

The power of empowerment

Katerina Nomidou

Powerlessness and the

- power of symptoms
- power of stigma
- Power of ignorance
- power of public opinion
- power of psychiatry
- power of mental illness bureaucrats

Empowerment and the

- power of empathy
- power of compassionate care
- power of not been ashamed
- power of real support for people (not just political activism)
- power of knowledge
- power of law
- power of credibility
- power of empowering others

What is empowerment?

In a mental health context, empowerment refers to the level of choice, influence and control that people using mental health services can exercise over events in their lives.

The key to empowerment is the removal of formal or informal barriers and the transformation of power relations between individuals, communities, services and governments.

Mental Health in Europe: Indicators of empowerment of users and carers

The WHO / E.C. partnership Project for empowerment of users and carers in mental health (2009-2012) defined 19 indicators divided in 4 domains:

- Protection of human rights and tackling stigma and discrimination
- Involvement in decision-making
- High quality care and evaluation
- Access to information and resources

Objective

To assess mental health empowerment of people using mental health services, families and carers in European countries.

1978

The Declaration of Alma-Ata

People have the right and duty to participate individually and collectively in the planning and implementation of their health care.

1986

Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion

We need to advocate, enable and mediate the encouragement of health promotion.

2000

The Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health

We need affective and integrated health systems that are transparent.

2004

European Strategy for the Prevention and Control of NCDs

People should be empowered to promote their own health.

2005

The Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion in a Globalized World

Health promotion needs to be on the global development agenda and we need to determine responsibilities for the local governments.

Mental Health Declaration and Action Plan for Europe

We need to foster awareness on the importance of mental wellbeing, tackle stigma and empower service users, carers and nongovernmental organizations.

Helsinki Declaration

We need to set standards for mental health activities, eliminate stigma and offer people with mental health problems choice and involvement in their own care.

2007

European Pact for Mental Health and Wellbeing

Empowerment of people with mental health problems and those who care for them are key priorities for the next decade.

The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

People with disabilities are subjects with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives.

2008

European Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases

People should be empowered to promote their own health.

2010

WHO statement on user empowerment in mental health

The key to empowerment is to remove formal and informal barriers and to transform the power relations between individuals, services and governments.

WHO Global and European Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2020

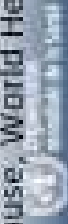
Cross-cutting principles

1. Universal health coverage
2. Human rights
3. Evidence-based practice
4. Life course approach
5. Multisectoral approach
6. **Empowerment of persons with mental disorders and psychosocial disabilities**



Image: WHO/Chris de Bode

Shekhar Saxena – Director Department of Mental Health
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Users' perspective

- Participation in decisions
 - Access to information and resources
 - Having a range of options from which to choose
 - Dignity and respect
 - Belonging and contributing to a wider society
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- Developing communities that empower users and carers
 - Creating empowering services
 - Using service user and carer experience
 - Training and education for users, carers and health professionals
 - Improving employment opportunities
 - User leadership in research
 - Quality assurance and monitoring of mental health services

Carers' perspective

- Subjective impact (perceived)
- Objective impact (e.g. ill health, economic, displacing daily routine)

WHO estimated that the burden to family and community from psychosis is only exceeded by those from dementia and quadriplegia.

World health report 2001. Mental health: new understanding, new hope. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2001 (<http://www.who.int/whr/2001/en>)

External conditions & internal qualities

- Information sharing and confidentiality
- hope and respect
- reclaiming one's life
- feeling connected
- understanding that people have rights
- learning skills that the individual defines as important
- moving from secrecy to transparency
- growth and change that are never ending and self initiated

Taking action for user empowerment

- 1. Protection of the human rights of service users and fighting stigma and discrimination;
- 2. Ensuring high-quality care and accountability of services;
- 3. Having access to information and resources;
- 4. Inclusion in decision-making;
- 5. Having local organizational capacity to make demands on institutions and governing structures

Thank you for your attention !!!

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