

WHO Mental Health Policy Project: Addressing Needs, Improving Services (MHPP)

Our vision is that governments meet the health care needs of people with mental disorders and promote their human rights

The Problem

450 million people experience mental or neurological disorders around the world. These disorders constitute 5 of the 10 leading causes of disability worldwide, thus creating a devastating social and economic impact for individuals, families, and governments.

People with mental disorders often face stigma, discrimination, and grave violations of their human rights. In addition, mental ill-health and poverty interact in a negative cycle: mental ill-health impedes people's ability to gain access to education and employment and consequently to engage productively in society, and poverty in turn increases the risk for developing mental disorders, and reduces people's ability to gain access to much needed mental health interventions.

This clearly demands that mental health be given significant importance on the public health agenda of countries. Yet mental health remains a low health priority in many parts of the world. This is in part due to the fact that the capacity needed to establish comprehensive and effective mental health services have not been available in all countries.

The Challenge

In response to this need, the WHO has developed the *Mental Health Policy Project: Addressing Needs, Improving Services (MHPP)*.

MHPP is designed to assist countries with capacity building through access to educational materials, practical guidance and collaborative consultation with WHO experts, in order to create and implement national mental health policies, plans, legislation and services which can effectively address mental health needs in countries.

This project is open to all countries who want to improve their mental health systems.

The MHPP project consists of four components, each one linked to and building on the other. These components are:

- 1) **The Mental Health Policy and Service Guidance Package**
- 2) **Training Programme**
- 3) **International Network of Experts**
- 4) **Support to countries**

Guiding values of the Mental Health Policy Project:

Mental health outcomes are optimized when:

- Mental health is an essential component of public health
- Government policies, plans, laws and services address the mental health needs and promote the mental health and wellbeing of the population
- Services are appropriate, accountable and accessible
- Services are equitable. Barriers to treatment caused by poverty are reduced or eliminated
- The rights of people with mental disorders are promoted and protected
- People with mental disorders have as much autonomy as possible and are able to participate in the civil and political lives of their communities and countries.

The Mental Health Policy and Service Guidance Package



WHO has developed the Mental Health Policy and Service Guidance Package in order to provide practical, up-to-date and evidence based information and guidance to countries who want to improve their mental health systems.

The Guidance Package comprises fourteen modules, each of which is

designed to cover an essential component of mental health system development. Each module has received extensive input from international experts from all regions of the globe. Each module is accompanied by a training pack that includes a workbook and case study.

The modules of the Mental Health Policy and Service Guidance Package include:

- Mental Health Context
- Mental Health Policy, Plans and Programmes
- Organization of Services for Mental Health
- Mental Health Financing
- Mental Health Legislation and Human Rights
- Advocacy for Mental Health
- Quality Improvement for Mental Health
- Planning and Budgeting to Deliver Services for Mental Health
- Improving Access and Use of Psychotropic Medicines
- Mental Health Information Systems
- Human Resources and Training for Mental Health
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health
- Research and Evaluation of Mental Health Policy and Services
- Workplace Mental Health Policies and Programmes

In addition, WHO has developed a **Resource Book on Mental Health, Human Rights and Legislation**.

The modules of the WHO Guidance Package as well as the WHO Resource Book are available directly from the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse. Electronic versions of the modules can also be downloaded from the following website: http://www.who.int/mental_health/policy

The modules, together with the training packs make up the "core curriculum" needed to inform the development and sustainable delivery of mental health policy, laws, plans and services.

They have been designed to provide essential information and guidance to policy makers, planners, mental health professionals and service providers,

voluntary sector organizations and other stakeholders responsible for driving mental health system development in their countries.

Ideally, stakeholders will also participate in the workshop programmes developed to provide training in the understanding and application of the information found in the modules and training packs.

Training Programme

Workshop based training programmes have been designed to complement the Guidance Package described above.

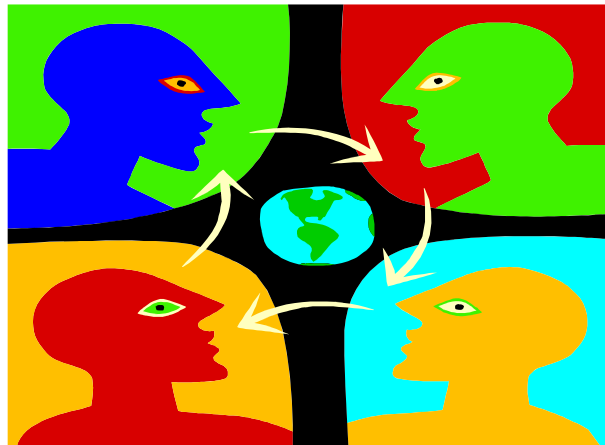
Each workshop is facilitated by trained technical consultants from WHO's international network of experts (see below).

The training method for each workshop combines didactic sessions in which technical materials are presented, with small group exercises using case study and problem solving approach.

These workshops are designed for those who are responsible for the creation, development and sustainable delivery of mental health strategies at national, regional or district level.

Each workshop usually runs for 2 to 4 days. The workshops enable participants to :

- Understand and apply the information gained through the workshop and Guidance Package to their own national context
- Understand the concepts, processes and operational domains necessary to begin to develop appropriate strategies to meet mental health needs in their countries.
- Develop a draft plan of action that they can apply upon returning home to move their work forward.



International Network of Experts

WHO have brought together a group of international experts in mental health policy, planning, legislation, service development and human rights.

Many of these experts participated in the creation of one or more of the modules of the WHO Mental Health Policy and Service Guidance Package and all have been trained in WHO's framework

and methodology for working with countries.

They are regularly in contact with each other to share information, as well as teaching and consultation experiences.

Members of the network of experts, along with WHO staff, are responsible for facilitating the workshops and providing technical support to countries.

Support to countries

Countries can receive direct, in-depth and ongoing technical support to improve their mental health systems.

WHO and one or more members of the network of experts works closely and collaboratively with national actors responsible for the development, operation, management and evaluation

of mental health at the national, regional or district level.

In this process, experts provide technical advice and guidance to countries, while at the same time assisting them to build and develop national capacities.

WHO can provide technical support to countries by helping them to address crucial questions such as:

- How can national mental health needs be accurately determined; what are the resources that are required to address these needs?
- What are the preliminary steps to be taken if mental health services are non-existent or limited?
- What strategies can help to better promote and protect the rights of people with mental disorders?
- How can the support of key stakeholders such as consumer, family, NGOs and other organizations be secured?
- How can the quality of mental health care be improved?
- What are different options for maximising financing for mental health and making the best use of available funds to improve mental health systems?
- What are the best approaches for organizing and coordinating mental health services in my region?
- What are the human resource competencies and training needs for a good mental health system and how can health care providers be educated and motivated to work effectively for mental health in an integrated system of care?
- How can access to, and rational use of, psychotropic medicines be improved?
- What steps are required to set up an effective mental health information system to ensure that improvements in mental health care delivery are based on informed decisions?
- What measures can be taken to make sure that the mental health needs of children and adolescents are met?
- What measures can be taken to ensure that policies, plans, laws and services get implemented effectively and how can their effectiveness be evaluated?

Support to countries can be both long or short term. Long term support would be useful for countries that are at the preliminary stages of reform or are planning to substantially reform their

- 1) Conduct a situational analysis of mental health systems in countries
- 2) Conduct training workshops for individual countries or groups of countries (as described above)

Short term support to countries can include one or more of the above activities, which need not be addressed in the given order above. Short term support is useful for countries who want assistance in a specific mental health

mental health systems. This support to countries would cover the following activities, preferably in the order set out below:

- 3) Provide ongoing and in-depth technical support to countries on one or more aspects of their mental health system reform
- 4) Help countries to evaluate the effectiveness of their mental health reform intervention

issue that they have already identified (for example, establishing a mental health information system; addressing mental health human resource training needs; etc.).