Gambian Amputee Association Members Attend 3-Day Mental Health Awareness Course with Focus on Lived Experiences

Friday 6 March, 2020

(March 7, 2020) – Lived experiences can turn out to be valuable when they inspire and motivate others in similar situations to continue their battle against all odds that life throws at them. Ten members of the Gambian Amputee Association recently took part in a 3-day mental health awareness and peer counseling course in January. The course was designed especially for the group by mental health professional Katie Taylor-Smith in association with Legs4Africa.

The 3-day mental health awareness and peer counseling course saw enthusiastic participation by the members of the Gambian Amputee Association. The content was delivered by Katie Taylor-Smith, who specializes in post-trauma psychology, along with Alieu Tourey, a social work and counseling trainee. The course focused attention on how lived experiences of trauma help develop positive coping strategies and inspire others.

Over the course of three days, the members, six women and four men, looked at various ways to stay physically and mentally healthy, the link between the two, why lived experiences are important, how to manage positive and negative thoughts and peer counseling techniques. Alieu advised on the cultural context, drawing upon his professional insights as a police officer and social work trainee, and also helping translate and embellish the course material into local, relative content.

The feedback after the workshop has been positive, and members have spoken of their hope to extend these counseling techniques to amputee peers and others as well. The course leaders received praise for their willingness to share personal stories, inspiring participants to do the same within their communities. Nursery teacher and community worker Tako Saho, a kind and gentle lady, said the course offered her an additional layer of understanding others, further helping to encourage kindness and emotional intuition.

Legs4Africa provides affordable rehabilitation for amputees across Africa. Its mission is to help amputees live independently, through the provision of prosthetic legs along with physical and emotional rehabilitation.

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