

End October 2021 circular



Mental Health Awareness Month.

The month of October has been declared Mental Health Awareness month with the objective of not only educating the public about mental health but also to reduce the stigma and discrimination that people with mental illness are often

subjected to.

Our counsellors perform an important role in the support of mental health and healing, especially at this time of abnormal measures. The website <https://www.gov.za/> points out that “Like physical disorders mental and brain disorders vary in severity. There are those that are:

- Transient (like an acute stress disorder)
- Periodic (like bipolar disorder, characterised by periods of exaggerated elation followed by periods of depression)
- Long lasting and progressive (like Alzheimer’s disease)”

Self-care and home based care

To the wellness counsellor mental health awareness is not limited to one month per year for it is an ongoing concern. Although wellness counsellors are obliged to refer serious mental health cases, much of the primary healthcare support can be rendered by community workers. Most people do not have access to medical aids and cannot afford expensive mental healthcare professionals. This is the niche market where wellness counsellors can work at ground level.

We have always emphasised that *self-care and home based care* is at the core of the community counselling movement. Wellness counsellors facilitate self-care which means they involve the needy person in his/her own health support. Therefore we do not regard the challenged person as a patient that is per definition passive and submissive, but rather as an active client, i.e. ‘actient’ (*active plus client*) that is willing to accept responsible for his/her own health and wellbeing.

This approach requires the wellness counsellor to be a teacher and coach to guide and support the actient in participating actively and intelligently in a

constructive self-care programme. Unfortunately this is not easy to implement as people are conditioned by the *medicalisation* of society to think that they should blindly rely on the authority and the expertise of the medical fraternity to heal and cure. This is an erroneous conception and unless we succeed in empowering people to break this yoke, the healthcare system is doomed to fail miserably.

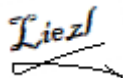
Our message to you as wellness counsellor is: **“You are a self-care facilitator, your and my mission is to empower people to become actients.”**

Lalah Delia is correct in reminding us that: “Self-care is how you take your power back.” –

Note

Please take note that due to the frequent Eskom outages our telephone systems may not always work. If you cannot get hold of the office, please phone later again or alternatively send an email. We do apologise for any inconvenience, but it is not due to the fact that our staff members are not available to take your calls.

Happy counselling



Dr. Liezl Herholdt

ASCHP & C4CSA