

## **Promoting the rights of people with mental disorders What can you do?**

*Promoting and protecting the rights of people with mental disorders requires the concerted and unified effort of multiple stakeholders.*

### **Policy makers**

- Improve and increase the financial and human resources allocated to mental health
- Be familiar with international and national human rights standards and norms related to people with mental disorders
- Ensure that policies in the education, labour, criminal justice system and general health care system all act to promote mental health and protect human rights
- Include coverage for mental health care in both public and private insurance schemes
- Implement mental health policies and laws that promote human rights, deinstitutionalisation, integration into general health care and development of community care
- Set up monitoring mechanisms to ensure that human rights are being respected in all mental health facilities

### **Health care workers**

- Respect the dignity, protect the rights, and promote the autonomy and liberty of people with mental disorders
- Ensure that informed consent of people with mental disorders is the basis for all treatment provided
- Involve people with mental disorders in the development of their treatment plan
- Involve families in the treatment and care of their relatives with mental disorders.
- Inform decision makers what resources and other support is needed in order to provide good quality mental health care

### **Mental health service users**

- Denounce human rights violations including outdated and inhuman forms of treatment, poor service delivery, inaccessible care and abusive use of involuntary admission and treatment.
- Advocate for your participation in the development and implementation of policies and laws to improve human rights and mental health services
- Be familiar with your human rights under international human rights law and national laws.
- Join forces with other mental health service users in order to support each other and carry out activities to change attitudes towards people with mental disorders and combat stigma and discrimination.

### **User groups, family groups, advocacy organisations and other NGOs**

- Sensitize and educate the public about mental health and mental disorders and raise awareness on the rights of people with mental disorders

- Advocate for the provision of good quality mental health services in primary health care, general hospital settings and in the community
- Advocate for your participation in the development and implementation of policies and laws to improve human rights and services for people with mental disorders
- Organise informal community mental health services such as counseling, self-help groups both for individuals with mental disorders and for families, drop-in centres, community re-integration programmes, case management, outreach programmes and crisis services
- Provide preventive and promotive services, such as school-based mental health promotion programmes
- Collaborate with other NGOs that share similar goals within the country, region and world

### **Foundations**

- Support the development and implementation of country mental health policies, plans and laws that promote and protect human rights
- Support the development of mental health services in primary health care, general health care settings and in the community
- Support the creation and activities of mental health service user, family and advocacy organizations
- Support research to evaluate the impact of mental health policies and laws.
- Support research to develop effective mental health interventions in primary care, general health and community facilities

### **Academic institutions**

- Provide policy and health systems training for mental health policy makers and planners
- Provide appropriate mental health training for primary health care and community workers
- Incorporate training on mental health and human rights issues into undergraduate and post graduate curricula for health and mental health professionals, including those in primary care
- Conduct research into mental health policy and service planning, including evaluation of policy implementation, and models of service organisation and planning
- Conduct research on effective mental health interventions at primary care and in the community facilities;
- Provide up-to-date undergraduate and post-graduate curricula based on evidence-based approaches, in keeping with policy priorities
- Provide specialist supervision for both the delivery and planning of mental health services through primary care and community care

### **Professional Organizations**

- Contribute to the debate on policy and legislation development
- Set quality standards for mental health workers at all the levels; ie in hospitals, primary health care and community settings
- Raise awareness of constituencies on mental health and human rights issues
- Provide accreditation for mental health professionals

- Support the change of roles among primary health care staff from working predominantly with physical disorders to a more holistic approach to health care that incorporates physical and mental health.
- Support the change of roles among mental health staff from working in predominantly institutional settings to predominantly community-based settings.

**Media**

- Avoid stereotypes, sensationalism and perpetuating myths and misconception when reporting on mental health issues
- Present the mental health issues with compassion, highlighting what can be achieved with adequate financial and human resources.
- Highlight the human rights of people with mental disorders