



Workshop #2:

What place for experiential knowledge?

Co-organizers

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What is this work shop about?

This workshop explored the issue of human rights in mental health services from the perspectives of the service user and family carers.

A significant amount of care is provided to people with severe mental health difficulties in the community. Expert by experience (**users and family carers**) have much to contribute to the care and recovery of people with mental illness. Furthermore, there is an internationally growing trend to **include peer support workers in mental health services**, and despite the ongoing challenges, their inclusion in the mental health care workforce is very beneficial. In most cases individuals with mental illness are supported by at least one family member. Family members have rights too and this workshop explored issues such as the right to information, training and support from mental health services and from national governments. Specific issues such as confidentiality and joint decision making were also addressed.

Services based on protecting the human rights of users should be of a **high quality**, be available when needed and be **appropriate to people's needs**. Modern rights based mental health services should **involve the user and family care, partners in the process of treatment and recovery**. This means **having adequate communication** between services, users and family carers. It also means **developing and delivering programmes of care where user and family members are active participants** with the service providers. Principles such as advocacy, **joint decision making, individualized programme planning** and a **focus on recovery** are at the heart of such services.



Findings and recommendations

1. Users' knowledge of their rights is a key tool to **facilitate recovery**.
2. **Inclusion of persons with lived experience** in the **development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of mental health services is key** to advance mental health services to align with human rights and person-centeredness.
3. In hospital settings, service users must be **informed of their rights** at the earliest stage of their stay in hospital. And **reporting mechanisms** should be in place for service users to report any incidents of human rights violations.
4. Human rights are integral for providing mental health services that promote recovery and quality of life of persons impacted by mental health conditions. Human rights principles must apply to both the **human** and **physical environments** in which services are delivered and ensure that **recovery** can be **facilitated in spaces that are safe, respectful, empathetic, and non-judgmental**.
5. Mental health care services should provide:
 - a therapeutic culture based on **empowerment, knowledge**, and **support**. They must avoid adherence practices and where such practices are used the structures and processes should be based on a human rights framework.
 - multi-disciplinary teams and services based on medical, psychological and social interventions.
6. Mental health care services must avoid adherence practices and where such practices are used the structures and processes should be based on a human rights framework. They should operate based on the principle of “**Trauma Informed Care**”, defined as practices that promote a culture of safety, empowerment and healing. It involves a process of **organisational change** that creates **recovery environments** for professionals, service users and carers.



7. Human rights principles must apply to both the **human and physical environments** in which services are delivered **in spaces that are safe, respectful, empathetic, and non-judgmental**. This involves a process of **cultural and organisational change** that creates **recovery environments** for professionals, service users and carers.
8. Rights should be enshrined in Law and Policy and achieved with practitioners through dialogue. Family members and mental health service providers need to **collaborate** to provide support. This includes **accurate and open communications**.
9. **Training** for all **mental health professional** should include time to explore and embrace a therapeutic culture based on **empowerment**, and **support, as well as to consider the role and importance of supporters caring**.
10. Mental Health care in the community is provided in the main by family members. Therefore, **family members have rights** too, specifically, rights to **information, support, and education**. This means they must be:
 - Listened to by the mental health practitioners and viewed as partners in care.
 - Well informed as soon as possible on mental illness and supported to improve their relationships with their loved ones with lived experience.
 - Helped when the situation is deteriorating, and crises may occur.
 - And, entitled to experience a recovery process too.
11. Involved family members should be considered as **partners in care** and support and become part of the **Circle of Support** with users of services and professionals. Partnerships **benefits everyone!**