

Empowerment of Mental Illness Service Users:
Life Long Learning, Integration and Action
EMILIA

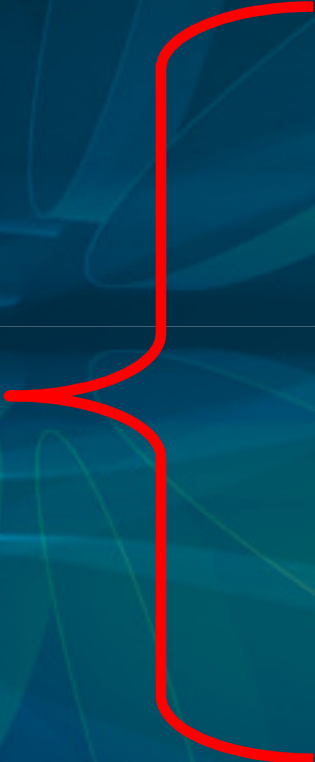
***The impact of the users'
participation on the
psychosocial rehabilitation
process and outcome.***

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- Is it recommended to involve users in mental health policies, services planning and delivery?
- Is it beneficial, for whom, and when?

What involvement?

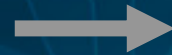
- Planning
 - Organizing
 - Coordinating
 - Researching
 - Supporting
 - Caring
 - Advocating
- 
- Participating
 - Deciding
 - Helping

What do we expect from this involvement?

- the **placing** of mental health on government agendas;
- **improvements in policies and practices** of governments and institutions;
- **changes** made to laws, government regulations, and institutional settings;
- **improvements in the promotion** of mental health and the prevention of mental disorders;
- the **protection and promotion of the rights and interests** of persons with mental disorders and their families;
- **improvements** in mental health services, treatment and care.

- Involving users is a recommended policy:
 - WHO, WAPR, EE, national policies
- Is generally seen as *worthwhile*, but the effects of involving users have not been thoroughly evaluated
- Of great importance is the value referring to the involvement of service users **as full partners** in all aspects of rehabilitation.
- Rehabilitation: a process with and for the person not to the person.

Disease –
psychiatric
problem



Patient
User



Consumer
Citizen

We have moved from the transition stage (from tradition to participation) → to transformation stage

This means we have to look at **how organisations can transform** (both culturally, structurally and in terms of policy and practice development) in **response to service user participation and learn from the process of transition**

There are a number of good reasons *why service users should participate:*

- Service users have **fundamental citizenship rights** that include participation in mental health services or issues that affect them
- Participation gives service users an **active role** that is essential to their recovery.
- The rights of service users as customers mean that they should be given **choices** and that services should **respond to their needs**.
- Service user participation contributes to improved services.

Examples of positive practice in mental health services

- Involvement in prioritizing and conducting research
- Involvement in staff selection
- Employment as paid mental health workers
- Involvement in planning and redesigning of mental health services
- Involvement in education and training

No matter what type of intervention is implemented (vocational, educational, residential, social skills, family), the practitioners must recall two important parameters:

1. change in any one measure, does not suggest or imply change in related measures (eg. improvement in vocational training, does not necessarily indicate improvement in psychosocial skills)
2. positive effect on any one measure may have a negative effect on an other (for instance, increase in social skills may increase / produce anxiety)

- *The impact therefore of any intervention should be studied and calculated on a wider range of outcomes, in a more **holisitic** way*
- *The involvement has to be carefully designed and implemented (step by step methodology) so that it can have maximum effect*

Stages when involving users or carers as stakeholders in services

- (a) deciding on the **main goal**
- (b) choosing a **mechanism** of involvement to achieve that goal
- (c) identifying potential **barriers and solutions**
- (d) **monitoring** the process of involvement
- (e) **evaluating** outcomes of the project, measuring whether the goal has been met
- (f) using data collected to inform running of this and future projects.

- Do we speak after all about continuity (a connected whole, coherence) in care, treatment, rehabilitation, support and in the ability to carry on with our lives (life long!)?

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It seeks to empower mental health service users and encourages mental health services to **maximise** service user **involvement** in the training for and delivery of **new and innovative services**, and by so doing **opens up** new **employment routes** for service users