



PHILIPPINES 2000



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LEGAL SERVICE

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Administrative Order No. 41  
Series of 2003

SUBJECT: Guidelines on the Implementation on Peer  
Counselling Service for Out of School Youth

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I. Rationale

The lifestyle of a person is formed during adolescence and early adulthood. Experimentation in substance use, smoking, sexual initiation and other risk-taking behavior may occur at this stage usually with peer influence and approval. These issues which have adverse implications to the health and welfare of the youth can be significantly minimized if not completely eradicated, if information and services are readily available at a time when they are most needed by children and youth.

A study entitled "Sustaining the Development of the Civil Society" estimates that one in every four barangays has no elementary schools, depriving 1.6 million children of basic education. A third of the country's barangays do not have complete elementary schools. This deplorable situation and the issue of poverty have contributed to the increasing number of out-of-school youth (OSY). The OSY situation is a social and economic issue that must be addressed if the country wants its human resources to be tapped for development.

According to the Council for the Welfare of Children, the latest count of youths aged 15-17 charged in court reached 14,000 or even more. Previous researches on young offenders focus more on data collection of their socio-demographic characteristics and there was hardly any in-depth analysis of these statistics.

The research conducted by the Philippine Action for Young Offenders (PAYO) attempted an analysis. Pooling their resource, the members conducted a nationwide survey and one-on-one interviews of youths in actual detention. The domain of study covered the key cities of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao which registered the highest number of youth offenders. The results of the survey described the deplorable conditions of young

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS  
KAGAWARAN NG KAGALINGANG PANLIPUNAN AT PAGPAPAUNLAD  
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offenders. Moreover, it identified the types of crime committed and traced their causes, determined the disposition of their cases and the provision of services from the five pillars of justice.

From here it can be deduced that the challenges in this age groups are numerous, if not provided with appropriate interventions they become vulnerable to delinquency, abuse etc. since this is the stage where experimentation and unhealthy behaviors start eventually leading to long term consequences. Recognizing such challenges, the Peer Counseling Service for out-of-school children and youth is designed to respond to the "growing-up" issues on children and youth. To address sexual-related and health problems as well as educational needs of the youth particularly the out-of-school, healthy attitudes and positive lifestyles need to be developed at this stage. It is likewise an important intervention in enabling the youth to perform expected roles as they go through critical psycho-social development stages of their life. Developing healthy attitudes can be achieved through provision of sufficient and necessary information, early detection of problems and immediate linkage with recourses facilitated by the peer counselors. Considering the degree of influence of peers in the life of the youth who are in search for role models, there is a high probability of identifying themselves with destructive and counter-productive behavior. It is critical at this stage for the youth to be exposed and to experience learnings that shall optimize their creative endowment and promote positive lifestyle.

The Peer Counselling Service is one of the preventive and developmental strategies of the UNLAD Kabataan program (UKP) geared towards building the capabilities of the youth to become partners in the delivery of youth-related services thereby promoting positive healthy lifestyle among the youth. The UKP was devolved to the Local Government Units for implementation per R.A. 9160 of 1991.

## **II. Legal Basis**

1. Presidential Decree 603 otherwise known as the child and youth welfare code acknowledges that children and youth are the most important assets of the nation. It provides that "every effort should be exerted to promote his welfare and enhance his opportunities for a useful and happy life.

2. Article 11 Section 13 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation building and have provision that shall promote and protect their physical moral, spiritual, intellectual and social being. It inculcates in the youth patriotism and nationalism and encourages their involvement in public and civic affairs.
3. The Medium Term Youth Development Plan (1999 to 2004) underscores the development of the Filipino youth.

### III. Description

The Peer Counselling Service is a helping strategy which identifies and trains competent out of school youth to be certified as peer counselors. The service provides the youth the opportunity to discover and develop personal qualities and lifeskills towards positive and healthy life style and promote social responsibility through the peer counselors. The youth to be handled by the peer counselor are referred by the social worker who shall continue to provide guidance until the service is terminated.

### IV. Objectives

*General :* To promote among the youth a positive lifestyle through access to information, opportunities and enhancement of skills towards the development of healthy attitudes and responsible behavior.

*Specific:*

1. To train the OSY as peer counsellors to enable him/her become catalysts in the formation of healthy/positive lifestyles, prevent illness and social dysfunction.
2. To provide support services to the peer counsellors to ensure sustainability of the project.
3. To document experiences and maintain data for policy and program development.

## V. Project Components:

### A. Organization and Development of Youth as Peer Counsellor

#### A.1. Identification of youth peer counsellor

A.1.a. The Municipal/City Social Welfare Officer/Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) shall identify and screen the youth based on the following criteria:

- An out of school youth who is within the age range 15-24 years old
- Preferably, an active member of the Pag-asa Youth Association
- With communication skills – oral and written
- Good moral character and responsible
- No vices (no drugs, alcohol, tobacco)
- Expressed commitment to perform peer counsellor's duties

#### A.1.b. Conduct of Training

- The selected youth shall be trained for 3 days using a Training Module on Peer Counselling designed for peer counsellor as reference.
- The trained Peer Counsellors shall formulate action plans with supervision and guidance by the social worker to be implemented in their respective areas.

### B. Service Implementation

The peer counsellor shall be known and recognized in the community to access counselling services to his/her peers faced with personal problems. It involves a process of guiding and helping their peers identify the problem being faced and decide and make concrete actions which will respond to the given problem.

B.1. In the implementation of the Peer Counsellor action plans the following peer counselling strategies, process, principles shall be applied.

#### a. The Guiding/Counselling process

The peer counsellor shall guide their peers in coping his/her personal problem. However, before doing such task the following fundamental process should be involved, through the Peer Counsellor;

- The counselee shall be able to identify the real problem
- Decide what he or she can do about the identified problem
- Think about the consequences of the solutions he/she decides to take
- Exhibits one's skills such as decision-making; and actions on the decision taken

b. Levels involved in the process

- Building rapport and relationships

In a counselling situation, a counsellor builds a relationship with his/her counselee through the conduct of correct conversation, good listening, and asking the right questions that will make both counselor and counselee comfortable with each other.

- Earnings One's trust

Trust is the most important element in the relationship that the counsellor is building with the counselee. A real relationship is based on trust that is earned and not begged for.

- Sharing and identifying information

As the Peer Counsellor earn the trust of the counselee, and eventually build a relationship with him/her, the Peer Counsellor may now share the necessary information that deem the counselee can use so that he/she may identify the real problem.

Just to clarify further, in a comprehensive manner of sharing, appropriate information and not gossip or myth must be shared.

It is not merely pinpointing the problem. Beyond that, the counselle should be able to consume the information so that he/she is able to think of a whole range of steps to do in order to tackle the identified problem.

- Guiding through Decision Making

One of the best ways to guide a counselle in the decision making process is to summarize and feedback the important points he/she offered to the Peer Counsellor. The Peer Counsellor may want to tell his/her the problem they mentioned, the actions, which he/she plan to take, and the consequences of these actions, which he/she expressly identified.

Through this method, he/she may be able to correct some things the Peer Counsellor might have misinterpreted. In doing so, the Peer Counsellor reinforce his/her views. It is also possible that he/she would continue to speak up because he/she know that the Peer Counsellor is there attentively listening to him/her.

- Coordinating with other agencies

For Peer Counsellor to become effective, it is wise to be aware of his/her own limitations. It is right to know until what point can we help as Peer Counsellors. In serious or grave cases such as rape, incest, child abuse and the like, these **MUST NOT BE HANDLED ALONE** but **MUST BE REFFERED** to appropriate agencies.

First and foremost is the DSWD. Peer Counsellors should also maintain contact with youth service providers especially on cases or problems shared with the Peer Counselor that these agencies have the authority and facility to deal with. The Peer Counselior must also **KEEP IN TOUCH** with the barangay

authorities and police as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and church groups for both technical and emergency services.

c. The Peer Counsellor shall possess the following skills in order to provide quality services to their peers.

- Listening Skills
- Responding Skills
- Decision Making Skills
- Suggesting Alternatives
- Referral Skills
- Limit – Setting Skills

d. The Principles of Counselling

ALL important and essential tasks are founded on fundamental principles so that Peer Counsellor are effective and yield results. The task of Peer counselling also has its own principles.

1. Principle of acceptance

This principle states that the Peer Counsellor must be able to ACCEPT everything (character, habit, form, etc.) about his/her counsellee.

2. Principle of respect

This is when the Peer Counsellor exhibit utmost and total respect to the person who is the counsellee.

3. Principle of trust and valuing

This principle emanates from the Peer Counsellor practice when the counsellee is able to feel that the Peer Counsellor can be trusted and that the Peer Counsellor value each information they give.

#### 4. Principle of Non-Judgement

This principle mirrors the Peer Counsellors own values and requires that he/she should not judge a counsellee's being as he/she express their own views. And,

#### 5. Principle of confidentiality

In response to the trust that the counsellee gives the Peer Counsellor, the principle of secrecy, privacy and confidentiality should apply.

### B.2: Venue for Counselling

The social worker may provide a space to conduct the counselling sessions. The venue should have at least the following physical conditions:

- Privacy
- Freedom from distraction
- Open space between participants
- Adequate ventilation
- Adequate light

Possessing adequate and correct information allows a Peer counsellor to provide basic information on common problems, issues concerns encountered by the young people. The following facts/information can help the peer counsellor in guiding his peer in taking good decisions and actions.

- Drugs and Substance Abuse
- Abuse
- HIV/AIDS and STD
- Adolescent and youth Health concerns (teenage pregnancy, abortion, sexual activity etc.
- Childs Rights
- Gender and Sexuality
- Environment



### B.3. Reporting

The Peer Counsellors shall prepare a monthly report to determine and facilitate the progress of their peers they are helping likewise the progress of the young people referred by the Peer Counsellor to other agency to access appropriate services. (Appendix A – Format of monthly report).

### C. Social Services

Support services shall be provided by the Local Social Welfare Offices/NGOs to the peer counsellors considering that the Peer Counsellors are living below the poverty threshold. This also intends to provide as an "incentive" to the Peer Counsellors and his/her family to ensure sustainability of the project. This may be in the form of educational assistance, livelihood/capital assistance; financial assistance etc.

### D. Documentation and Data Bank

The peer counsellors shall document their experiences/success stories in the provision of counselling services. A compendium of successful cases shall be prepared by the LSWDOs for data banking and sharing of strategies/approaches in the implementation of the project.

### E. Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation shall be conducted to ensure effective and efficient project management. The results shall be basis for project enhancement and re-planning to improve service implementation.

#### A.1.B Certification of Peer Counsellors

Identified youth trainees for peer counselling shall undergo an evaluation after the required training. This shall be conducted by the local team of evaluators so that the prospective peer counsellor would be evaluated according to required skills. Only certified peer counsellors shall be allowed to provide service.

## VI. Institutional Arrangements

### a. Department of Social Welfare and Development – Central Office

- Prepare and enrich program guidelines - PPB
- Provide technical assistance and Monitoring to DSWD FO - NOO
- Serve as Resource Person in the Training of FO staff, LGUs, Youth Development Leaders - PPB  
SWIDBI
- Provide augmentation funds - NOO

### b. DSWD – Field Office

- Identify target areas at the city/municipal levels in coordination with the LGUs, NGOs
- Provide technical assistance to LGUs, NGOs and conduct of monitoring activities in the implementation of the project e.g. training; utilization of augmentation fund etc.
- Maintain data bank and submit quarterly report to DSWD – NOO
- Document regional project implementation
- Coordinate with other GOs, NGOs and other sectors for the convergence of appropriate services

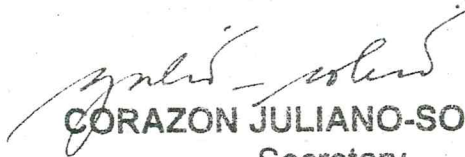
### c. City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office and Non-Government Organizations

- Identify, screen and recommend youth participants to the PC training
- Implement project/services according to established program guidelines
- Monitor action plan prepared by the trained peer counsellors
- Submit quarterly status report to DSWD-FO
- Document area – based project implementation
- Provide, support services to peer counsellors to be able to sustain the project.

d. Community Peer Counsellors

- Implement action plan in the provision of counselling services
- Document experiences in the conduct of counselling sessions
- Maintain directory of offices, people organizations, NGO available in the community to access the youth with appropriate services
- Prepare and submit monthly report to City/Municipal Social Welfare Offices/NGOs.

This order shall take effect immediately and revoke previous orders inconsistent hereto.




**CORAZON JULIANO-SOLIMAN**

Secretary

Department of Social Welfare and Development

**A CERTIFIED COPY:**



**RENATO F. GILERA**  
Records Officer III