

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

My name is Maria Riehl.

As a member of Women's Federation for World Peace (an international NGO with ECOSOC Status Category 1) I am happy to make this brief statement. Having worked as a General Practitioner (GP) in Vienna, Austria for 36 years, I wish to offer some insights based on my experience in my profession, from which I have now retired.

During my time as a GP I met many patients who experienced health problems resulting from a wide range of diseases and in need of various types of treatment.

From my perspective, the most important first step was to listen carefully to the patients in order to familiarise myself with their overall health situation and their own understanding of it. Additionally, I found it extremely helpful to discover the social environment of the patients, which involved making home visits.

In my view, trust and honesty between the patient and myself as the doctor were of utmost importance to create a foundation for a beneficial and effective treatment. Furthermore, as a medical doctor, I also needed to be aware of my own capability to help the patients through understanding their needs and worries.

Frequently, the patient's family also needed to be involved in the healing process in order to achieve the best possible outcome. If the patient was separated from his/her family, the situation became more difficult and complicated. In this case, health institutions and health care workers were called in to help create a more stable situation in order to aid the patient's recovery.

The most serious problems arise when patients start to self-medicate without consulting a specialist. This may lead to misuse of medication and substances, frequently resulting in a detrimental situation for the patient. We need strong networks in society to prevent this from happening.

It is my sincere hope that we can create a more peaceful and harmonious world through understanding the effectiveness of good communication skills and empathy while serving as experts in our field. Thank you for your attention.

Thank you again for your preparation for this congress.

Sincerely

Maria Riehl MD

UN Office Director Vienna

WFPIInternational

1230 Vienna Erlaaerplatz 5/19

Tel 0043 650 667 41 46