



### ABSTRACT FORM

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<b>Title of the contribution/Titolo del contributo</b>	Using People Power to Change the Culture of Mental Health		
<b>Objectives/Obiettivi</b>	Introduce a community based systemic approach to prevention & early Intervention in behavioral health.		

**Contents-text/Contenuto-testo:  
Max. 400 parole/words**

A prevention model is proposed that is inexpensive and offers the most effective results in lives improved and saved. The development of a culture of compassion and engagement is critical to the right to the best possible version of one's life for those with mental illnesses.

Currently most G 20 healthcare systems rely on early intervention but have little prevention. Engagement currently begins in crisis, which from the start engenders discrimination, fear and bias. By normalizing the response and reaction to mental illnesses a major step can be taken in ensuring good health, the ability to work, equality before the law, and independence for those with serious mental illnesses.

Stigma prevents individuals from seeking help and finding resources. Traditional de-stigmatization programs have had limited success and are narrow in scope. We must instead,

create a culture of compassion, of empathy and of engagement.

With Smallpox, Typhus, Tuberculosis, Yellow Fever and many other diseases a public health model was a major factor in the elimination or mitigation of those diseases. Behavioral health illnesses are a broad range, but certain common principles and practices can be applied to do public health outreach and engagement. We must use People Power to change the culture.

Educating and empowering the broadest possible spectrum of the society using an upstream model that includes active listening, resilience, knowledge of resources and of direct engagement with individuals with mental illnesses long term cultural change can be effected. Engagement with peers has been proven to be the most productive factor in reaching these goals.

A whole community approach engaging all stakeholders all the way from prenatal care, to older adult engagement using targeted efforts with common core principles and modules can become a tool that will lift the veil of stigma and allow individuals living with these illnesses to live fuller lives.