

WHO work to promote person-centred, rights-based, recovery approaches in mental health



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Human Rights Perspective in Mental Health (1)

“We are all born free and equal.”





Human Rights Perspective in Mental Health (2)

“We are all born free and equal.”

- The statement “*We are all born free and equal*” is intentionally ambiguous.
- On the one hand, because we are human, we are all born free and equal.
On the other hand, in many cases governments or societies may deny many people their right to freedom and equality.
- Human rights are about ensuring that the freedom and equality of all people are respected.



Human Rights Perspective in Mental Health (3)

What do we truly need in order to live a good life?





Human Rights Perspective in Mental Health (4)

Human rights are universal, inalienable, and equal.

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948)

Core Principles:

Dignity and equality – All human beings are born free and equal.

Non-discrimination – Rights apply to everyone without distinction.

Freedom – Freedom of thought, expression, religion, and movement.

Protection – Freedom from torture, slavery, and arbitrary detention.

Justice – Right to a fair trial and equal protection under the law.

Social rights – Right to education, health, work, and an adequate standard of living.

Participation – Right to take part in government and public affairs.



Urgent need for person-centred & human rights approach in mental health

Pressing issues to address:

- Institutionalisation
- Lack of access to community services
- Use of coercive practices, violence, abuse & neglect
- Denial of peoples' legal capacity - right to decide over own treatment and other areas of life
- Stigma, discrimination and disempowerment in mental health and other services
- Overemphasis on diagnosis & use of medication to manage symptoms and underemphasis on addressing the social and structural determinants impacting people lives



Country Context: Mental Health & Human Rights in Armenia

- System in transition: institutional → community-based care
- Mental health draft Law and Action Plan in place
- Human rights alignment: formal, partial in practice
- Coercive practices remain in use
- Strong momentum for reform

(WHO, September 2025)



Key CRPD rights relevant to mental health

- Legal capacity and supported decision making (Art 12)
- Liberty and Security of person (Art 14)
- Independent community living (Art 19)
- Right to health (Art 25)



Action areas for reform

- Build capacity to **combat stigma and discrimination** and promote human rights and recovery (WHO MOSAIC Toolkit)
- Create **community-based services** and **supports** that respect and promote human rights
- Promote the **participation of persons with lived experience** and promote civil society (WHO MOSAIC Toolkit)
- Reform national **policies and legislation** in line with the CRPD and other international human rights standards



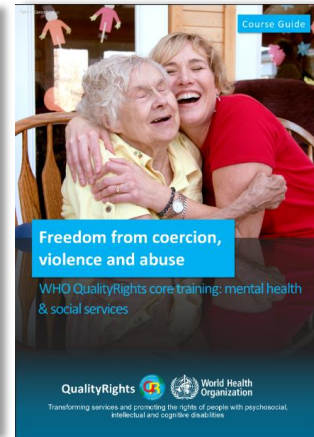
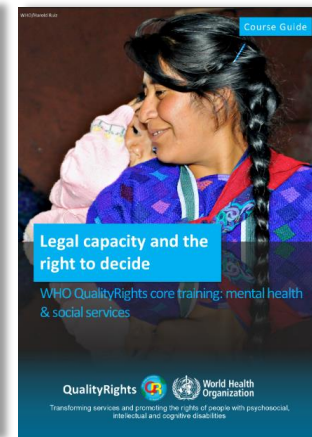
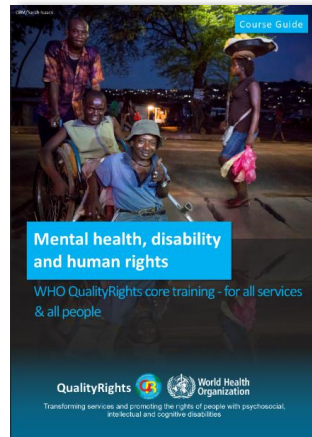
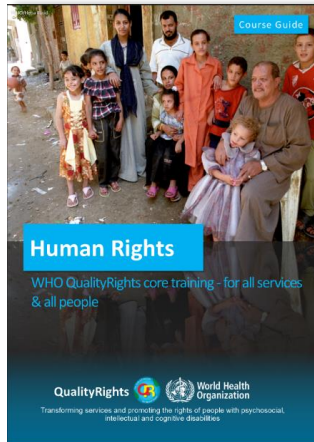
Capacity building on human rights in mental health

- Attitude and mindset change is fundamental for rights based mental health reform
- Shifts in attitudes to:
 - combat stigma and discrimination
 - ensure people are seen as rights holders (respect for legal capacity; freedom from coercion etc.)
- Without significant mindset change the risk is that mental health reform efforts will only lead to a slight improvement in practices without any fundamental change in the paradigm

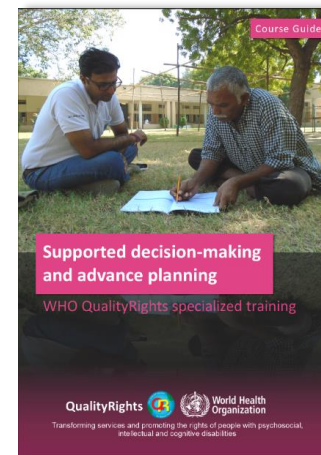
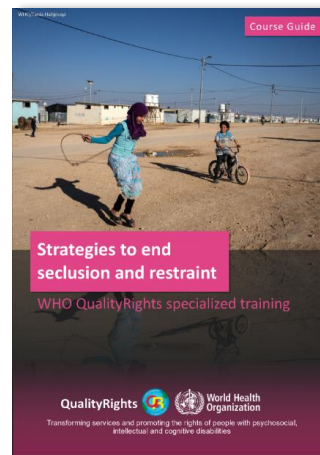
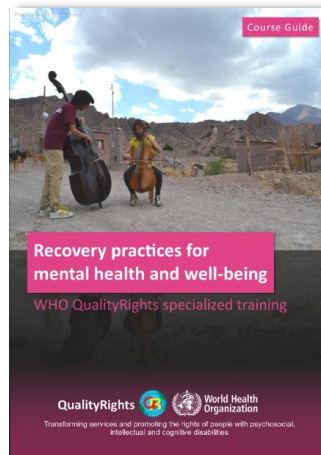
QualityRights face-to-face training modules

QualityRights face-to-face training modules

Core modules



Specialized modules





QualityRights e-training

WHO QR e-training Mental Health, recovery & community inclusion

- Changing mindsets of whole communities, on massive scale
- Free and open to all
- Available in 13 languages including English, French and Spanish

 **WHO QualityRights**
Act, unite and empower for mental health

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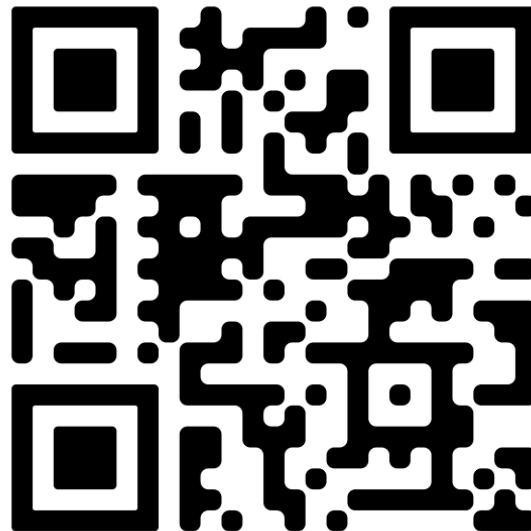
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- 118,500 People enrolled
- 65,000 have received WHO certificate
- 23% improvement in attitudes aligned with human rights



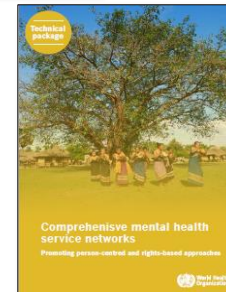
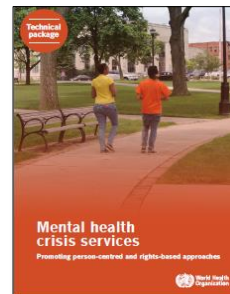
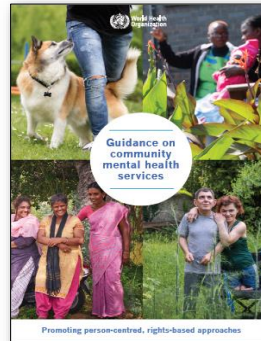
Access QualityRights e-training in Armenian at:

https://whoacademy.org/coursewares/course-v1:WHOA+0016_QR_HY+2025





WHO Guidance on community mental health services: Promoting person-centred & rights-based approaches



THREE EVIDENCE-BASED PRINCIPLES TO END STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

- Based on current evidence and past stigma reduction campaigns
- Should be part of any stigma-reduction activity
- What suits best for context?



Rights-based Law Reform

Mental health, human rights and legislation

Guidance and practice



World Health
Organization



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

Content

- Ensuring equality and non-discrimination
- Respecting personhood and legal capacity
- Informed consent and eliminating coercive practices
- Access to quality mental health services
- Implementing mental health services in the community
- Ensuring full and effective participation in public decisions
- Ensuring accountability
- Cross-sectoral reform for holistic service provision

Process

- Steps for development, implementation & evaluation



WHO QualityRights resources & links

Capacity building

- QR training & guidance materials:
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/who-qualityrights-guidance-and-training-tools>
- QR e-training on mental health, recovery & inclusion:
<https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/policy-law-rights/qr-e-training>

Creating rights-based community services

- Guidance & technical packages on community mental health services:
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/guidance-and-technical-packages-on-community-mental-health-services>
- QR service assessment toolkit:
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241548410>
- QR module on transforming services & promoting rights:
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241516815>

Participation

- WHO Guidance on one-to-one peer support
<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/329591/9789241516785-eng.pdf>
- WHO Guidance on peer support groups
<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/329594/9789241516778-eng.pdf>
- WHO Guidance setting-up civil society organizations
<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/329589/9789241516808-eng.pdf>
- WHO Guidance on advocacy campaigns
<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/329587/9789241516792-eng.pdf>

Policy and law reform

- WHO/OHCHR Guidance on mental health, human rights & law
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240080737>
- WHO Guidance on mental health policies & strategic action plans - **coming soon**
- WHO Guidance on mental health policies & strategic actions for government sectors- **coming soon**
- QualityRights country implementation portal:
<https://qualityrights.org/>



THANK YOU!