

**HELP & SHELTER  
WOMEN'S WORLD OF PRAYER GERMAN COMMITTEE PROJECT**

**EVALUATION OF BASIC COUNSELLING WORKSHOP – AUGUST & SEPTEMBER  
2009**

This workshop was held over a period of 4 days, August 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>, September 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> with participants from the communities of Kaneville, Den Amstel and Good Hope.

**Objectives**

The objectives of the workshops were as follows:

- To introduce key aspects of counselling and the counselling process to participants
- To empower participants to acquire basic skills to assist them in lay counselling in their communities

**Programme**

**Day 1 & 2**

- Understanding Self
- Values
- Definition of Counselling
- Role of the Counsellor
- Qualities of an Effective Counsellor
- Counselling Skills
- Counselling Process

**Day 3 & 4**

- Counselling Challenges
- Domestic Violence : Web of Abuse, Entrapment, Cycle of Violence
- Counselling Domestic Violence Survivors: Change Process, Options & Consequences, DVA, Safety Plan, Services,
- Child Abuse: Forms, Signs, Behaviours
- Counselling Guidelines on Child Abuse
- Plans for Community Counselling

**Attendance**

A total of 17 persons, 14 females and 3 males from the communities of Kaneville, Den Amstel and Good Hope attended this workshop. Out of these 17 persons 14 of them, 12 females and 2 males attended on all 4 days. The requirement was that participants had to attend all 4 days of the workshop before they could be considered to assist with lay counselling in their communities.

**Age**

Participants' ages ranged from fourteen (14) years to fifty nine (65) years as follows:

- |                                 |                               |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| - 16-19 years – 2 persons (13%) | 40-49 years – 2 persons (13%) |
| - 20-29 years - 4 persons (27%) | 50-59 years – 3 persons (20%) |
| - 30-39 years - 3 persons (20%) | 60-65 years – 1 person (7%)   |

**Facilitator's Evaluation- Day 1 & 2**

**Understanding Self-**

Participants were given 15 questions which they were asked to reflect on and answer i.e. colours that brighten their lives, what makes them happy, things they enjoy doing, things that make them feel strong, the 3 parts of their body they are most grateful for, 3 things they most like about themselves, things they know well or are good at, qualities they would like their present life partner or future life partner to have, plans to maintain & develop their spousal/partner relationship, persons whose life they have enriched, persons who have enriched their lives and if

they were not created human what would they like to be and why. These questions generated a lot of interaction, soul searching and sharing among participants some of it very personal and moving. The activity was done so that participants would reflect on themselves and their lives as self-knowledge is a key factor in the whole process of counselling. It was a stimulating activity and participants enjoyed sharing, listening and getting to know one another. This workshop was the first opportunity for persons from the 3 communities to meet, exchange ideas and experiences.

### **Values**

The importance of values to who we are and also to the process of counselling was explored with participants. Values were defined as beliefs, principles, ideas, feelings and judgements which help us to know what we hold as good or bad, important or unimportant, worthwhile or worthless. Values also help to guide our actions, affect how we relate to others and shape our attitudes. Participants in small groups identified some of their values as equal rights and justice for all, respect for others, living life by the laws and statutes of the creator, abstinence before marriage or before being in a stable relationship, humbleness, equality, personal hygiene, right to life, dressing appropriately and modestly etc. Small group discussions on where we get our values from identified Church/religion, family, teachers, society, gender, community, music, culture, history and experiences

### **Definition of Counselling**

Participants in groups defined counselling as:

- Listening to the individual, getting them to open up about their problem(s), prompting and guiding them to find solutions to their problem(s) that will be of benefit to them. This can be achieved only by gaining their trust.
- Guidance, helping them to understand that they are not alone  
Listening, identifying the problem and being able to come up with a solution  
Maintaining confidentiality
- Helping someone to identify his/her problem  
Identifying the solution  
Empowering him/her with coping skills

The facilitator also gave a definition of counselling and participants were congratulated on their very good definitions of counselling which captured the main aspects of.

### **Sharing/Reflection Activity**

Participants divided up into pairs and were asked to share with their partner a personal/private event or situation which they experienced and had shared with few people. This was to be a purely private exchange between the pairs no one was allowed to disclose what they were told. At the end of the exchanges participants were asked to say how it felt to tell someone who is a stranger about a personal experience. This was a practical exercise to get participants to understand what it feels like to be the client having to tell someone about personal and very often embarrassing situations and for the listeners a practical experience in maintaining confidentiality.

### **Role of the Counsellor**

The role of the counselor was summarized as ABCD, Awareness, Behaviour Change, Conflict Resolution and Decision Making

Awareness – Bringing the person to an awareness of self, others and situation that is the cause of their distress. Helping person to identify their problem(s), providing emotional support, providing accurate and relevant information

Behaviour Change – Guiding the persons to recognize the need for behaviour change and the need to commit to making the necessary changes through exploring options and problem solving and coping skills

Conflict Resolution – Teaching techniques in managing and resolving conflicts.

Decision Making – Helping person to the point of comfort with their decisions and consequences, supporting them in reaching a decision and assisting them to access other sources of support or resources as needed.

### **Qualities of an Effective Counsellor**

Some of the important qualities identified in a counsellor were, respect for the client, being an attentive/ good listener, being compassionate/caring, honest & trustworthy, knowledgeable, patient, confident/positive and always maintaining confidentiality. To be effective, counsellors also need to know their limits, know when and where to refer to, be aware of their own feelings, values and attitudes so they can maintain objectivity and impartiality in a caring manner and have the ability to empathize with the person seeking help.

### **Counselling Skills**

Four main counselling skills were discussed, active listening, effective questioning, counsellor/client communication and step by step guide to conducting a counseling session.

Active Listening - The counsellor needs to really listens to what the persons is saying, make eye contact, respond verbally and non verbally so as to encourage the persons to relate their story and observe the non verbal messages, body language, that the persons is exhibiting.

Effective Questioning- This determines the quality of information the counsellor receives, open ended questions were recommended , 'why' questions were to be avoided as they put persons on the defensive, The use of question to clarify information and summarizing what has been communicated during counselling ensures that the information received is indeed accurate.

Road blocks to effective communication such as advising, judging, ordering, threatening, moralizing, preaching, teaching, lecturing, analyzing and withdrawing were discussed through the use of examples.

A step by step guide on how to conduct a counselling session was also discussed. At the end of all of the theory and discussions participants were then given the opportunity to put what they had learnt into practice. They were divided up into groups of 3 with each person having the opportunity to be a counsellor, client and observer. At the end of this activity, participants were asked to share how they felt, and assess their performance and the performance of others group members using an agreed on criteria. Participants thoroughly enjoyed doing these role plays and it gave them some insight into the counselling process.

### **Homework**

Participants were asked to use the time in between the next 2 day session to practice their counselling skills as they would be asked to report on these at the next session.

### **Day 3 & 4**

#### **Counselling Challenges**

Participants were divided up into pairs, each pair was given one of the 8 counselling challenges with tips on how to cope with them and asked to do a demonstration role play. After each role play the other participants were asked to identify the problem and the solution. Some of the challenges acted out were what to do if the client is silent, cries, asks the counsellor a personal question, wants the counsellor to make the decision for them. Other challenges included what to do if the counsellor makes a mistake, does not know the answer to the client's question or counsellor and client already know each other. This activity was very well received and participants had both fun acting out the skits and showing the solutions.

#### **Domestic Violence-Cycle of Abuse, Entrapment, Web of Abuse**

Since many of the participants, through attending peer educators' workshops, were already aware of these topics, it was decided to do dramatic presentations to showcase these 3 key aspects of domestic violence. The three groups were innovative, creative and effective in their 3 presentations and set the stage for counselling of domestic violence survivors.

#### **Counselling Domestic Violence Survivors:**

##### **Change Process**

The change process for DV survivors was outlined in five stages:

- Not aware she/he is being abused, in denial, not interested in change-Basically she/he

- thinks partners hit their women/ men in all relationships, think this is normal, makes excuses for the abusive behaviour or minimizes the severity of the abuse
- Knows she/he is being abused, weighing the pro and cons of change- Realizes her/his abusers behaviour is out of control, questions if this is really love, starts to evaluate the relationship.
  - Knows she/he is being abused and planning to change as part of the goal to end the abuse- At this stage she/he is finding ways to avoid the abuse, learning about protection/restraining orders (DVA), exploring what action the police can take and examining other options and safety strategies
  - Beginning to put changes in place to end abuse- Building a support network, actively seeking help, getting a protection order, moving out
  - Has changed her/his situation, trying to live without abuse

### **Needs of an Abused Woman/Man**

These needs were identified as; having the violence stopped, to be listened to, to get legal representation, police protection, counseling for her/him and children, somewhere safe she can go to with her children, financial/social assistance if leaving abusive situation

### **Services for DV Survivors & Safety Plans**

These were outlined as, counselling services, protection orders, legal advice and representation, welfare services, child protection services, police assistance, maintenance orders for child support, shelter services etc.

Key aspects of a safety plan were also discussed in detail with participants.

### **Counselling Role Play**

Participants were divided up into groups of 3 and asked to role play a counselling session. Each group was given the chance to be both a counsellor and client. During the role plays participants were asked to focus on DV situations and pay special attention to identifying the problem accurately, extent and form(s) of DV being experienced, and exploring options and safety plans. Participants were assessed on their counselling skills and other criteria outlined above. Performances varied as a few participants were a bit nervous and shy but altogether participants found it to be a good learning experience and performed credibly.

### **Counselling Guidelines on Child Abuse**

Forms, signs and behaviours in children experiencing child abuse were discussed. Counselling guidelines outlined included:

***-Ensuring the safety and comfort of the child-***counselling the child in a comfortable non-threatening setting, getting to know the child not just the problem.

***-Encouraging child friendly communication-*** through drawing, play, story telling and other creative ways

***-Child Rights & Child Protection-*** the rights and safety of the child cannot be protected while keeping abuse secret .However the child's identity must be kept private and confidential at all times through only informing those who need to know.

***-Counselling Parents-*** in order to counsel parents effectively the counsellor needs to first assess the parenting abilities of the parent(s).

***Vulnerability of Children-***children are particularly vulnerable to abuse due to their small size, their socialization to obey adults, trust them and do as they say, their dependence on adults for basic needs.

***The 5 important messages abused children need to hear-*** I believe you, I am glad you told me, I am sorry this has happened to you, this is not your fault and I may need to speak to other trusted adults to help you and prevent this from happening again.

### **Counselling Sexually Abused Children**

Participants were advised of what to do and what not to do in counselling child sexual abuse survivors. These included showing empathy, accepting the child's statement(s), speaking quietly

and privately, staying calm, reassuring and impartial, giving the child your full attention, believe what the child tells you, give direct answers to questions from the child, discuss options, inform the child who else you need to tell, help the child not to feel guilty and to regain their self-confidence and self esteem, provide sex education and guidance if needed, encourage appropriate social behaviour, encourage a supportive social network of relatives, friends, peers etc, if sexually abused explain the need for a medical examination, police report, child protection agency report etc what it will entail and accompany the child for these if possible.

The short and long term effects of child abuse and in particular child sexual abuse were also discussed.

### **Community Counselling Plans**

**Kaneville-** Participants said they would counsel individuals and groups where applicable e.g. couples, families and groups

**Den Amstel-** Participants said they plan to use their counselling skills at the following locations:

- Save Your Children Orphanage
- Murray's Private School
- Other Schools on the WCD
- Youth Groups

**Good Hope-** Participants said they would do:

- Random Group Counselling
- Gather information on abuse in the community
- Invite abused individuals/families to counselling sessions
- Organize counselling sessions in the community 1 or 2 afternoons per week

### **Participants' Evaluation**

<b>Programme Topic</b>	<b>Yes, Definitely</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>No, Not at all</b>	<b>No Response</b>
Did you understand the information shared?	92%	8%		
Did the workshop increase your understanding of counselling?	100%			
Did the workshop help you to better understand the role and qualities of a counsellor	100%			
Do you think you learnt new counselling skills?	91%			9%
Do you think there was enough time for group work and sharing of information?	45%	9%	45%	
Did you learn new ideas and skills?	100%			
Do you think you are better able to help/counsel persons who experience DV now?	100%			
Did you learn about services for DV?	100%			
Do you understand how to help someone to make a DV safety plan?	92%	8%		
Do you think you are better able to help with counselling children?	92%	8%		
Did you learn skills for counselling children?	92%	8%		
Do you think the facilitator(s) did a good job of presenting the topics?	100%			
Was the venue comfortable and conducive for learning?	100%			
Were the meals and snacks good?	92%	8%		
Were handouts useful and informative?	100%			

### **What participants found most useful about the workshop**

- Understanding self and the role plays

- The way the workshop was facilitated. Facilitator did not supply all the answers and information, everyone was asked for his or her input
- Role plays on being a counsellor, client and observer and the purpose of counselling
- It helped me to grow and develop skills. I never imagined I would be able to start a conversation and share information about DV which I took for love. I learnt the art of counselling
- Counselling, ground rules and values
- How to be a good counsellor
- Being honest. Saying what you mean and doing what you promise

#### **What participants found most useful about counselling DV survivors**

- Safety plans
- Role plays on being a counsellor
- Learning not to have low self esteem and to be independent
- Understanding how to deal with persons experiencing DV and counsel them
- How to get persons to open up and discuss their problems
- That there are always other options
- The counselling was so good it made me a better person

#### **What participants found most useful about the session on counselling children**

- That there are laws to protect children from continual domestic abuse
- To show children empathy
- How to deal with children, because they are easy targets
- Role plays on counselling
- How to recognize child abuse especially child sexual abuse
- I found everything useful

#### **What participants' learnt**

- Counselling, values, counselling skills, expectations, qualities and role of the counsellor, what makes an effective counsellor, confidentiality, being non-judgemental, listening skills, making eye contact, asking open ended questions, counselors are not advisors, know your limits, I learnt how to deal with children, husbands, wives and others who are experiencing DV, I learnt no one should encourage abuse in any form, that my feelings does not matter it is the person I am counselling who is important, I learnt ways of helping persons to cope with their situation, making persons self reliant, being patient and positive about myself and giving emotional support to my client, I learnt about conflicts and how to resolve them and learnt more about myself and the difference between sympathy and empathy

#### **New things that participants learnt from the workshop**

- How to work with people, that our reaction when counselling can have a positive or negative effect on the client, some of the signs of sexually abused children which I was unaware of, the safety plan for DV, change process for abused women/persons, how important it is to help children who are abused, how to deal with violence, how to approach someone who is being constantly abused

#### **How will you use what you have learnt**

- I will share what I have learnt with family, friends, church members and people in the community
- I will go back in my community and share my knowledge whenever the need arises
- I will use this to be a more effective counsellor by putting the client and his/her problem first
- I will use what I have learnt with people who are being abused and need counselling and people in the community who have DV problems

- By sharing the information with my co-workers and youth and older persons in my community
- By putting into practice the skills learnt.
- By applying them to my life where applicable and helping others to do the same

**Other comments/recommendations**

- More workshops on counselling
- More training programmes
- Thank you for a very productive few days