

International Collaborating Network

Community Mental Health Leading Experiences



Our purpose

Over the last thirty years, there has been a movement in many countries from institutional mental health care towards community systems. However comprehensive, integrated and effective services have only been developed in a relatively small number of places.

The purpose of the Collaborating Network is to bring together places that have been successful in developing good quality community mental health services, with those that are in the process of implementation. With the support of a continuous learning collaboration, organisations may benefit from others' experience.

In this way a more robust community mental health movement can be sustained, which will be effective in influencing and improving the lives of people with mental health problems.

Our vision and values

Our vision is a world which respects and values the differences between individuals, enabling people who experience mental health problems, with appropriate supports, to lead fulfilling and productive lives using their strengths to contribute as full citizens and enrich our societies.

Our values are for community mental health service development and practice that is underpinned by service users' needs and desires

Our Mission

The mission of the Collaborating Network is to pool the resources of its membership, in order to collectively seek improved outcomes for people with mental health problems.

International Mental Health Collaborating Network
" Mental Health and Citizenship "

45, Avenue du Maréchal Lyautey – 59370 Mons en Baroeul - France
Tel : 00 33 032 437 100 - Email : imhcn@epsm-lille-metropole.fr /
web site : www.IMHCN.org



These outcomes include:

- treatments and therapies that improve people's life situations
- adequate housing
- employment
- social networks
- community participation and integration
- independent advocacy for service users
- supporting the development of user participation and organisation
- action research in community mental health
- tackling discriminatory policies and laws

Our aims & objectives

The Collaborating Network has the following goals:

- The creation of community services which are integrated, coherent and capable of developing a strategy that responds to the mental health needs of a given community.
- Deinstitutionalisation, not only from the psychiatric hospital, but also the current psychiatric practice of only "treating and curing illness".
- Avoiding the fragmentation of specific responses for specific needs, which leads to separation and exclusion.

The aim of the Collaborating Network is to help those places who are in need. It operates in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO), with WHO partner organisations, national ministries, and non-governmental organisations.

The Network will achieve its aims through a web site, exchanges of staff for study visits, work placements, workshops, research programmes, international conferences, and access to organisations with similar values, principles and experiences.

Membership of the Network

The founder members of the Network are:

- Trieste Department of Mental Health (Italy)
- Cavan Monaghan Mental Health Services (Ireland)
- Asturias Mental Health Service (Spain)
- Cornwall Partnership NHS Trust (UK)
- EPSM Lille Metropole (France)
- South Stockholm Mental Health Service (Sweden)

Mental health organisations and individuals that aspire to the values and principles of the Network can take part its activities. It is a multidisciplinary network, with users and carers as equal partners.



Individuals should be committed to describing and sharing their work through the activities of the Network.

They can improve their knowledge and skills, whatever stage they are at in local service development. People in the vanguard of development can find themselves isolated. The sharing of experiences - and finding solutions together - is a support function of the network.

Organisations will be developing integrated community services with:

- no large psychiatric institutions;
- operating 24 hours / round the clock in the community;
- service user involvement in developing services;
- partnerships with community providers of housing, work, education and leisure opportunities;
- the least restrictive environments for crisis care;
- the central aim of improving the service user's quality of life;
- an intention to evaluate services and share the results;
- a commitment to address the needs of minority groups.

Public Health Organisations and non government organisations wishing to join the Network should have demonstrated commitment to its objectives.

To join the Network

- Visit our web-site www.IMHCN.com
- Complete the service profile template
- Submit the completed template by e-mail to our secretariat :

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In support of Network objectives

The end of the asylum age will see the global elimination of all psychiatric hospitals, for such institutions remain the primary location for the reproduction of psychiatry and the dehumanisation, exclusion and impoverishment of people who suffer.

The "vision" and system of values of a community service must always be based on the central importance of service users and their processes of recovery.

Service users should have guaranteed rights:

- to live in their own private space, regardless of the seriousness of their disturbance,
- to an active role within society through job placement or forms of social enterprise.

Community responsibility for mental health must redefine social control to take into account the views of all stakeholders, but above all to protect weak and vulnerable subjects.

The services must recognise differences of gender and culture as fundamental to the concept of equal rights.

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