

S25-02

THE WHO-EC PARTNERSHIP PROJECT ON EMPOWERMENT IN MENTAL HEALTH

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People with mental health problems and their families have not been involved as equal partners in decision-making processes on mental health services, and they continue to be at risk of social exclusion and discrimination in all facets of life. In a mental health context, empowerment refers to the level of choice, influence and control that users of mental health services can exercise over events in their lives, and the key to empowerment is the removal of formal or informal barriers and the transformation of power relations between individuals, communities, services and governments. Despite all achievements that have been made over the past decade, there is still a strong need for empowerment of people with mental health problems and their families. The World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe and the European Commission started a three years lasting "Partnership Project on Empowerment in Mental Health" in 2008 which aims to support Member States in the European Region in creating societies in which people with mental health problems are enabled to develop and express their full potential as equal citizens. The WHO Statement on Empowerment in Mental Health has been published, about 100 examples of empowerment practice across Europe have been collected, and indicators for empowerment applicable at national level have been identified. The project outcomes and possibilities for their implementation at country level will be presented.