

IIMHL & IIDL Leadership Briefing XVII

Information from the Dutch International Mental Health Hub: Update on COVID-19

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Introduction

The following five activities come from an update produced by the Dutch International Mental Health Hub. It is intended to provide you with information on their activities and their perspective on international work in the field of mental health.

Marjonneke de Vetten – McMahon is the Network Coordinator of the Dutch International Mental Health Hub.



1. Webinar: *“How can we best address the challenges for a mentally healthy society in the context of COVID-19?”*

Our first webinar was a success on the 12th of June with 72 participants from the Netherlands, UK, Sweden, US and Canada. Speakers [Steve Appleton](#), Prof [Paul Burstow](#) and [Marjolein Martens](#) made clear that a “whole society approach” is needed. It is important to break the silos and establish real cooperation between the mental health care sector, social sector and the communities. Watch the webinar:
Password 6d?p84i5

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/7PVMJeDR9UJLZavCtQbHGZ5mM43naaa8gyB-N-vYOxEtY2VbE1pqz1FyWqPLhnNNK>

2. 9th European Community Based Mental Health Service Providers Network (EUCOMS) Meeting: *“Delivering Community Mental Health Care during COVID-19; Innovative practices and lessons learned”*

EUCOMS also had a successful first online meeting on the 11th of June 2020. With guests from World Health Organisation (WHO), IIMHL, Mental Health Europe (MHE) and from various countries such as Norway, Spain and Moldova.

EUCOMS was able to provide a very complete and varied picture of the innovations that took place during the pandemic to ensure that people remain not only physically but also mentally healthy. The meeting covered the following themes related to the delivering of community care during lockdown:

- Digital learning and capacity building of mental health professionals
- Reaching out to those hard to engage
- Digital solutions in care and recovery activities
- Scaling up delivery of online psychotherapy
- Inter-sectoral collaboration.

Link to meeting: <https://youtu.be/Ym8bzatE-vs>

3. Position Paper from Mental Health Europe: “Key long-term challenges and opportunities for mental health in the aftermath of COVID-19”

This June 2020 report aims to explore the key challenges and opportunities for mental health in the aftermath of COVID-19. It shows how COVID-19 offers an opportunity to rethink our approach to mental health and implement structural changes in mental health support. It examines the impact of socio-economic factors on mental health and access to mental health support and services – how COVID-19 can reshape our approach; and it provides five recommendations.

https://www.mhe-sme.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/MHE-COVID-19-position-paper_062020.pdf

4. United Nations: “Why mental health is a human right” May 2020

In this article, UN-rapporteur on the right to health, Dr Dainius Puras, reflects on how Covid-19 offers an opportunity to rethink our mental health strategy.

But he also worries that measures to contain Covid-19 could reverse global advances in mental health treatment. *“I urge governments to use this crisis as an opportunity for progressive changes. Less coercion, less locking people up, less medicalisation, moving more from the idea of treatment as fixing a disorder... Instead we can now move to very innovative... I should use the terms support and care, instead of treatment.”*

But he is “cautiously optimistic”, too, that the crisis will revitalise respect for human rights and multilateralism. Populist nationalists *“were happy that everybody now solves problems in their own country, but this does not work, so maybe people or leaders will come back to the idea that only together we can address such challenges”*.

<https://www.newstatesman.com/spotlight/healthcare/2020/05/why-mental-health-human-right>

5. “Report on the Transition from Institutional Care to Community-Based Services in 27 European Union Member States” by Jan Šiška and Julie Beadle-Brown

In 2020 the European Commission, in consultation with the members of the EEC, has commissioned an investigation into the progress of the transition from institutional to family and community care and support over the past 10 years.

The report provides a broad picture of the current situation, solutions and trends in deinstitutionalisation and community mental healthcare in the EU for people with disabilities, mental health problems, the homeless, children and older adults in 27 EU countries.

<https://deinstitutionalisationdotcom.files.wordpress.com/2020/05/eeg-di-report-2020-1.pdf>