



The
CENTER for
VICTIMS of
TORTURE

INTERNATIONAL HEALING SERVICES

Building Local Mental Health Capacity

In its international healing programs, CVT hires community members as psychosocial counselors (PSCs) who serve as mental health service providers, advocates and educators. The training process is extensive and continues throughout a PSC's career. CVT's goal is to develop highly capable local resources for healing and advocacy with in-depth knowledge and skills who can continue to serve their community even after CVT has departed. Trainings provided to psychosocial counselors cover a range of topics. Sample training sessions include:

Torture and Trauma

- Torture and War Trauma: Definitions and Effects
- The Psychological, Spiritual and Social Effects of Torture
- The Relationship between Trauma and Substance Abuse
- Psychobiology of Trauma



Clinical Practice and Methods

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Refining Psychosocial Assessment Skills
- Model for Trauma Interventions: Judith Herman's Classic Trauma & Recovery
- Introduction to Interpreting in a Therapeutic Context
- Designing and Conducting Community Sensitizations
- Basics of Psychodrama: Theory and Practice

Group Counseling

- Ethical Considerations in Group Counseling and Issues in Group Co-Facilitation
- Clinical Guidelines for Trauma Counseling Groups
- Creating and Maintaining a Safe Space
- Presentation Techniques



Mental Health Topics

- Suicide and Its Prevention
- Understanding the Symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Depression
- Errors in Thinking That Contribute to Stress and Depression

Working with Children and Families

- Conducting Interventions with War-Traumatized Parents and Caretakers
- Childhood Trauma and the Psychosocial Effects of War
- Talking with Children about Difficult Topics
- Family Interventions

Gender Issues and Sexual Violence

- Gender and Mental Health
- Gender-Based Violence: Overview and Prevention
- Directives and International Recommendations Relating to Sexual Violence
- The Physical, Psychological and Social Consequences of Rape



PSCs apply their formal training as they work alongside professional CVT psychotherapists to provide mental health services to torture and war trauma survivors. They begin their careers by observing and assisting a professional psychotherapist as he/she runs a 10-week group counseling cycle. As their skills and knowledge develop, PSCs go on to serve as group co-facilitators and, based on their progress, may eventually lead sessions on their own.



Equipped with sound clinical knowledge and in-depth hands-on experience, CVT-trained counselors continue to serve as mental health resources in their community after CVT's project has ended. Many of them have continued their mental health careers with other agencies or have launched their own organizations (Liberian Association of Psychosocial Services (LAPS); Community Association for Psychosocial Services (CAPS) in Sierra Leone).

CVT is grateful for funding provided by the United States Government, the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, and the European Union.



CVT: Restoring the Dignity of the Human Spirit

The Center for Victims of Torture ▪ 649 Dayton Avenue ▪
St. Paul, MN 55104 ▪ USA ▪ cvt.org

August 2011