



WHO MENTAL HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

The WHO Project on Mental Health and Human Rights aims to support countries in adopting strategies to protect and promote the human rights of people with mental disorders. It focuses specifically on the development and implementation of mental health legislation, as this represents an important means of rights protection.

People with mental disorders are exposed to a wide range of human rights violations. Violations often occur in psychiatric institutions through inadequate, degrading and harmful care and treatment as well as unhygienic and inhuman living conditions. They also occur outside the institutional context, with people all over the world experiencing limitation in the exercise of their civil liberties and in the fields of employment, education, and housing, due to the stigma myths and misconceptions associated with mental disorders. This stigma and discrimination can, in turn, impact on a person's ability to gain access to appropriate care, integrate into society, and recover from illness.



"All persons with a mental illness, or who are being treated as such persons, shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person... There shall be no discrimination on the grounds of mental illness..."

UN Principles for the Protection of Persons with Mental Illness,
GA resolution 46/119 of 17 December 1991.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO COUNTRIES

WHO offers direct technical assistance to countries in developing and implementing their national mental health laws, using the WHO guidance materials and Network of Experts. Support to countries typically includes the following activities:

- Analysis of human rights situation for people with mental disorders
- Critical analysis of existing mental health law & identification of key issues for the new law
- Development of an action plan for developing and implementing mental health law
- Ongoing, in depth technical support during the drafting and implementation of their law
- Evaluation of the mental health law reform

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Legislation enables the codification and consolidation of the fundamental principles, values, aims and objectives of mental health policies and programmes. It provides a legal framework to ensure that critical issues affecting the lives of people with mental disorders, both in mental health facilities and in the broader community context, are addressed.

WHO GUIDANCE MATERIAL ON MENTAL HEALTH, HUMAN RIGHT AND LEGISLATION

WHO has developed a number of guidance materials on mental health, human rights and legislation in order to inform and assist countries wishing to formulate mental health legislation.

A **WHO Resource Book on Mental Health, Human Rights and Legislation** has been developed, which brings together information on international norms and standards related to the rights of people with mental disorders, key issues that need to be considered and included in national mental health law, and strategies and best practice examples to facilitate the process of developing, adopting and implementing mental health legislation.

WHO has also developed a **Checklist** in order to assist countries in reviewing and assessing the comprehensiveness and adequacy of their existing law and to help them in the process of drafting new law. In addition, WHO has developed a number of training tools and exercises designed to increase people's skills in the area of mental health, human rights and legislation.



INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF EXPERTS

WHO has established an international network of experts able to provide countries with technical assistance in the area of mental health, human rights and legislation. Experts from each region have received training in WHO's framework and methodology for working with countries in this area.

http://www.who.int/mental_health/policy/en/