

A photograph of two men laughing heartily on a balcony. The man on the left has a beard and glasses, wearing a light blue striped shirt. The man on the right is wearing a plaid shirt and has his arm raised. They are looking out over a city with green hills and a large building in the distance. A blue circular graphic with the text 'Technical package' is in the top left corner.

Technical  
package

# Hospital-based mental health services

Promoting person-centred and rights-based approaches



World Health  
Organization



Technical  
package

# Hospital-based mental health services

Promoting person-centred and rights-based approaches

Hospital-based mental health services: promoting person-centred and rights-based approaches

(Guidance and technical packages on community mental health services: promoting person-centred and rights-based approaches)

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[The accompanying guidance document and technical packages are available here](#)

# Contents

Foreword . . . . .	.iv
Acknowledgements . . . . .	.v
Executive summary . . . . .	xiii
What is the WHO QualityRights initiative? . . . . .	xix
About the WHO Guidance and technical packages on community mental health services . . . . .	xx

## 1. Introduction.....1

## 2. Hospital-based mental health services – description and analysis .....5

2.1	BET Unit, Blakstad Hospital, Vestre Viken Hospital Trust Viken, Norway . . . . .	.6
2.2	Kliniken Landkreis Heidenheim gGmbH Germany. . . . .	21
2.3	Soteria Berne, Switzerland . . . . .	35

## 3. Moving forward: from concept to good practice hospitalbased mental health service .....47

References . . . . .	53
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# Foreword

Around the world, mental health services are striving to provide quality care and support for people with mental health conditions or psychosocial disabilities. But in many countries, people still lack access to quality services that respond to their needs and respect their rights and dignity. Even today, people are subject to wide-ranging violations and discrimination in mental health care settings, including the use of coercive practices, poor and inhuman living conditions, neglect, and in some cases, abuse.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), signed in 2006, recognizes the imperative to undertake major reforms to protect and promote human rights in mental health. This is echoed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which call for the promotion of mental health and wellbeing, with human rights at its core, and in the United Nations Political Declaration on universal health coverage.

The last two decades have witnessed a growing awareness of the need to improve mental health services, however, in all countries, whether low-, medium- or high-income, the collective response has been constrained by outdated legal and policy frameworks, and lack of resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the inadequate and outdated nature of mental health systems and services worldwide. It has brought to light the damaging effects of institutions, lack of cohesive social networks, the isolation and marginalization of many individuals with mental health conditions, along with the insufficient and fragmented nature of community mental health services.

Everywhere, countries need mental health services that reject coercive practices, that support people to make their own decisions about their treatment and care, and that promote participation and community inclusion by addressing all important areas of a person's life – including relationships, work, family, housing and education – rather than focusing only on symptom reduction.

The WHO Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2020–2030 provides inspiration and a framework to help countries prioritize and operationalize a person-centred, rights-based, recovery approach in mental health. By showcasing good practice mental health services from around the world this guidance supports countries to develop and reform community-based services and responses from a human rights perspective, promoting key rights such as equality, non-discrimination, legal capacity, informed consent and community inclusion. It offers a roadmap towards ending institutionalization and involuntary hospitalization and treatment and provides specific action steps for building mental health services that respect every person's inherent dignity.

Everyone has a role to play in bringing mental health services in line with international human rights standards – policy makers, service providers, civil society, and people with lived experience of mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities.

This guidance is intended to bring urgency and clarity to policy makers around the globe and to encourage investment in community-based mental health services in alignment with international human rights standards. It provides a vision of mental health care with the highest standards of respect for human rights and gives hope for a better life to millions of people with mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities, and their families, worldwide.



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