

# Success for Luciana at the NHS!

"I had been looking for a job for a while. I had four interviews that seemed to be going well, but when I mentioned I had epilepsy I noticed a change in people's attitudes. One day I was talking to a friend who told me about Dionne and gave me her number. I rang her and we started working together on what type of job I would like, what would be suitable, what to do in interviews, filling in forms and training.

Dionne got information about epilepsy and talked to employers. I felt I needed some help especially as I am not in my own country. I like England and I'm used to it but in many ways it is different to Brazil. Laws are different etc.

In Brazil I would have known better how to approach employers. Dionne helped me a lot, Employment Services has been really helpful. Before I worked in a supermarket but had to leave because I was having many seizures and I had one in work. I was stressed by the job and it was not helping my condition.

For a year/year and a half I worked as a cleaner while looking for other jobs. I got frustrated because I felt I could do more and I wanted a job that was daily. Cleaning was not very reliable and I wanted to get out of the house, as it was boring. I want to develop my skills and go back to study. "

**Luciana works as a Clerical Officer for the NHS in medical records. She tells how the job, and the support from Embracing Diversity, came about...**



Dionne says,

"Luciana was capable of many roles but I wanted to be sure the employers knew about epilepsy. I liased with potential employers to find out whether they were supportive. The Health and Safety and Risk Assessment forms are really important."

Pauline - Section Manager, medical records was informed of the project by her manager and then Dionne contacted her about Luciana. She says, **"The service is great, Dionne made it so easy. I didn't know until I received the application form that Luciana had epilepsy but it made no difference. Everything qualified her for the job."**

We worked through risk assessments and everything we needed to do with Dionne. She's fitted really well into the team. On the first day she answered the phone which was really impressive because often new people are really reluctant to do so. She gets on really well with the team and works really hard."

Luciana says,

"I feel safe here because if something happens I know that people will know what to do."



Pauline and Luciana were among 12 members of staff who attended a short (15-20mins) talk by Dr Lucy from Occupational Health, about epilepsy. The talk focussed on basic facts and the employment aspect, ie. what people should do if a colleague has a seizure and procedures that can be put in place. Luciana talked about the support she needs if she has a seizure and warning signs that a seizure may be coming.

Pauline says,

**"As far as we are concerned we employ Luciana and therefore we put everything in place we can to support her. Some of the paperwork does take up time but it is good as it helps me to think things through and it is worthwhile."**

Luciana adds,

**"I really like it here, everyone is really nice. At first I was worried because I didn't know the job and I was anxious. I still have a lot to learn but I really enjoy it. I am very busy all day but it is not a stressful environment therefore it is perfect for me. I could not have got a job in a better place."**

## Notes on epilepsy:

3% of the population suffer from epilepsy and there are two types.

If someone has a seizure you should lie them down, preferably on their side, and allow them space to have the seizure.

You can place a pillow or something soft under their head to prevent them banging it.

If it continues for more than a couple of minutes it is a medical emergency and you should call paramedics.

In the workplace it's advisable to allocate someone who is confident to be the one to go to the person's aid if they begin a seizure. Also allocate people in case that person is on holiday.

Signs a seizure is on its way include the person having memory blanks for a few seconds.

**For more information about epilepsy or finding work if English is your second language please contact Dionne Duffill or Nafisa Salaam, Senior Employment Officers on 0161 474 5900**

"I could not have got a job in a **better** place."