

Assessing the Level of Preparedness of Traditional Leaders as Counsellors in Offering Counselling to Parasuicide Victims in Rural Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT The study sought to ascertain the level of preparedness of traditional leaders as counsellors in offering counselling to parasuicide victims in one selected district in rural Zimbabwe. The study followed a qualitative case study design which utilized phenomenological interviewing as the sole data collection tool. Data were collected from purposefully selected chiefs, headmen and family elders. Content analysis through emerging themes was used to analyse data collected. The study found that traditional leaders were involved in offering counselling services to parasuicide victims. Traditional leaders had not received any formal training in counselling, they mainly talked to their clients and indicated that their efforts were effective in combating suicide. The study concluded that traditional leaders were involved in an important task of offering counselling to people with suicidal tendencies yet they lacked formal training to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to enhance their operations. Recommendations were made that training in counselling that infuses Eurocentric and Afrocentric approaches should be provided to equip traditional leaders to better assist parasuicide victims.