

## **Global Mental Health Peer Network Position Statement**

### *Mental Health and Suicide Prevention*

### *World Suicide Prevention Day*

**10 September 2021**

#### **Purpose of this position statement**

Launched on World Suicide Prevention Day 2021, this position statement describes the values of the Global Mental Health Peer Network, how it engages with stakeholders to guide future efforts to address inequalities and issues relating to mental health and suicide prevention. Building on the expertise and representing the views of the Global Mental Health Peer Network, the position statement seeks to provide direction with regard to specific issues relating to mental health and suicide.

#### **Support for specialist individuals and organisations**

The Global Mental Health Peer Network (GMHPN) supports the direction of specialist organisations working in the area of suicide prevention, including policy-focused peak bodies and research institutions. This includes the International Association for Suicide Prevention, the World Health Organization and other country-specific organisations working in the area. We recognise the value of coordinated suicide prevention efforts at a global level, and support the recommendations made in the WHO Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2020 (extended to 2030) and the 'LIVE LIFE Implementation Guide for Suicide Prevention in Countries' stressing the importance of initiatives and programs to follow the following core pillars, at a minimum:

- Situation analysis
- Multisectoral collaboration
- Awareness-raising and advocacy
- Capacity-building
- Financing
- Surveillance, monitoring and evaluation.

Our perspective is largely informed by such expert direction, which, together with the lived experience insights from the GMHPN members, inform the direction of our work and advocacy efforts. With this we aim to make a difference on mental health and suicide, enacted across cultural and global boundaries to increase coordinated and targeted suicide prevention strategies throughout the world. We advocate for the rights of those with a lived experience and as a movement we hope for improved mental health and wellbeing.

Through its sub-committees and partnerships, the GMHPN has a vision to *“strengthen the voices of persons with lived experience globally, through empowerment and inspiring respect and acknowledgement of their experiences, views, and opinions as valued and equal citizens of the world.”* Fundamental to the GMHPN are the principles of working with all stakeholders to affect the desired change, however ensuring that the views, opinions, and experiences of persons with lived experience reflect this change.

## **A world free from stigma, discrimination, inequality, and inequity**

The GMHPN stands to enhance suicide prevention efforts, by creating communities where persons with lived experience are valued as equal citizens of the world, free from stigma, discrimination, inequality, and inequity, and by seeing suicide as both tragedy and a cry for systemic change. The GMHPN gives voice to the voiceless and creates a platform for lived experience, to end isolation from the world, and connect mental health care user groups and movements globally.

As GMHPN strongly opposes and condemns discrimination and any stigma attached to mental health conditions or experience of suicide, disorders or psychosocial disabilities and the consequences thereof (e.g. human rights violations, abuse, segregation), persons with lived experience need representation at community life or discussion platforms that directly or indirectly impact on the lives of these people.

## **Person-centred, holistic mental health and suicide prevention responses**

The GMHPN advocates for an integrated and holistic response to mental health care and services that incorporates medical, social and human rights models, emphasizing the multidimensional aspects of mental health conditions. Societal challenges like suicide cannot be addressed in isolation as a medical problem.

The GMHPN strongly supports and advocates for a person-centred and recovery approach to mental health care and suicide prevention services. It challenges and condemns the paradigm of medical traditions and institutional care models that have subjected individuals with mental health conditions to severe human rights violations, developed structures of societal segregation, and denied the inherent human dignity and voice of this community.

## **A human rights approach**

The GMHPN believes in a human rights-based approach within an operating framework focussed on empowerment, recovery, and peer support – where lived experience is the influence supporting de-stigmatisation, quality of life, equality, and equity. This underpins all of its work from the promotion of international treaties and human rights instruments, accountability measures under domestic laws, and emphasizing the importance of protecting and respecting the rights of persons with lived experience.

## **Lived experience leadership**

The GMHPN focuses on the development of lived experience leadership to enhance meaningful participation in the development, design review, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of services at all stages and in all aspects of life. Building global lived experience leadership and stakeholder partnerships are essential as the catalysts of change and transformation in mental health and suicide prevention, where lived experience experts are at the centre of policy and action and where lived experience voices are reflected in these policies, plans, and practices.

## Collaborate to build the lived experience movement

The GMHPN believes we should create a community of experts by experience, who are empowered to self-advocate and advocate on a broader and global scale. We invite collaborators who follow this vision to contact us and help us to build this movement and hope for those affected by mental ill health and suicide.

**To show your support for suicide prevention, to remember a lost one and for survivors of suicide, light a candle in your window at 8pm on World Suicide Prevention Day. For more information and resources in various languages see:**

<https://www.iasp.info/wspd2021/light-a-candle/>

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