

A photograph of two men crouching over a table. The man on the left is smiling and giving a thumbs up. The man on the right is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. On the table in front of them are several colorful cards with various patterns and designs. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Technical
package

Community mental health centres

Promoting person-centred and rights-based approaches

Technical
package

Community mental health centres

Promoting person-centred and rights-based approaches



World Health
Organization



QualityRights

Community mental health centres: 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.](#)

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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however, in all countries, whether low-, medium- or high-income, the collective response has been constrained by outdated legal and policy frameworks, and lack of resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the inadequate and outdated nature of mental health systems and services worldwide.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.



Dr Ren Minghui

Assistant Director-General

Universal Health Coverage/Communicable and Noncommunicable Diseases

World Health Organization

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Conceptualization and overall management

Michelle Funk, Unit Head, and Natalie Drew Bold, Technical Officer; Policy, Law and Human Rights, Department of Mental Health and Substance Use, World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva, Switzerland.

Strategic direction

Strategic direction for the WHO documents was provided by:

Keshav Desiraju, Former Health Secretary, New Delhi, India

Julian Eaton, Mental Health Director, CBM Global, London, United Kingdom

Sarah Kline, Co-Founder and Interim Chief Executive Officer, United for Global Mental Health, London, United Kingdom

Hernan Montenegro von Mühlenbrock, PHC Coordinator, Special Programme on Primary Health Care, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland

Michael Njenga, Executive Council Member, Africa Disability Forum, Chief Executive Officer, Users and Survivors of Psychiatry in Kenya, Nairobi, Kenya

Simon Njuguna Kahonge, Director of Mental Health, Ministry of Health, Nairobi, Kenya

Soumitra Pathare, Director, Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy, Indian Law Society, Pune, India

Olga Runciman, Psychologist, Owner of Psycovery Denmark, Chair of the Danish Hearing Voices Network, Copenhagen, Denmark

Benedetto Saraceno, Secretary General, Lisbon Institute Global Mental Health, CEDOC/NOVA, Medical School, Lisbon, Portugal

Alberto Vásquez Encalada, President, Sociedad y Discapacidad (SODIS), Geneva, Switzerland

Writing and research team

Michelle Funk and Natalie Drew Bold were lead writers on the documents and oversaw a research and writing team comprising:

Patrick Bracken, Independent Psychiatrist and Consultant, West Cork, Ireland; Celine Cole, Consultant, Department of Mental Health and Substance Use, WHO, Airlingen, Germany; Julia Faure, Consultant, Policy, Law and Human Rights, Department of Mental Health and Substance Use, WHO, Le Chesnay, France; Emily McLoughlin, Consultant, Policy, Law and Human Rights, Department of Mental Health and Substance Use, WHO, Geneva, Switzerland; Maria Francesca Moro, Researcher and PhD candidate, Department of Epidemiology, Mailman School of Public Health Columbia University, New York, NY, United States of America; Cláudia Pellegrini Braga, Rio de Janeiro Public Prosecutor's Office, Brazil.

Afiya House – Massachusetts, USA: Sera Davidow, Director, Wildflower Alliance (formerly known as the Western Massachusetts Recovery Learning Community), Holyoke MA, USA

Atmiyata – Gujarat, India: Jasmine Kalha, Program Manager and Research Fellow; Soumitra Pathare, Director (Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy, Indian Law Society, Pune, India).

Aung Clinic – Yangon, Myanmar: Radka Antalikova, Lead Researcher, Thabyay Education Foundation, Yangon, Myanmar; Aung Min, Mental health professional and Art therapist, Second team leader, Aung Clinic Mental Health Initiative, Yangon, Myanmar; Brang Mai, Supervisor Counsellor and Evaluation Researcher (team member), Aung Clinic Mental Health Initiative, YMCA Counselling Centre, Yangon, Myanmar; Polly Dewhirst, Social Work and Human Rights Consultant/ Trainer and Researcher of Case Study Documentation, Aung Clinic Mental Health Initiative, Yangon, Myanmar; San San Oo, Consultant Psychiatrist and EMDR Therapist and Team Leader, Aung Clinic Mental Health Initiative, Yangon, Myanmar; Shwe Ya Min Oo, Psychiatrist and Evaluation Researcher (team member), Aung Clinic Mental Health Initiative, Mental Health Hospital, Yangon, Myanmar.

BET Unit, Blakstad Hospital, Vestre Viken Hospital Trust – Viken, Norway: Roar Fosse, Senior Researcher, Department of Research and Development, Division of Mental Health and Addiction; Jan Hammer, Special Advisor, Department of Psychiatry, Blakstad Division of Mental Health and Addiction; Didrik Heggdal, The BET Unit, Blakstad Department; Peggy Lilleby, Psychiatrist, The BET Unit, Blakstad Department; Arne Lillelien, Clinical Consultant, The BET Unit, Blakstad Department; Jørgen Strand, Chief of staff and Unit manager, The BET Unit, Blakstad Department; Inger Hilde Vik, Clinical Consultant, The BET Unit, Blakstad Department (Vestre Viken Hospital Trust, Viken, Norway).

Brazil community-based mental health networks – a focus on Campinas: Sandrina Indiani, President, Directing Council of the Serviço de Saúde Dr. Candido Ferreira, Campinas, Brazil; Rosana Teresa Onocko Campos, Professor, University of Campinas, Campinas, Brazil; Fábio Roque Ieiri, Psychiatrist, Complexo Hospitalar Prefeito Edivaldo Ors, Campinas, Brazil; Sara Sgobin, Coordinator, Technical Area of Mental Health, Municipal Health Secretariat, Campinas, Brazil.

Centros de Atenção Psicossocial (CAPS) III – Brasilândia, São Paulo, Brazil: Carolina Albuquerque de Siqueira, Nurse, CAPS III – Brasilândia, São Paulo, Brazil; Jamile Caleiro Abbud, Psychologist, CAPS III – Brasilândia, São Paulo, Brazil; Anderson da Silva Dalcin, Coordinator, CAPS III – Brasilândia, São Paulo, Brazil; Marisa de Jesus Rocha, Occupational Therapist, CAPS III – Brasilândia, São Paulo, Brazil; Debra Demiquele da Silva, Nursing Assistant, CAPS III – Brasilândia, São Paulo, Brazil; Glaucia Galvão, Supporter Management of Network and Services, Mental Health, Associação Saúde da Família, São Paulo, Brazil; Michele Goncalves Panarotte, Psychologist, CAPS III – Brasilândia, São Paulo, Brazil; Cláudia Longhi, Coordinator, Technical Area of Mental Health, Municipal Health Secretariat, São Paulo, Brazil; Thais Helena Mourão Laranjo, Supporter Management of Network and Services, Mental Health, Associação Saúde da Família, São Paulo, Brazil; Aline Pereira Leal, Social Assistant, CAPS III – Brasilândia, São Paulo, Brazil; Iara Soares Pires Fontagnelo, Occupational Therapist, CAPS III – Brasilândia, São Paulo, Brazil; Igor Manoel Rodrigues Costa, Workshop Professional, CAPS III – Brasilândia, São Paulo, Brazil; Douglas Sherer Sakaguchi, Supervisor Técnico, Freguesia do Ó, Brasilândia, São Paulo, Brazil; Davi Tavares Villagra, Physical Education Professional, CAPS III – Brasilândia, São Paulo, Brazil; Alessandro Uemura Vicentini, Psychologist, CAPS III – Brasilândia, São Paulo, Brazil.

East Lille network of mental health services – France: Antoine Baleige, Praticien hospitalier, Secteur 59G21, Centre Collaborateur de l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé (Lille, France); Alain Dannet, Coordonnateur du GCS, Centre Collaborateur de l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé (Lille, France); Laurent Defromont, Praticien hospitalier, Chef de pôle, Secteur 59G21, Centre Collaborateur de l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé (Lille, France); Géry Kruhelski, Chief Nurse Manager, Secteur 21, Centre Collaborateur de l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé (Lille, France); Marianne Ramonet, Psychiatrist, Sector 21, Centre Collaborateur de l'Organisation mondiale de la Santé (Lille, France); Jean-Luc Roelandt, Psychiatrist, Centre collaborateur de l'OMS pour la Recherche et la Formation en Santé mentale, Etablissement Public de Santé Mentale (EPSM) Lille-Métropole, France; Simon Vasseur, Praticien hospitalier, Centre collaborateur de l'OMS pour la Recherche et la Formation en Santé mentale, Etablissement Public de Santé Mentale (EPSM) Lille-Métropole, France.

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