

The Emotional Toll of Looking for Work



Three Years Searching for Work: Lwazi on the Value of Support

“For three years, I searched for work, hoping that one day I would be able to provide for my family without worrying about where the next loaf of bread would come from.”

For Lwazi, looking for work was not simply about finding employment. It was also about wanting to provide for his family and meet everyday needs. The ongoing search, accompanied by repeated disappointment, began to take an emotional toll.

Despite these challenges, Lwazi continued looking for opportunities. His experience reflects a part of unemployment that is not always visible: the uncertainty, pressure and emotional exhaustion that can build when people keep trying without knowing when their circumstances will change.

His journey began to shift when he was introduced to the Basic Package of Support (BPS). The team helped him apply for different job opportunities, restoring some of his hope that something might eventually come through.

Coaching sessions also gave Lwazi an opportunity to reflect on how the prolonged struggle to find work and provide for his family had affected him. He began to recognise how emotionally drained he had become.

For Lwazi, one of the most important aspects of coaching has been having a safe, non-judgmental space where he can speak openly about what he is experiencing. He values having someone who listens, offers practical guidance and helps him feel less alone as he navigates life's challenges.

“I am not perfect, and I still face challenges, but I know I have someone who listens to and supports me,” he explains.

Lwazi says he leaves coaching sessions feeling lighter, more at ease and encouraged to keep moving forward.

His story highlights why support on the journey to work needs to extend beyond helping young people apply for opportunities. The search itself can be demanding, particularly when people are also carrying the responsibility of supporting their families.

BPS coaching provides space for young people to discuss these pressures while continuing to work towards their goals. It cannot remove every challenge or guarantee an employment outcome, but it can offer practical guidance and a supportive relationship along the way.

For Lwazi, knowing that he does not have to navigate the journey alone is an important part of continuing forward.