

Aids Counseling *)

Doreen Biehle **)

Project Concern International, Jakarta

OVERVIEW

Counseling, as related to AIDS work is not limited to the clinical setting in which supportive psychotherapy is given to persons living with HIV/AIDS. Today, I hope to discuss a continuum of counseling interventions that include counseling for STD/HIV/AIDS prevention, counseling for behavior change, counseling which is community based and utilizes informal leadership, counseling around HIV testing, counseling and psychotherapy for people with HIV/AIDS and their families, and grief and bereavement counseling.

As you can see, the topic to be discussed is quite broad. Due to limitations in time, I apologize if my introductions to this material is too brief. I'm hoping from all of the presentations in this seminar you will have greater appreciation for the complexity of work in this field and the need for health care professionals of all disciplines and backgrounds.

Counseling is the process of face-to-face communication and support through which people can question, share, and come to terms with alternative prevention behaviors. Counseling helps people understand the threat of HIV infection in personal and tangible ways. It helps people select

specific behaviors suited to their lifestyle and then provides support to maintain those changes.

Counseling gives people the opportunity to ask questions, to vent anger and share frustration. It helps persons to not unduly fear the disease or those who have it. Counseling can help people to decide whether to be tested for HIV infection and how to cope with the results if they are HIV positive. Counseling can reinforce condom promotion and behavior change strategies by allowing people to explore these ideas confidentially.

At various entry points on this continuum of counseling activities, there are many different types of professionals and non-professionals who can effectively participate in counseling roles.

Counseling as an occupation is still a novel and under-utilized profession in Indonesia as well as most of Asia. Much of our time in counseling around AIDS is educating the public as to what exactly counseling is, who could benefit from it, how it is administered, and why it might be helpful.

Historically in Indonesia, the first collective group of professionals to be trained

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** Doreen Biehle, LISW, MSSW is a technical assistant for counselling, and was a consultant to the EPOCH project from 1992-1996.