
In answering the question ‘What are the three things rehabilitation professional organisations can do in a coordinated effort to raise awareness among policy makers of the need for rehabilitation?’ three themes emerged. They are as follows:

**Generating and/or curating knowledge for evidence-informed policy development.**

This should be in a form that is accessible and comprehensible to those developing policy. Examples include:

- Generation of global data on the status of rehabilitation services including human resources.
- Support for national data acquisition particularly where gaps in data have been highlighted for example economic and workforce data.
- Collation of evidence that demonstrates the social, educational, economic, and health consequences of inaction.
- Drafting of scenarios, case studies and solutions. This activity involves outlining viable solutions to identified needs. This would be supported, where appropriate, with relevant economic analyses and human resource modeling and would include compelling personal stories.
- Supporting informed policy makers. This activity is centered on developing opportunities for stakeholders to develop knowledge about concepts and practice of rehabilitation.

**Unity of approach, language and position**

Collaboration between health professionals and consumer/patient/client may be achieved through the development of a global rehabilitation consortium with stakeholders from a range of backgrounds as part of a collaborative model of engagement.

- Global professional organisations would generate unified statements, using consistent terminology in support of interdisciplinary, evidence-informed rehabilitation practice.
- Such a consortium or collaboration would provide technical support as required to inform the development of policy.
- National organisations should be encouraged to work collaboratively especially where there are multiple organisations with common purposes.
Advocacy

This involves:

- Active engagement with policy makers in advocacy by participating in WHO and Regional Executive Committee meetings.
- Support of consumers’ organisations in their requests for appropriate information about major rehabilitation interventions.
- Acknowledgment of success e.g. those countries that successfully developed rehabilitation services in the health system from “minimal” to “national policy” in the last 10 to 15 years. The experience in these countries might be used to inspire and inform policy makers in other countries to work similarly, or even use their experience for training the rehabilitation professionals.

What are the three things rehabilitation professional organisations can do in a coordinated effort to raise awareness among civil society of the need for rehabilitation?

Fundamental to the success of professional organisations’ impact on raising awareness among civil society is once again, embracing a collaborative approach. This is both within the professional community and also with the wider community of stakeholders such as organisations of people who will benefit from rehabilitation, as well as service users and their networks.

Awareness-raising

- Professional organisations should participate in WHO and regional office campaigns to raise awareness of disabilities and the need for rehabilitation. They can work collaboratively to establish a World/International Day of Rehabilitation and to develop a range of resources to raise awareness. This could be themed each year around effective rehabilitation and outcomes. Alternatively or jointly there could be a dedicated month of the year to raise awareness of disabilities and rehabilitation.
- Professional organisations could work collaboratively with:
  - individuals and families who have benefitted, and continue to benefit, from rehabilitation, as well as;
  - other non-governmental actors/organisations (NGOs) to share ‘success stories’ in a public way and educate the wider public on the impact of rehabilitation, to empower patients/clients/consumers to influence and educate for rehabilitation.

Rights based approach

- Professional organisations can promote the rights of persons with disabilities, demonstrating the benefits to society of ensuring universal access to rehabilitation. In addition, they can emphasize the positive impact of rehabilitation on education and
workforce issues in society. In addition they can act as a centralised resource to
assist in coordinated lobbying strategies for NGO's

Empowerment & education
- Professional organisations can invite the consumer and other stakeholder
organisations to participate in congresses and scientific meetings organized by their
associations with the goal of educating the general population on the positive impact
and availability of rehabilitation interventions. This also provides an opportunity to
engage local and national media to highlight the impact of rehabilitation.

What are the three things rehabilitation professional organisations can do in a
coordinated effort to raise awareness among the private sector of the need for
rehabilitation?

Rehabilitation professional organisations have a role in raising awareness, educating and
supporting the private sector. Specifically, the following suggestions were made under the
following headings:

Awareness and education
Emphasising that a healthy and buoyant labour market is reliant in part upon a commitment to
rehabilitation, both as it relates to optimising the potential of those with permanent disabilities
and those for whom a return to work from illness or injury is desirable and necessary.

Advocacy
Advocating for a commitment from employers to proactively uphold the rights of employees
as they relate to disability and rehabilitation. In addition, advocating for rehabilitation to be
provided and reimbursed in private health services.

Support
Professional organisations can support the private sector in developing new products,
services and technologies that support rehabilitation. They can also advise on interventions
and support as part of Corporate Social Responsibility programmes. In addition, professional
organisations can work collaboratively with the private sector in promoting the objectives of
the Global Disability Action Plan (particularly Objective 2) and maximum utilisation of assistive
technologies.