

Malawi Association of Counselling

‘Facilitating Emotional Growth’



The President speaks

‘Within the year we managed to accomplish some milestones as we continue to advance the cause of professional counselling in Malawi’

The profession on the spotlight

‘Profession is an occupation that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification. So we can ask ourselves: What training did I receive?’

Counselling in the pandemic

‘Yet professional support for such survivors has been curtailed to the movement restrictions’



MALAWI ASSOCIATION OF COUNSELLING

From the president's desk

Dear fellow Counsellors and members,

It is the end of the last quarter of 2020. What a year it has been. Quite a challenging year for all of us counsellors, family and friends, acquaintances and clients mainly because of the Covid19 situation within our borders and the rest of Africa and beyond. We are thankful to the Lord for granting us such grace to still be alive and record a number of successes in a year that was challenging. MAC offers a sincere condolences to friends and families of those that died due to the pandemic.

Within the year we managed to accomplish some milestones as we continue to advance the cause of professional Counselling in Malawi. Such notable activities include the historical MAC strategic planning where we drafted the short, mid and long term activities, we also used the time to highlight strategic decisions as what will drive MAC in the coming 5yrs. Such a great time we had and we can really see light at the end of the tunnel in line with trainings, enhanced resources mobilization, networking and collaboration, Counselling policy and regulatory approvals.

MAC also had an interface meeting with the newly established ministry of Civic Education and National Unity and the outcome of the meeting was the submitted concept note where MAC envisage a possible collaboration in dealing with mindset change, healing of the nation from the past atrocities, conflict resolution and management, peace building and the provision of general consultancy to governments entities.

MAC also managed to procure a plot for possible development along the Bypass road in Lilongwe. You may have seen the training adverts in the national newspapers and WhatsApp forums for 2021 intake of our certificate program. Please feel free to share this with your family and friends. We look forward to seeing you enrolled. Fellow counsellors, As you can see the future really looks bright for all of us. I encourage us to face the same with hope and renewed commitment as we advance professional Counselling in Malawi.

Merry Christmas and a happy 2021 to you all!



Dominic Actionman Nsona
MAC President

Vision

MAC's Vision is vibrant communities through professional counselling

Mission

MAC's mission is to promote the advancement of the Counselling Profession in Malawi and the development of professional counsellors, ensuring the quality of counselling services for the emotional healing, psychosocial growth, and the well-being of people.



AM I A PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLOR OR NOT YET?

By Huguette Ostiguy mic

Everyone needs to ask this question. Due to the reality of Counselling in Malawi, we are invited to ask ourselves: “Am I a real professional counsellor?” I maybe a Counsellor, but am I a professional counsellor. Since ‘Counselling’ is not yet officially recognized as a profession in Malawi, and so not being regulated, it is difficult to know who is a professional counsellor or a para-counsellor. Still let’s look at definition: ‘Profession’ is an occupation that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification. So we can ask ourselves: What training did I receive? What formal qualification did I get?

Counselling has developed in Malawi from 2000 onward out of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Different institutions started offering Counselling training at different levels. Now, in Malawi, we have ‘professional’ counsellors of different degrees or levels of knowledge and skills. There are many who are trained in other disciplines and usually their training includes one or two modules about Counselling Theories and Skills. They have acquired valuable knowledge and skills in helping professions their training seems to fall short of ‘prolonged training’ and ‘formal qualification’ They may be called “counsellors” but their qualification belong to another profession, like nurses, teachers, etc.

To be a ‘Professional Counsellor’, one has to undergo a prolonged training up to a formal qualification. Counselling and psychotherapy training have to include basic requirements both theoretical and practical. Without those two essential aspects of training, a counsellor cannot be formally designated a ‘professional counsellor.’

ARTS & HUMOUR

By Chandulo Kayira

The owl and the chimpanzee

The owl and the chimpanzee went to sea

In a beautiful boat called The Mind
The owl was sensible, clever and smart

The chimp was a little behind
The owl made decisions, based on fact

And knew where to steer its ship
The chimp reacted a little too fast

And often the boat would tip
The waves would come and crash aboard

The chimp would start to cry
Large tears would roll right down his face

Afraid that he would die

The chimp and the owl would
wrestle at night

When the world was quiet and still
The chimp would jump up and rock the boat

And the boat would start to fill
Then the owl stepped in and grabbed a pail

And started to empty it out
And the chimp would start to get quite cross

And would often scream and shout
The battle continued night after night

Until the chimp started to see
That if it let the owl take control
A more peaceful night it would be

Lesson

The chimp is our brain. Internal conflict is normal and human. If we can learn to control our primitive, scared brain more often and listen to our inner owl, we’ll enjoy more.

Demand for Counselling Services Spikes during the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Dominic Actionman Nsona

A lot of mental health issues have increased in recent months. This is the case in Malawi and many African countries. Issues like an increase in rape cases, suicide, and gender based violence (GBV), intimate partner violence and the Covid-19 pandemic. All these factors have necessitated the demand for professional counselling services to survivors, family members and the community at large.

Yet professional support for such survivors has been curtailed due to the movement restrictions. Access to safe spaces and in-person counselling have been significantly reduced and, in some cases totally suspended.

The pandemic and other related emerging issues have taken its toll on many people in Malawi. The question is, have professional counselling service providers met the demand for services? In my opinion, the answer to this question is a big “no”. This may either be due to people not knowing where to access such services, or the counselling service providers failed to indicate their availability to offer such services. However way you look at it, the issue is that there has been a huge demand in those needing counselling and the need is still with us. We may also say that therapists have learnt other means of counselling such as using video and voice calls.

Individuals and communities still expect a *cure* from the counselling experience and they come to counsellors with problems of all kinds. *‘People are exhausted and the counsellors will have to offer counselling intervention programs for larger*

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

.... through Counselling Ongoing Training, Supervision and Consultation

By Huguette Ostiguy mic

Self-Development, both personal and professional, is an essential aspect of our life as Counsellors. How... when... do we take care of our ongoing development? Different means are available to contribute to our development. Many professions have what is called CPD (Continuing Professional Development) that is a requirement for the renewal of license or certification. However, in order to give effective, ethical and therapeutic services to our clients, we need to commit ourselves to ongoing personal and professional development. Getting more training is one way, and also having Counselling Supervision that contribute directly to improve

communities when all this is over,' said one counselor from Zomba. This means that it is never too late for counsellors to start working with the survivors. I am aware of the overwhelming frustration brought on by the magnitude of mental health problems coupled with the lack of effective counselling skills, and not knowing how to use the technology of online or tele-counselling methods. The lack of support for counsellors remains a challenge especially as the stress of the pandemic began to impact on their own well-being.

In Malawi, even before the mental health impact of the pandemic became a reality, programs to provide professional support and supervision of counsellors and their practice were already an issue of concern. Support systems for counsellors that will provide guidance and ensure that they have somewhere to turn to when the job gets overwhelming are in the production phase by MAC. We plan to give counsellors a safe space to meet every month in small groups where they can discuss difficult cases amongst themselves (peer supervision groups). Counsellors will also receive expert supervision on their practice methods and matters directly related to their work from senior professionals in their field

The role of MAC in making professional counselling services available to the masses

MAC has registered members across the country and the mapping exercise is ongoing in order to establish where each registered counsellor is working as well as the services they are offering. All professional counsellors can register through the link on MAC's website: <https://malawi-ac.org/membership/online-registration/>

our services. When necessary, consultation is another tool to ensure positive action.

[Ref: MAC Code of Ethics A4/MAC Standards of Practice # 5]



All counsellors need to have MAC Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice to guide us our services to people. It is available at MAC for only MK1, 100. Becoming a member of MAC and registering yourselves as a practicing counsellors give you different advantages. Just go to www.mwcounselling.org and do so. Being part of MAC Counselling Family allows us to know who you are, where you work, and to contact you when people ask for services.

For any questions, simply contact

malawimac@gmail.com, or

Phone 0880 917090.

From the...



...With Eric Rukundo



COLLABORATION & NETWORKING

The effects of natural disasters, violence and the Covid-19 pandemic are quite evident and overwhelming in our communities and these have left the country desperate not only for physical healing but also emotional and mental wellbeing. The extent of emotional damage calls for collaborative efforts among professional counsellors.

Malawi association of counsellors (MAC) strives to see vibrant communities through ethical professional counselling across the country. In as much as this is a great and inspiring vision, it cannot be accomplished by one person or an individual organization. If we are to see an emotionally and mentally healthy Malawi, the need for effective networking, partnership, and collaboration among professional counsellors cannot be overemphasized. MAC values partnership and would like to invite like-minded individuals as well as organizations to jump on the wagon for this noble task.

“Alone, you go fast but together we go far”. Our joint efforts can enable us to overcome some of the seemingly unsurmountable challenges that have in many ways handicapped our country. Our collaborative efforts can harness the best out of us for greater impact as this brings together our different expertise, skills, perspectives and backgrounds and enables us to perform at the edge of our potential. This does not underestimate the great work individual organizations are doing on the ground but much more can be accomplished by our increased capacity through collaboration and networking.

To facilitate collaboration and professional growth, MAC conducts annual conferences that bring counsellors from across the country together and also offers quality professional training to ensure professional growth in Malawi.

The wise one from the east

By Chandulo Kayira



Mental health is not a destination, but a process. It's about how you drive, not where you're going



To be a good parent, you need to take care of yourself so that you can have the physical and *emotional* energy to take care of your family.

“Take care of your body. It's *the only* place you have to live.”

