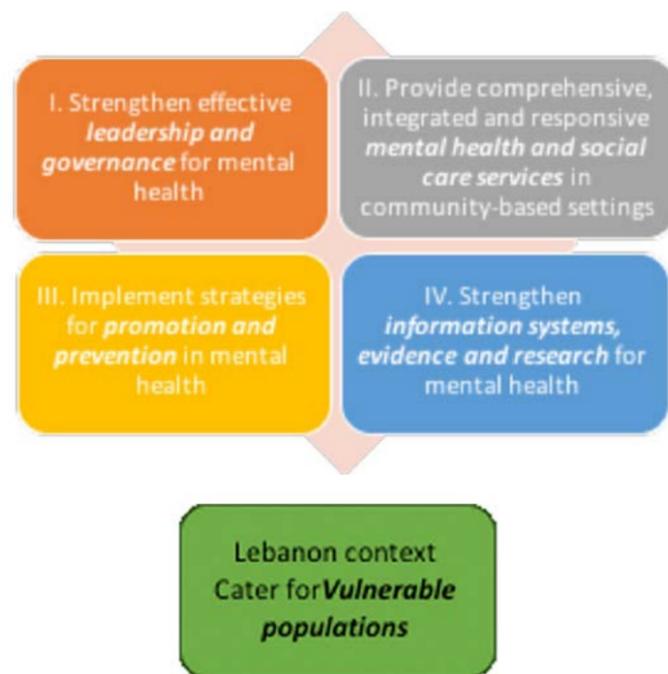


# Role of WHO in Mental Health



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The World Health Organization recognizes greatly mental health and psychosocial well-being as an integral part of health and defines it as a “state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”<sup>1</sup>. In 2015, mental health has also become an integral part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Aspiring to reach the SDGs, WHO supports and assists governments and Member States in strengthening and promoting mental health through developing and implementing mental health policies and plans.

WHO launched in 2013 the “Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan for 2013-2020”<sup>2</sup>, which is a commitment by all WHO’s Member States to take actions towards improving mental health. Based on a life-course approach, this plan recognizes the vital role of mental health in achieving health for all. This comprehensive action plan seeks to achieve equity through universal health coverage, promote mental well-being, prevent mental disorders, provide care, enhance recovery, promote human rights and reduce the mortality, morbidity and disability for persons with mental disorders.

The Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan focuses on 4 key objectives, to:

In Lebanon, WHO worked with the National Mental Health Programme at the Ministry of Public Health in adapting the Global Action Plan into a National Mental Health Strategy (2015-2020)<sup>3</sup>. This strategy was developed following a consultative process, is in line with the Global Action Plan, and has added a fifth strategic domain of action for vulnerable groups.

WHO supports implantation of the Strategy and transforms the objectives of the Strategy into action through the following initiatives.

In terms of **leadership and governance**, WHO has been supporting in setting the strategic direction for mental health, developing and reviewing strategies and action plans as well as evaluating these strategies in addition to advocacy.

In the **service organization** arena, WHO support mainly involves normative guidance, production of guidelines and technical materials, improving quality of care as well as building the capacities of health professionals in various levels of care. Focus is on increasing access to affordable quality services that are people-centred. WHO has trained

over 2,000 healthcare staff who are not specialized in mental health on recognizing and managing priority conditions using the WHO *mental health Gap Action Program intervention guide*<sup>4</sup>. WHO also supports the procurement of psychotropic medications that are in line with the WHO essential drug list. A guide was also developed to rationalize prescription<sup>5</sup>. In addition, emergency mental health care was addressed through training staff at emergency departments of public and private hospitals on managing psychiatric emergencies. In terms of improving quality of care, WHO has trained a national team of assessors and has facilitated the first assessment of the quality and human rights aspects in facilities providing mental health services using the WHO *Quality Rights* approach<sup>6</sup> (figure 1).



Figure 1 - Training on WHO Quality Rights

In the area of **prevention and promotion** in mental health, WHO has been supporting the national educational campaigns that aim at increasing awareness around a mental health issue (figure 2). WHO also supports the development of advocacy and educational materials around mental health (figure 3).

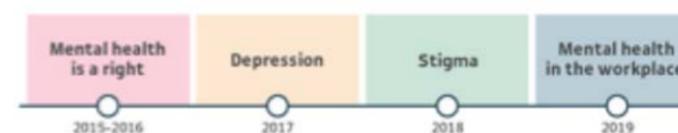


Figure 2 – National awareness campaigns’ themes

In terms of **information systems, evidence, and research**, WHO regularly collects and disseminates data on mental health resources such as policies, plans, financing, care delivery, human resources, medicines, and information systems, which show the achievements in reaching the Global Action Plan’s targets. In Lebanon, WHO also



Figure 3 - Educational brochures developed by WHO and MOPH to promote mental health

supported the development and piloting of a mental health registry system aiming at observing trends of diseases and treatment in mental disorders in the private and public sectors (clinic-based, PHC centre-based, and hospital-based). An online platform has been developed whereby psychiatrists will be able to report on first-visit patients. In addition, a mobile-based intervention has been developed and tested for effectiveness in the Lebanese context.

In addition to the four pillars of work in the WHO Global Action Plan, another pillar was added to the Lebanon strategy around improving access to services to **vulnerable groups**. WHO is supporting the improvement and increase in access to mental health services in prison.

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- 5- MOPH. 2018. *Guide for the Rational Prescription of Medications for Priority Mental and Neurological Conditions* [https://www.moph.gov.lb/userfiles/files/Programs%26Projects/MentalHealthProgram/Psychotropic%20medications%20guide-%20FINAL-%20EN-%2019%20Sept%202018%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.moph.gov.lb/userfiles/files/Programs%26Projects/MentalHealthProgram/Psychotropic%20medications%20guide-%20FINAL-%20EN-%2019%20Sept%202018%20(1).pdf)
- 6- WHO. 2012. *Quality Rights*. [https://www.who.int/mental\\_health/publications/QualityRights\\_toolkit/en/](https://www.who.int/mental_health/publications/QualityRights_toolkit/en/)