

My MHF Experience

By Esther Msowoya

I have been an MHF trainer since February 2008. I was part of the first training of trainers in the world conducted by NBCC International, which was held in Lilongwe, Malawi.

My motivation to become an MHF Trainer is my belief that the MHF program deals with real life matters that are currently affecting communities in my country. I like the fact that it is a hands-on program that has equipped me to assist other community members in an effective and efficient way.

I encounter people from a variety of backgrounds, including professionals such as educators, social welfare officers, medical staff and government administrators. I also interact regularly with community leaders, grass roots community members, and their families in their villages. One of the most important groups that I interact with regularly is young people in schools and communities in both urban and rural settings.

I have found that I use the knowledge and skills that I learned from the MHF curriculum everyday in my interaction with people. For example, I have been able to provide referrals to people for their care and support, and have gotten involved in helping individuals who do not have a clear picture of human development. I am more aware of issues related to suicide, and I have used the MHF training to help other people improve their well-being. The MHF program has helped me to view people's problems holistically, dealing with their emotions, feelings, and understanding their situations empathetically. It has also helped me to look at challenging situations positively and with determination to find solutions.

I have used the program for personal growth—socially, personally and emotionally. My growing knowledge of the MHF program and its curriculum has the capacity to assist me to become a holistic and grounded person in the area of mental wellness. As a trainer working with the Guidance, Counselling and Youth Development Centre for Africa, I have been able to handle a group of participants with confidence, zeal and expertise. I am proud to say that I have trained others in the MHF program in my country of Malawi and in Zambia.

I think the MHF program is relevant to life as it deals with current situations. It helps people understand their situations and how to better cope. The program has been designed to be easily delivered and to be implemented in a variety of settings. It is adaptable and can be fused into other existing programs in other professions and community life. It is also affordable and sustainable, which is especially important in countries such as mine.



Esther Msowoya



Ms. Esther Msowoya is the MHF Consultant Officer at the Guidance, Counselling and Youth Development Centre for Africa (GCYDCA), located in Lilongwe, Malawi.

For more information on the Mental Health Facilitator (MHF) program, please contact NBCC International at nbccinternational@nbcc.org.

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