundation, Tsakane has built her career around combining clinical expertise with community advocacy. She holds a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy and has worked across public-sector rehabilitation, mental health and wheelchair seating, including establishing an occupational therapy psychiatry service at a local community health centre from the ground up.

Her experience has also exposed her to the stigma surrounding disability and mental health. Through her foundation, established in 2025, Tsakane works to challenge those perceptions by donating wheelchairs and assistive devices, facilitating community conversations and supporting organisations and homes serving people with physical and developmental disabilities across Soweto and Gauteng, ensuring marginalised individuals receive equal access to resources and opportunities to lead full, dignified lives.

For Tsakane, advocacy is about taking action rather than simply raising awareness. Her work with the Baragwanath Hospital Comfort Committee, professional leadership within the Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa and her work mentoring future

that meaningful change requires people to use their skills and influence to open doors for others.

That commitment extends beyond her clinical profession. As a former Miss Soweto, speaker, master of ceremonies, voice-over artist and plus-size model, Tsakane has used public platforms to promote disability awareness, health literacy, youth mentorship, mental wellbeing and representation.

Ultimately, her motivation is deeply personal – her faith and belief in God have strengthened her desire to model a life centred on compassion and service. Tsakane believes that people living with disabilities and those experiencing mental health challenges deserve to be seen. She is committed to using her knowledge, voice and her platforms to help people feel valued and included.

Your
story
matters

