



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

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CONTRIBUTION TO THE DIVORCE BILL BY HON WINNIE MOONGO

Honourable Speaker

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1. As a Bachelor of Nursing graduate who has studied ^{Mental Health} Clinical Psychology, I have had the opportunity to observe firsthand the profound effects that depression can have on individuals. Divorce is not only a legal termination of a marital relationship but also a significant psychological and emotional upheaval. This upheaval often leads to what is known as Post-Divorce Depression. Given the severity and potential long-term effects of this condition, I strongly recommend that the Divorce Bill include a mandatory section requiring divorced spouses to undergo Psychodynamic Therapy and present a certificate of completion to the Court before they can remarry. This requirement would ensure that past traumatic experiences are adequately addressed, reducing the likelihood of subsequent divorces.
2. Post-divorce depression is a well-documented phenomenon. It can manifest as feelings of emptiness, sadness, and an inability to experience joy. These

symptoms can range from persistent sadness to intense bouts of depression, potentially lasting for years or even a lifetime if left untreated. *The Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory* ranks "marital separation from mate" as one of the most stressful life events, highlighting the psychological strain that divorce imposes on individuals. This stress is a major factor contributing to depression, making it imperative to address these mental health challenges through structured therapeutic interventions.

3. Psychodynamic therapy, a type of psychotherapy, is particularly effective in treating the emotional and mental health challenges associated with divorce. This therapy focuses on understanding how past experiences influence current thoughts and behaviors. By identifying and addressing these underlying issues, individuals can gain greater control over their emotions and actions, leading to healthier relationships in the future. This form of therapy is less intense than psychoanalysis but equally effective in helping individuals understand and manage their distress and anxiety.
4. The inclusion of mandatory psychodynamic therapy in the Divorce Bill would provide divorced individuals with the tools they need to process their experiences and emotions constructively. This therapy can help them deal with overwhelming feelings of sadness or helplessness, persistent anxiety, and difficulty in facing everyday challenges. By addressing these issues, individuals can improve their mental health and well-being, making them better prepared for future relationships.
5. Moreover, divorce often leads to significant lifestyle changes, financial difficulties, and familial strains. These changes can exacerbate feelings of depression and anxiety. Psychodynamic therapy can help individuals navigate these changes by providing a safe space to explore their feelings and develop

coping strategies. This therapeutic support is crucial in helping individuals adapt to their new circumstances and rebuild their lives.

6. The impact of divorce extends beyond the immediate parties involved, affecting children and extended families as well. Strained relationships with children, custody disputes, and the introduction of new family dynamics can all contribute to feelings of depression and anxiety. By mandating psychodynamic therapy, we can help divorced individuals address these complex emotions and improve their relationships with their children and other family members.
7. One of the significant advantages of psychodynamic therapy is its focus on long-term emotional well-being. Unlike short-term solutions, this therapy delves into the root causes of emotional distress, ensuring that individuals can achieve lasting mental health improvements. This approach is particularly beneficial for those who have experienced abusive marriages or have a history of mental health conditions such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia.
8. Requiring a certificate of completion for psychodynamic therapy before remarriage would ensure that individuals are genuinely ready to enter a new relationship. This measure would protect both the individuals and their future spouses from the potential fallout of unresolved emotional issues. It would also provide a clear signal to society that we lawmakers of Namibia prioritize mental health and well-being in the context of marital relationships.
9. The proposed requirement is not intended to be punitive but rather supportive. It recognizes the profound impact of divorce on mental health and aims to provide individuals with the necessary resources to heal and move forward. This approach aligns with the principles of comprehensive mental and

behavioral health care, emphasizing the importance of addressing both the immediate and long-term effects of divorce.

10. Incorporating mandatory psychodynamic therapy into the Divorce Bill would also set a positive precedent for other legislative measures aimed at promoting mental health and wellbeing of all Namibians. It would demonstrate a commitment to addressing the psychological aspects of significant life events, thereby fostering a more holistic approach to public health and well-being.
11. To conclude, divorce is a life-changing event that can lead to significant emotional and mental health challenges. By mandating psychodynamic therapy and requiring a certificate of completion before remarriage, we can ensure that individuals are adequately supported in their journey toward healing and recovery. This measure would not only reduce the likelihood of future divorces but also promote healthier and more stable relationships. I urge all of us here to consider this recommendation seriously and include it in the Divorce Bill for the benefit of all Namibians. I thank you.