

Red Cross provides chill-out pod for teen patients

By  Nicci Botha

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Adolescents fall within the "children" category when it comes cancer treatment, yet their needs are vastly different from younger patients, so the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital has invested in a mobile recreational pod where they can enjoy a little freedom.



The R70,000 Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) Youth Booth provides a safe and comfortable recreational area and workstation. The idea is that this portable booth is a space that the young people receiving treatment can call their own.

Different social needs

"Teenagers in paediatric units struggle with crying babies and other factors that don't recognise their need to have some independence. Other adolescents and young adults in adult units are equally vulnerable because these units aren't set up to deal with their psychological and social needs," says Professor Alan Davids, head of haematology and oncology at the hospital.

Designed and developed by Ari's Cancer Foundation, an organisation inspired by Ariana Jansen who lost her battle to cancer at 24 years old, the booth is mobile, folds up and is lockable when not in use, so it can be moved around the wards easily. When closed it looks like a box, which folds open into the two sections.

The relaxation pod has:

- An iPad connected to the booth, where patients can use it to play games, browse the internet and stay connected on social media.
- Wifi in the booth to connect to the internet.
- A workstation with a computer to work on homework or projects.
- Plenty of shelf space for books and magazines.

It can accommodate up to three children at a time - one in the relaxation pod with the tablet, one at the computer workstation and one at the fold-out desk. If the computer is used for watching movies and they have opted to put the sound on instead of using the earphones provided, it can accommodate an extra one or two children.

“The idea is to give young adults a comfortable area to relax and be entertained while they are undergoing treatment at the hospital. This area is also designed to inspire the type of colourful and positive energy that we hope to give to the young adults, rather than a typical scenario where they tend to be consumed with the negative thoughts of the treatment.” says Alan Jansen from the Ari’s Cancer Foundation.

The foundation aims to set up similar booths in oncology units around South Africa.

ABOUT NICCI BOTHA

Nicci Botha has been wordsmithing for more than 20 years, covering just about every subject under the sun and then some. She's strung together words on sustainable development, maritime matters, mining, marketing, medical, lifestyle... and that elixir of life - chocolate. Nicci has worked for local and international media houses including Primedia, Caxton, Lloyd's and Reuters. Her new passion is digital media.

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