

Center for the Victims of Torture

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://www.cvt.org/blog/healing-and-human-rights/overcoming-fear-and-finding-future>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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With the coming of COVID-19, I had a feeling that evil forces are pursuing me. Why am I facing this terrible pandemic even after escaping from horrible conditions back in my home country? Being a wounded healer, I have the spirit to pursue my destiny despite the odds. CVT has taught me: It is life. We should never give up. I always reassure my clients that we made it; we can still make it through all this.

With the pandemic, what we need to do is to follow the advisory from WHO and Ministry of Health on COVID-19 control measures, which I ensure and observe during service delivery to our clients.

The second thing I tell my clients is To keep yourself away from COVID 19 and its stresses, you need to keep active. You need exercises that will keep you healthy and keep disease at bay. I have personal experience through CVT services.

Here is one thing I have come to believe: Such terrible things can happen to you, but theres a life ahead of you. Life changes.

Before I came here to Kalobeyei, Kenya, I left my home in South Sudan and went to Uganda to be with my husband. We had to run because there were people who wanted to kill him. First he ran and then I followed him I had to. After he left, they threatened to kill me.

When I reunited with him in Uganda, we had to leave again. First we went on foot and then we took a motorbike to Kenya.

In Kenya it was like South Sudan; I was very stressed and afraid. I could not go out to walk. I felt like I could not see people and had a lot of fear in my heart. I knew that some people were looking at me with suspicion because of the man who wanted to kill me and my husband.

One of the counselors at CVT came around, meeting people in the community, and he found me sitting outside, alone. He said that people had told him, Go to that house shes always alone. No one can address her.

So he came and told me about CVT, about counseling for people with stress and problems. So I felt I could speak to him. I told him whats wrong with me, what makes me feel I must be inside alone all the time.

He said they were doing counseling and physiotherapy. He listened to me and said When youre ready, come to CVT.

Because I was alone with no relatives, no friends, but with three children to care for, I decided to come to CVT. When I came here, I found CVT did exactly what the counselor told me.

At CVT, they accompany you; they show you how your problems fit into the concept of a river of life, with some good times and some bad times. They help you learn how to be in a group and to listen to other peoples challenges. This helps you so you can deal with your problems.

Everyone has problems. You need someone to help you.

The CVT counselors told me ways to cope with stress and problems. I learned the benefit of forgetting challenges in my life so I could better accept myself in my heart. So when I went, I felt relaxed. I felt better. I was gaining hope and losing stress. I became a more normal person.

In addition to counseling, I did physiotherapy. They gave me exercises, which were very helpful. Before that, I had a lot of fear. The people who had come for me wanted to kill me. They tortured me. I knew I needed to do the CVT sessions. So I came for all 10 weeks, and I began to feel safe and strong. I could do my daily work without any problems.

Today I feel safe. I feel free. I even shared my story with my neighbors. I feel like I have family here.

And then I saw an advertisement for a job at CVT, so I went back. I applied and did the interview. I passed and joined CVT as a rehabilitative assistant. Now I work with the psychosocial counselors (PSCs) and the physiotherapists. Now I give service to people like I got. I serve as proof that CVT is important, important, important.

We give service to people who are really benefiting, and we see positive results. I teach physiotherapy exercises for the 10-week cycle. I call clients and tell them about the sessions. When a new group starts, I help introduce the sessions, set goals and the rules of working in the group. The sessions go through each step in the healing journey: relaxation, understanding the body and pain, flexibility and strengthening. At the end of 10 weeks, we celebrate and close the group. But we do follow-up meetings with clients as well, for a year.

At CVT, we are changing lives, returning people back to be as free and flexible as before. I recall a client who was tortured in South Sudan and could not walk or bend or carry anything. Even though he was tortured, after our care, he could find that passion again. Now, he can lift things again, he can handle his work. He can even carry his children.

I appreciate that at CVT, everyone coming here has a role to do. No one sits and watches. Everyone comes in the morning, and we do what we came for. Each week we have a plan were not here to waste time. At CVT, we do something meaningful.



I see hope at CVT. When you're there, your life will be changed. We really make sure when you come to CVT you get all the care we can provide for you. You become a normal person.

I have learned that when you have a problem, don't end your life. There is a way to get help. I got help and hope in my life I can still do something in the future.

I was done with my life. After what happened in South Sudan, I wanted to kill myself. I had no meaning. I felt useless. But today, I know this is my day. It's up to me.



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