

Policy - promotion and prevention in mental health: role of the World Federation for Mental Health

Policy Forum

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Mental Health Policy

“Mental health policy is an organized set of values, principles and objectives for improving mental health and reducing the burden of mental disorders in a population. It outlines a vision for the future and helps to establish a model for action” (WHO 2003).

Mental health policy deficits

- 1/3 of countries in the world have no mental health policy
- 1/3 of people in the world not protected by mental health legislation
- 1/3 of all countries have no public budget for mental health
- In Africa and S-E Asia less than 1% of health budget spent on mental health
- People with mental disorders discriminated against e.g. no disability benefits in 20% of all countries

Promotion of mental health

Mental health promotion aims to promote positive mental health by increasing psychological well-being, competence and resilience and supportive living environments

Public health definition of mental disorder prevention

“Mental disorder prevention aims at reducing incidence, prevalence, recurrence of mental disorders, the time spent with symptoms or the risk condition for a mental illness, preventing or delaying recurrences and also decreasing the impact of illness in the affected person, their families and the society.”

Policy imperatives

- Mental health policy needs to be an integral part of health policy
- Mental health promotion and prevention of mental and behavioural disorders needs to be an integral part of mental health policy
- Goals of mental health promotion/prevention are not the sole responsibility of the mental health sector

- Advocacy will be required to convince decision makers of the value of including mental health promotion/prevention in their policy agenda
- Aim of advocacy is to generate public demand for mental health, place mental health issues high up on the political and community agenda and effectively convince all stakeholders to act in support of mental health”. (WHO 2005: 191)

Role of the World Federation for Mental Health

- The World Federation for Mental Health has been engaged in advocacy in the fields of mental health promotion/prevention since its foundation
- Its membership and structure place it in a unique position to continue play a major role in addressing policy

Membership of WFMH

- WFMH began with members, “not of individuals or countries, but of societies” from 46 different countries
- Unique, in that its broad and diverse membership constituency represents professionals, service users/patients, family members/caregivers, advocates and concerned citizens
- Recognized that an effective global “voice for mental health” required the interest and commitment of people other than mental health professionals

Membership of WFMH

- WFMH's membership - individuals and organizations – promotes a global network of diverse and concerned people working together from over 150 countries
- Provides the basis for WFMH's influence on global intergovernmental bodies
- Helps to connect grassroots organizations in low-income countries with developed countries
- Serves as the source of WFMH's volunteer leadership

WFMH: mission and goals

- The Mission of WFMH is “To promote the advancement of mental health awareness, prevention, advocacy, and best practice recovery-focused interventions worldwide”
- WFMH’s Goals are:
 - **To heighten public awareness about the importance of mental health, and to gain understanding and improve attitudes about mental disorders**
 - **To promote mental health and prevent mental disorders**
 - **To improve the care, treatment and recovery of people with mental disorders**

Some landmarks in WFMH's prevention leadership

- The 1975 WFMH World Congress in Copenhagen included papers on such topics as “Preventive Health and the Psychology of Economic Growth”
- One of the major themes of the 1985 World Congress in Brighton, England was “Prevention of Mental and Emotional Disability”
- In 1986, the Johns Hopkins Center for Prevention Research was certified as WFMH's first Collaborating Center
- In 1989, WFMH formed the International Committee on Prevention
- In 1995, at the WFMH World Congress in Dublin, Ireland, a WFMH International Consortium for Prevention including 45 members from 7 regions emerged

WFMH: collaboration and network building

- WFMH's P & P initiatives and activities center on opportunities for collaboration and network-building
- Official NGO consultative status with world bodies since 1948 (United Nations, WHO, UNESCO, UN High Commission for Refugees, UN Commission on Human Rights, ILO)
- Special projects – ADHD, Depression, Metabolic Issues, Concerns of Families and Carers
- Biennial World Mental Health Congresses (August 2007 in Hong Kong)

WFMH: collaboration and network building

- Conference presentations contributing to policy development
- WFMH partnerships and collaborations with WPA, WASP, IASP, WFMH Collaborating Centers, Corporate partnerships for special projects
- From 2000, Biennial Conferences on the Promotion of Mental Health and Prevention of Mental and Behavioral Disorders - with Carter Centre, Clifford Beers, WHO
- The emerging Global Consortium for Advancement of Promotion and Prevention in Mental Health (GCAPP)

World Mental Health Day – major advocacy and educational program

- WMHDay focuses worldwide attention on a mental health theme each year on 10 October
- WMHDay serves to promote positive mental health attitudes, reduce stigma, inform individuals, families, and communities about mental health and mental disorders and thereby influence policy
- Each campaign incorporates elements of mental health promotion, prevention in mental disorders and mental awareness and advocacy

History of World Mental Health Day

- First organized by WFMH in 1992
- First “themed” WMHDay was in 1994 – *“Improving the Quality of Mental Health Services Throughout the World”*
- Annual campaign materials packets now distributed free to around 4,000 organizations and individuals in over 150 countries, on website and translated into 6 languages
- Now adopted by governments, NGO’s and committed individuals worldwide

Previous WMH Day Themes

- 1996 Women and Mental Health
- 1997 Children and Mental Health
- 1998 Mental Health and Human Rights
- 1999 Mental Health and Ageing
- 2000-2001 Mental Health and Work
- 2002 The Effects of Trauma and Violence on Children and Adolescents
- 2003 Emotional and Behavioral Disorders of Children and Adolescents
- 2004 The Relationship Between Physical & Mental Health
- 2005 Mental and Physical Health Across the Life Span

WMH Day as advocacy

- Takes various forms, e.g. 1995, month long in Egypt, Conference in France, community celebration in Micronesian Islands, UK at site of Bedlam Hospital, PAHO translated material into Spanish
- Not one-day event, global outreach – large national events, banners in Katmandu, Pacific island of Palau, Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya

2006

World Mental Health Day theme

The theme for World Mental Health Day 2006 is
*“Building Awareness-Reducing Risk: Mental
Illness and Suicide,”* calling attention to the
growing worldwide public health impact of suicide
and the increased risks of suicide among people
with mental illnesses

WFMH'S future role in promotion and prevention leadership

- Staffed WFMH Center for Promotion of Mental Health & Prevention of Mental Disorders
- Give support to P&P conferences and assistance to GCAPP
- An increased focus on leadership in “secondary” and “tertiary “ prevention
- New Special Projects - Mental health and HIV/AIDS. Transcultural mental health
- Increased priority on advancing prevention in developing countries through special initiatives and grassroots coalition-building

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