



THE CONTACT

CONTACT Family Counselling Centre's Newsletter

OCTOBER— DECEMBER 2006

CONTACT as a counselling and training organisation is often addressing this difficult issue again and again. All over the world, as well as in Zimbabwe the issue of suicidal thoughts and suicide is something like a taboo. As counsellors, we have to break the silence and talk about many under communicated issues such as abuse, neglect, sexual difficulties as well as suicide.

Another important thing is that, as counsellors we have to update ourselves in all questions of life and death that our clients are going through. If we don't do it, we are at risk of being scared by suicidal clients, of avoiding proper assessment and not offering appropriate counselling that could make an impact upon our clients and make them survive.

We have to learn how to be empathetic with the very strange emotions of a suicidal person. But how? How can we understand that suicidal feeling of not having any future, any space, and any other alternative except death?

A very comprehensive help in that question came through some research done in that area. The state of mind in front of a suicidal attempt is conceptualised as a syndrome (= a bundle of symptoms, of signs) called presuicidal syndrome, or more conveniently the tunnel or funnel model of suicidality. Not being in that condition, it is not an easy task for anybody to get an idea about how somebody feels like the one who is on that path towards a suicidal attempt.

Imagine a big black funnel. When the very first idea of suicide comes into your mind, you are in a way at the entrance of that funnel. At one side there are all the challenges of life, all the relations you are in, all the struggle of every day life especially in these harsh times nowadays here in the country. You feel overwhelmed, perhaps exhausted, you want to be relieved from that entire struggle. Being tired you want a solution on short notice. Now the idea pops up. There is this simple solution to all my problems. Being dead there are no problems to cope with and the idea makes life look easier. The idea is appealing. Death is advertising. And through that

you are pulled deeper into that funnel. We are speaking of **pull factors**. Now, you are in a very different state of mind. All your feelings, perceptions and thoughts even your relationships are constricted. There is no other future, no other way forward only that simple solution. All support systems are no longer seen. And any other challenge is now pushing you deeper into that dark. We are speaking of **push factors**. Even minor incidents can now cause the final step that an outsider can't understand. The only light is now at the very end of that funnel and that light, ironically, means death.

But there is still some fear, fear to be dead, fear to undertake the final step. A mental struggle starts with one side inside you that wants to proceed and the other one that wants you to be alive. Quite often this struggle is a lonesome one. All who do not share that struggle with anybody else are at high risk to be dead. Even with good and resourceful relationships and support systems anybody is at risk if not sharing.

Luckily, quite often, the person is giving us some signs, verbally and nonverbally and through that, we, as counsellors, are invited to share that struggle and that burden. We can build a caring relationship by good joining and coaching the client in that struggle. We can ask him or her to delay, to give himself/ herself more time for the final decision. We can weigh the pros and cons together. We can strengthen the relationship with significant others, the resource persons and systems, while the client has already started to cut these ties.

And as somebody can be sucked into that funnel, he or she can be pulled out back to a position outside the funnel. The person now wonders how he or she had thought in such a manner. Hopefully as CONTACT we are offering a counselling service in this direction that can take somebody out of the funnel, back to life and the future.

Breaking the silence about SUICIDE

by
K. Weisensee

FAMILY LIFE– NOT AN EASY TASK

DI RECTOR'S DESK with Mrs D. Madonko

Dear Members and Friends,

Suicide, maybe, is not a bright way to finish the year but let us look at the issue from the positive side: it can be prevented! We all enjoyed Karl's Saturday talk on the subject and the new perspective he gave to our counsellors. We are encouraging all of you to join the Saturday talks because the topics discussed are very interesting for us counsellors.

CONTACT is looking at the forthcoming year with great optimism despite the gloomy situation in the country. We are very proud that the Bulawayo public appreciates our work and our donors continue giving us their support. A big challenge for CONTACT for the next year is the implementation of a new project, which will offer comprehensive social services for the child sexual abuse cases. It is going to be an activity that involves, also, the Bulawayo City Council and the Catholic Archdiocese.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members and friends a happy, constructive and creative New Year!

Saturday Talks Schedule—2007

TOPIC	DATE	TIME	FACILITATOR
How to thrive under pressure - Resilience	10/02/07	9 - 11 am	K. Weisensee
Crisis Intervention	10/03/07	9 - 11 am	D. Madonko J. T. Ncube
Supervision—How to develop as a counsellor	14/04/07	9 - 11 am	K. Weisensee
Personal Growth PRH	12/05/07	9 - 11 am	B. Terry
Family Reconstruction	09/06/07	9 - 11 am	K. Weisensee
Couple Counselling	14/07/07	9 - 11 am	B. Terry

LOOK OUT FOR OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER FOR SOME MORE TOPICS FOR THE SATURDAY TALKS



COUNSELLORS' CORNER

The satellite centres programme has been going on well, we are effectively operating in Maqhawe Clinic, Magwegwe Clinic, Northend Clinic, Luveve Parish, Baptist Church and Mzilikazi Housing Office. Clients from surrounding areas are finding satellite centres very convenient. Listed below is our timetable of the centres for your information.

CONTACT FAMILY COUNSELLING CENTRE SATELITE CENTRES PROGRAMME – 2006

CLINIC	DAY	TIME
MAQHAWE CLINIC	WEDNESDAYS	8:00 a.m – 4:00 p.m
NORTHEND CLINIC	MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS	8:00 a.m – 2:00 p.m
MAGWEGWE CLINIC	THURSDAYS	8:00 a.m – 4:00 p.m
ROMAN CATHOLIC/ LUVEVE PARISH	TUESDAYS	8:00 a.m – 4:00 p.m
MZILIKAZI HOUSING OFFICE	MONDAYS	10:00 a.m – 4:00 p.m
BAPTIST CHURCH	FRIDAYS	11:00 a.m – 1:00 p.m

“Do you know how to relax?....read on, by Karl

Life nowadays is really difficult: how to earn an income, how to get mealie meal, how to raise the school fees for the children? Nearly all of us are struggling to make ends meet. We quite often feel stressed or exhausted. So, in these harsh times there is really a need to relax. How can anybody struggle any longer, if there is no time to relax and to comfort one self? Certainly we need to rest to cope with all these problems we have nowadays. But how can we do it. How can we relax?

Obviously some, especially men, are relying on alcohol to relax; but the next morning all the worries are back again accompanied by that uncomfortable hangover. And some hard-earned money is gone, making the worries even more. Then the need to relax and to get some distraction from all these problems increases. And in the end one gets locked into a circle of frustration and drinking, leading to alcohol addiction. Obviously, this is not the best way. So what can we do?

Perhaps it is a good idea to learn a little bit about stress and relaxation. Basically, we as human beings have a natural flight/fight/freeze response. During our evolution as humans, for thousands of years, we encountered the threats of lions and other dangerous wildlife. So automatic reactions to threats developed in our behaviour, and became an important part of our nature as humans. When afraid and facing danger, we get a rush of adrenaline, a rise in blood pressure and a lot of other changes in our body, which help us to stand and fight or to flee. Another, less common response is to freeze and do nothing. All these responses helped us to survive in ancient times and they even have the same purpose for us today. But they also place us under stress.

These responses occur automatically and involuntarily every time our brain gives our body the signal “DANGER”. Most of us nowadays are not challenged by lions any more; the dangers are more modern, such as how to get employment, how to survive in a harsh socio-economic environment. Every driver knows the

feeling after a near accident:

our bodies react in the same way as they did when we were facing that lion: we feel stressed, we worry, are scared or afraid. And the stress sometimes continues long after the immediate danger goes away.

But there is hope: humans also have the capacity to relax. We as humans are creative enough to discover many ways to relax. To give some examples: we can take a nice hour in the bath, watch a really thrilling soccer match, do some physical exercises, have a nice chat with an aunt or the neighbour or just sit looking into the fire - all that and even a lot of other things can give us that feeling of relaxation, not to mention the relaxing effects of a satisfying sexual relationship. And a lot of us are finding some peace in religious faith and in prayer. Nearly everyone has gained some knowledge of what to use to gain some relaxation in every day life. But the stress response occurs automatically, while the relaxation response occurs only voluntarily – we have to decide to take a break or to do something else to feel relaxed. So let’s make sure we take breaks from our every day hassle. Everybody knows how to do it. We only have to be aware of what we can do to relax better and really commit ourselves to it.

Relaxing is in fact a skill, which can be learned and developed like other skills, say driving a car or typing. Some people have developed some specialised techniques for relaxing. Different techniques use different working principles: muscle relaxation, different kinds of meditation and other techniques can be taught. One kind of meditation, in particular, called mindful meditation, is easy to learn and to use. CONTACT Family Counselling Centre is offering to the general public free face-to-face relaxation counselling and group training in mindfulness meditation. At present the training is only in English but later in the year we will offer it in vernacular languages.

Contact us for more details.

RESOURCE LIBRARY

We have a few more new and interesting books in our resource library for our students and members. You are welcome to come in and get yourself some valuable information:

International Journal for the Advancement of COUNSELLING (2004) Edited by Arthur M. Horne

- Volume 26, No.1, No.2, No.3, No.4
- Volume 27, No.2, No.4
- Volume 28, No.1, No.2, No.3

Gender Mainstreaming in Zimbabwe (2003) edited by Dr Patricia McFadden

- Volume 1

Challenges of Empowering for Young Feminist in Zimbabwe (2004) Edited by Kudzai Makombe



CONTACT
Family Counselling Centre

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CONTACT Family Counselling Centre is a Welfare Organisation that offers Counselling Services free of charge to the Bulawayo public. If you have problems in your family, at your school or at your workplace; if you want to improve your relationships, performance, and to reduce stress, anxiety and grief, you are welcome. It also trains a broad range of people working in community based contexts in Systemic Counselling Courses.

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Due to the high postage costs we are unable to post the Newsletter to you. We therefore advice you to collect it from our offices.

Talk to our Counsellors, Auntie "Thandi" or Uncle "D" on:
Tel: (09) 72400

***** DIRECTIONS TO CONTACT OFFICES*****

"From the City centre use R. Mugabe Way towards 1st Ave. Turn right into 1st Ave, on your right you will see the Grey prison and on your left there is Robertson St, take it and immediately turn right into Barbour Ave. We are the first gate on your left."

ANNOUNCEMENT!

OUR NEXT INTAKE FOR THE CSC COURSE IS IN FEBRUARY 2007. PLEASE VISIT THE OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION. FORMS ARE ACCESSIBLE AT \$500.00



This has been a busy 3 months. With quite a few unforgettable occasions allow me to diarise some of them for you:

- 10/10/2006 Participated in the Mental Health Day Commemorations
- 18/10/2006 Refresher course for St Andrews Support Group
- 8 - 10/11/2006 Workshop for PLWHA, St Andrews Home Based Caregivers
- 23 - 27/10/206 CSC7 First in- class session
- 25/11/2006 Participated in the Womens' Coalition meeting on the Domestic Violence Bill
- 01/12/2006 Participated in the World AIDS Day celebrations



"To CONTACT members, students and the public"

From now on we are offering all members of our library an additional service:

Our Online Library



It contains an updated list of our books and more important a lot of material gathered from the internet. All members of our library now have the opportunity to browse through these files, read them in detail and are allowed to copy what they need. At the moment the utilised laptop is NOT connected to the internet, but it contains a lot of files which are very new and fresh. Everybody can also bring files that he or she has collected to be added to the Online Library.

Technical Information:

Floppy disk or USB Stick can be used, but have to be provided by the user. Before adding anything, the files will be checked for viruses.

INTRODUCING STUDENTS' RESEARCH PROJECTS

Phathisile Ndlovu An Investigation into the Challenges Faced by Children Whose Parents are in the Diaspora in Two Secondary Schools in Luveve Suburb of Bulawayo
CONTACT, 2006, Bulawayo.



Abstract:

The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges faced by children whose parents are in the Diaspora in two secondary schools in Luveve suburb. The research instruments used was a questionnaire. The respondents to the questionnaire were students from form 1 - 6 and teachers. 128 students and copies and 20 teachers' responses.

Children in the age group of 12 - 14 years felt unhappier than the children in the age group 14 - 17 and 16 - 19 years. Girls are talking longer to their parents on the telephone than boys. The teachers indicated that the age group that gave them the most problems was 14 - 17 years. They expressed that these children with their parents in the Diaspora have a bad influence on other children.

The study recommended that schools should conduct counselling sessions to help the emotionally hurt children.