

DIAKONIA INTERDENOMINATIONAL SERVICES FOR COUNSELLING EVANGELISM AND TEACHING

(DISCET)

22 Wellington Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone

PROGRESS REPORT ON PTSD WORKSHOP COUNSELLORS **PHASE II**

DISCET wishes to appreciate God Almighty for seeing us through, SAVE USA for providing the funds for the running of the workshop and Mental Health Coalition for collaborating with DISCET in delivering professional lectures that ensures the wellbeing of the Counsellors in Sierra Leone.

The aim of the PTSD /Wellbeing Session for Counsellors phase II, was to setup a mechanism of sustainability of the ideas taught in the two workshops. This will only happen if an umbrella body for all counselling institutions and individuals in the country is set up in order to guide,



monitor and encourage Counsellors to stay within counselling code of ethics so that professionalism can be maintained for effective service delivery. A national umbrella body for all Counsellors in the Sierra Leone was setup in the presence of 75 counsellors from several counselling institutions across the country. This

national body was named, **“Professional Counsellors’ Association—Sierra Leone (PCASL)”**.

The workshop was attended by fifty-three (53) trained counsellors from all works of life, religions and denominations and a total twenty-two (22)



aspiring or would be counsellors or those that have been doing some form of counselling but without professional training. We also had eleven organisers of the workshop from both DISCET and Mental Health Coalition. There

was a total of eight-nine (89) people in attendance.

This workshop was held from Wednesday 13th to 15th November, 2019 at the CCSL Conference Hall Kingharman Road, Brookfields in Freetown.

The workshop lasted for three (3) days and the topics presented were as listed below:

Handling Issues of Suicidal Attempts, Common Mental Health Issues, Addiction (Causes, Effects and Mitigation), Counselling skills (Practirium), Handling domestic violence and Abuse

The aim of the above was to empower the counsellors so that they are equipped for effective service delivery so that the prevalent issues in our country mentioned above are adequately addressed.

The third day of the workshop was more of planning and setting up of the umbrella counselling body that was explained about at the opening of this piece of writing. Several stakeholders in the counselling field were invited to make statements on the importance of counselling in nation building. Amongst those who made statements were the following:

The Director of DISCET

The Representative from the Ministry of Social Welfare

The Founder and Director Emeritus of DISCET.

The minister was represented by the Director of Social Welfare in the Ministry of Social Welfare in the person of Mr. Francis Dumbuya. In his remarks he pointed out the importance counselling in the everyday life thereby making it crucial to the development of any nation. He said, "since the dawn of society counselling has always been an important element in human life. From parents and grandparents advising other family members to community leaders providing guidance to residents, counselling has always been a natural part of human experience. counsellors are hope builders so ideally you are the hope builders, you are the ones who restore hope where there seems to be none. You are the ones who should build an enviable Sierra Leone by getting the minds of distressed individuals to believe and trust in themselves. This can only be done when you put into practice what you have learnt during the three days of the workshop".

He also said, counselling should e seen as a career and not only to help people out of their distresses, "Worth noting is the fact that

Counselling is a professional career which can make a profound impact on the lives of people and their communities. Its benefits are immeasurable. So if we want to

build healthy communities where individuals live their lives to the fullest, we should rely on you, Counsellors”.

Furthermore, the Director Emeritus, Rev Canon Dr. J. E. Modupe Taylor-Pearce, in his statement emphasised “that counsellors are coaches, and every school, university, business organisations, political and spiritual organisations etc, needs improvement which a good and trained counsellor can spot and provide. Counsellors doctors for emotional sickness, depression, low-self-esteem, and poor relationships. Counsellors can also serve as confidence builders and motivators to soar”.

The DISCET Director, in his closing statement applauded the counsellors for availing themselves to attend this workshop but also encouraged them that counselling is not just an act of helping a person to walk out of his/her issue; rather, counselling is a career like any other careers like Engineering, Banking, Medicine, Nursing etc. If these professions have umbrella organisations that regulate their activities in order to protect their code of ethics, it is important for us as counsellors to have an umbrella body that will serve as a guide for our practice.

The workshop was climaxed with the setting up of a National Umbrella body for all Counsellors in Sierra Leone that was named –**Professional Counsellors’ Association—Sierra Leone**. A national leadership was set up to oversee the smooth running of the young organisation and they will start working from the DISCET Secretariat for a start. The Secretary will be the only frequent volunteer that will be obliged to service the organisation twice every week. That is, the person will be expected to come to office two times in a week. The executives together with DISCET is thinking of fundraising ideas in order to help the young organisation stand on its feet. The names below constitute the national leadership. Freetown was divided into three zones, the zonal leaders also form part of the national leadership.

1. Chairman, Rev Sadrie Turay
2. Vice Chairman, Dr. Richard Bangura
3. PRO I - Dr Abdul Bangura
4. PRO 2 – Rev Johnson
5. East zone leader---- Rev. Alie M. Sesay

6. Central zone leader----- Bro. Buel Leomie

7. West zone leader----- Rev. Marie Conteh

The workshop ended in a certification ceremony.

I want to thank God for the opportunity He gave us to serve his people through this workshop.

Appreciation

We cease not to give thanks to God for all our prayer partners, donors and most especially to DISCET UK and SAVE USA for making this dream come true.