

This statement reflects the views of families and friends of people with psychosocial disability on their role in fostering the remission and recovery of people living with mental ill health such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and similar conditions.

EUFAMI's Position on Recovery from Mental Health Disabilities

EUFAMI asserts that family and friends can have a key role to play in their relative or friend's road to recovery based on an alliance among professional care givers, the person living with mental ill health and the family.

Families can provide an appropriate environment for positive change if they themselves understand the process of recovery through receiving help and training from peers and professionals. With such help and training they can support and empower their ill relative to work towards social reintegration and recovery from mental health disability.

Recovery is the development of personal potential, coping with disabilities and re-establishing a valid social role even with the limitations caused by living with mental ill health.

To recover the person needs:

- To regain self-esteem, a sense of purpose and personal fulfilment, experiencing empowerment regarding his or her life and environment in a context based on hope, respect, and responsibility.
- To achieve control over psychiatric symptoms through use of effective and safe psychotropic medication, supported by professional intervention aimed at going beyond compliance, fostering, and supporting adherence to treatments.
- To be able to cope with disability through appropriate psychotherapeutic, rehabilitative, and other evidence-based interventions to support and promote employment, education, independent living, social interaction, and inclusion.
- To be able to choose from a range of other complementary treatments, e.g. physical exercise, nutritional supplementation, etc. in the framework of a person-centred and holistic approach.
- To cope with and to overcome stigma and discrimination.

Recommendations

Governments should have disability and antidiscrimination legislation in place, with recommendations and action plans to ensure that requirements are implemented, so that people living with mental ill health can exercise the right to share in the opportunities, enjoyments, challenges, and responsibilities of everyday life – in fact the same rights as other citizens with a disability, such as:

1. Continuing regular personal support from a key worker using assessments and written plans on how to reach the person's relevant life goals - not plans restricted to only with treatment and care. All assessments and written plans must be formulated together by the professional and the person and regularly updated. National mental health laws should require that both the person living with mental ill health and the informal carer or family member should be involved in having their needs assessed by an assigned key worker, and that an action plan should be drawn up, implemented, and regularly monitored.
2. Access to a range of specialised social support services that can be called on at times of greatest need, e.g. crisis services such as a crisis outreach team and a crisis house providing alternatives to hospital admission, day centres, befriending schemes, supported or co-operative working environments etc.
3. Access to effective and safe medication, prescribed following best practice guidelines.
4. Independent financial support from the state, removing the need for dependency on family or household finances.
5. A choice of appropriate accommodation, with the necessary levels of personal support, if needed.
6. Access to meaningful occupation, with appropriate personal support, if needed.
7. Access to, and support in use of, mainstream social activities and facilities.
8. Help with developing social networks where professionals and family and friends can provide additional support, share responsibilities, and give each other mutual support.
9. Social inclusion, and the right *not* to be discriminated against. Governments should take steps to improve public understanding of mental ill health, and thereby help combat stigma. People with experience of mental ill health and their carers can speak out effectively to help change the public's perceptions and understanding of mental ill health.

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10. Highlight the importance of self-advocacy of sufferers of mental ill health. Using the Wellness Recovery Action Plan, individuals may take more control over their path to recovery.
 11. The right not to be institutionalised. Institutionalisation against the will of the patient can be a violation of his or her human rights.