



**MENTAL HEALTH IS A UNIVERSAL  
HUMAN RIGHT**

World Mental Health Day **10 October 2023**

# Toolkit



# 75th Anniversary 2023

Dear friends of WFMH,

It gives me great pleasure to celebrate with you the Diamond Jubilee of the WFMH. It has been seventy-five years since its first meeting in London in 1948. This organisation has carried the flag of mental health advocacy on a global level. The letter from King George in 1948 to the Federation highlighted our mission of advocacy and support for mental health in our community, it went beyond the needs of the mentally ill and suggested the Federation would help world citizens live together in peace and a good neighbourliness.



Seventy-five years later, I look back at our achievements and shortcomings. Having inherited from my grandfather the details of that conference, I was able to observe with pride the energy towards a multi-disciplinary approach to mental health care.

The world has evolved over the years adopting the biological model for treatment of mental health problems, but it quickly became clear that without advocacy and anti-stigma efforts, access to care services becomes challenging. The work of the Federation has continued to grow choosing the theme for Mental Health Day since 1993, supporting the needs of immigrants and refugees in the crisis areas and advocating for women in mental health are some of the highlights of our work. We have been able to maintain the voice of people with lived experience of mental disorder in policy and regulation planning. Families and carers have worked actively with the Federation since its inception.

On the academic level, the Federation has organised and participated in over 100 scientific conferences. The current group headed by our president elect is actively working on producing a journal for the Federation, a step we all look forward to. Looking at the coming seventy-five years, the Federation stands on solid grounds of governance and transparency, the work of the secretariat in setting standards for management and procedural activities was essential in maintaining our good relations with the UN and other international agencies.

So congratulations dear friends on this milestone. I send you my best wishes for many more years of success and achievements for WFMH.

Yours sincerely,

**Nasser Loza**

President WFMH

President Egyptian Society for the Rights of People with mental illness

# 2023 World Mental Health Global Awareness Campaign

## World Mental Health Day Theme

### 'MENTAL HEALTH IS A UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHT'

On 10 October 2023 we will be celebrating World Mental Health Day with the theme '**Mental Health is a Universal Human Right**' chosen by a global vote open to the public, including World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) members, stakeholders, and supporters.

This year's World Mental Health Day celebration coincides with the 75th Anniversary of the foundation of the WFMH in 1948. At its foundation a range of recommendations were made, including that specialised agencies of the United Nations (UN) should do everything possible to co-ordinate their activities in the interest of developing adequate mental health programmes within each member nation; and that the World Health Organization (WHO) give adequate attention to mental health principles in their health programmes, drawing on international professional organisations for co-operation.

1948 was an important year for human rights because the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted on 10 December 1948 by the UN General Assembly with Article 1 thereof stating: *'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.'*

Although the UDHR did not specifically mention mental health, and neither was it a treaty, by 1966, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) was adopted, Article 12 whereof stated: *'The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.'*

The United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was adopted in 2007 with the vision *'to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human*



*rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity'* and included people with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments.

Despite all efforts by the UN, WHO, WFMH, governments, institutions and other agencies, mental health discrimination, harmful stereotypes and stigma in the community, family, schools and the workplace still persist. The same prevents healthy relationships, social interactions and inclusive environments needed for the well-being of all members of society and presents barriers to the enjoyment of full well-being for all, especially those with mental health challenges.

Previous reports by the UN Human Rights office highlight that people with mental health conditions and those with psychosocial disabilities experience disproportionately higher rates of poor physical health and reduced life expectancy. Stigma is also a significant determinant of quality care and access to the full range of services required.

Investment and transformation in mental health is needed to help stop the widespread human rights violations that people with mental health conditions continue to experience worldwide.

This year's theme enables us to re-double our efforts to ensure that everybody should receive quality mental health care and that the human rights and well-being of people with mental illness are respected in all parts of the world so that every person with a mental health difficulty has:

1. The right to be protected from known harms to mental health; a universal right which applies to the entire population, but especially the vulnerable including children, minorities and the displaced peoples.
2. The right to access quality and affordable care when a person is struggling with their mental health.
3. The right to freedom and dignity, including the right of choice.

The 2023 World Mental Health Day theme '**Mental Health is a Universal Human Right**' provides us with an opportunity to re-ignite our efforts to make the world a better place.

We invite you to join this year's World Mental Health Day campaign.

**Professor Gabriel Ivbijaro MBE JP**

WFMH Secretary-General

Visiting Professor Population Mental Health NOVA University Lisbon Portugal Honorary Visiting Fellow Bradford University School of Management UK Past President WFMH President & Founder The World Dignity Project

1 June 2023

## REFERENCES

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- Brody EB. *The search for mental health. A history and memoir of WFMH 1948-1997*. Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins; 1998.
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- UN General Assembly, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities : resolution / adopted by the General Assembly*, 24 January 2007, A/RES/61/106 available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/45f973632.html> [accessed 22 May 2023]
- World Health Organization, *World Mental Health Report: Transforming Mental Health For All World Health Organization*, 2022

## Campaign Hashtags and Acronyms

#MHUHR #MHUniversalHR #UHR4MH

## Campaign Links

[WMHD Website](#) | [WFMH Instagram](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [YouTube](#)

For queries, please email us at: [wmhdofficial@gmail.com](mailto:wmhdofficial@gmail.com)

# How to Organize a Demonstration

We have gathered some general information for you to use as you plan your demonstrations for Mental Health and World Mental Health Day. Please note that requirements are different in every country and community – please find out the laws and requirements for your particular area and avoid any legal issues that might disrupt or cancel your demonstration. The different types of demonstrations that we are encouraging are:

**Vigil-** These are gatherings where people stay in one place. They are generally solemn and reflective and intended as a peaceful way of honoring or highlighting a person or group of persons or a subject of great concern.

**March-** A march is a gathering of people who move from one designated point to a pre-decided destination. Marches are good if you have a large crowd or when you want to cover a large area.

**Bicycle Rally-** It is a peaceful demonstration/gathering of cyclists, who travel in an organised manner and on a pre-determined route to spread awareness about a particular subject. Bicycle rallies are great if you want to cover a much larger area. You can tie-up with cycling clubs in your city to gather support and have a bigger turnout.

**Digital Engagement-** This will include organizing virtual marches for maximum engagement and outreach, webinars, web-conferences, activities based on expressive arts open to virtual participation, and online public education campaigns.

## Preparations Required

1. Pick a date (10/10/2023 would be great and most effective!) and secure a location. Check to see if you need a permit or some type of permission to hold your March or Vigil or Bike Rally in public. Please note that it will be critical to know your rights regarding any type of public gathering. Pick a heavily populated route or public gathering point.
2. Decide on your cause and the message you want to send to those watching. Make it simple, peaceful and strong. You can make banners, signs and handouts to spread your message. Please ensure that all such displays focus on the message that you seek to spread, being strong yet peaceful, spelled correctly and visually big enough to catch people's attention.
3. Plan and schedule speakers to address your crowd. You can schedule speakers to start

your event, end your event or both. Keep the speeches short and to the point, remember this is a demonstration not a symposium.

4. Please ensure that your material is socially and culturally relevant and acceptable. You may also highlight inspirational stories of local people's struggles and successes in dealing with their mental illnesses (after taking their due consent) which may inspire more and more people to reach out and seek help.
5. Get the word out! Contact your advocates, friends, partners, etc. The idea is to try and include as many groups as possible to show the strength and solidarity within the community. Creating a unified coalition among different groups (mental health groups and professionals, medical groups, families, patients, doctors, nurses, etc.) is essential to creating a broad-based social movement and getting the most attention.
6. Assign tasks and determine roles for all involved. If working with different groups, ensure that you bring all leaders and frontrunners together to utilize and unify everyone's abilities, networks, and message.
7. Contact the media and write press releases announcing your plans. Please ensure to include the 'who, what, when, where' information and be sure that all facts about your demonstration are available when you interact with the media.
8. Be sure to take pictures, keep notes of the entire event and send all your information to [wmhdoofficial@wfmh.global](mailto:wmhdoofficial@wfmh.global) when you are done, so that we can show the world that we are united and we won't keep silent any longer and make sure that our voices are heard!
9. This could be the single largest advocacy effort for mental illness across the globe! We hope you will join in and do everything you can to show your support. Be it 5 people or 500 people, we can all make a difference if we initiate action and just get the ball rolling.

**Mrinal Kanwar**

Legal Adviser

# World Mental Health Day 2023

## Sample Proclamation

WHEREAS, close to 1 billion people around the world are living with a mental disorder;

WHEREAS, relatively few people around the world have access to quality mental health care;

WHEREAS, the global community is reeling under the effects of wars, displacement, and the climate emergency, all of which have adversely impacted the well-being of the world citizens;

WHEREAS, it is imperative to understand that embracing human rights and fundamental freedoms must be a precondition of care, and a first step to address social justice and reduce stigma and discrimination toward people with mental health issues;

WHEREAS, many mental health conditions have traditionally received too little attention and concern by the general public, the general healthcare system, and elected and appointed public policy makers, resulting in inadequate priority being given to these disorders;

WHEREAS, there is increasing evidence that the prevention of mental illness is possible by using both general and targeted evidence-based interventions which can improve outcomes for individuals across the spectrum of mental disorders and life course;

WHEREAS, there is a need to establish global mental health and well-being targets that can bring together evidence that captures the social determinants of health, including promoting exercise, widening access to good nutrition and food, all of which will have a positive impact on mental health and well-being;

AND WHEREAS, the World Federation for Mental Health has designated the theme for World Mental Health Day 2023 as 'Mental Health is a Universal Human Right' and urges the international community to understand the imminent need for greater collaboration between governments, citizens and planners so that effective processes can be established to deliver mental health and well-being services to the entire global population;

THEREFORE, I, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ (TITLE) \_\_\_\_\_ OF THE \_\_\_\_\_ (TOWN/COUNTRY AGENCY, ORGANIZATION, MINISTRY) DO HEREBY PROCLAIM 10 OCTOBER 2023 AS WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY IN \_\_\_\_\_ TOWN/CITY/COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_

urge all governmental and nongovernmental mental health organizations and agencies to work in concert with elected and appointed public officials to apply universal preventive measures that reduce the risk of mental illness, including promotion of social inclusion poli-



cies, support and direct investment for vulnerable populations and investment in communities and youth in particular; to improve well-being interventions across life course from pregnancy, birth, early childhood, early teens, adulthood to older adulthood; to improve the social determinants of health; and to address mental health stigma and discrimination that very often serve as barriers for people seeking services and support available to them.

I further urge all citizens to join and support the local, state/provincial, and national non-governmental organizations that are working to make mental health a priority in communities throughout our nation.

Together, we will all make a difference and promote mentally healthy communities and citizens!

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Ministry/Office/Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(SEAL)

# Sample Media Release for Signing

## The World Mental Health Day Proclamation

October 10, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

\_\_\_\_\_ MAYOR (OR OTHER OFFICIAL) OF \_\_\_\_\_ (town, city, or country)  
\_\_\_\_\_ PROCLAIMS OCTOBER 10 WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY IN \_\_\_\_\_  
(locale).

The (official's title/position/office), the Honorable (name), designated October 10 as World Mental Health Day 2023 in (locale) through the signing of a Proclamation issued by (legislative body, office, department).

The Proclamation signing ceremony was organized by \_\_\_\_\_ (organizing organization or agency) \_\_\_\_\_, and was attended by (members of the organization, public officials, community leaders, and private citizens, etc.).

The Proclamation urged all governmental and nongovernmental mental health organizations and agencies to work in concert with elected and appointed public officials to apply universal preventive measures that reduce the risk of mental illness, including promotion of social inclusion policies, support and direct investment for vulnerable populations and investment in communities and youth in particular; to improve well-being interventions across life course from pregnancy, birth, early childhood, early teens, adulthood to older adulthood; to improve the social determinants of health; and to address mental health stigma and discrimination that very often serve as barriers for people seeking services and support available to them.

The theme for World Mental Health Day 2023 as 'Mental Health is a Universal Human Right' aims at encouraging and facilitating greater collaboration between governments, citizens and planners so that effective processes can be established to deliver mental health and well-being services to the entire global community, which is currently reeling not just under the effects of wars, displacement, and climate emergency.

The World Federation for Mental Health (WFMH) established World Mental Health Day in 1992; it is the only annual global awareness campaign to focus attention on specific aspects of mental health and mental disorders and is now commemorated on all continents of the world and in nearly all countries on October 10 through local, regional and national World Mental

Health Day commemorative events and programs.

## Put a brick in the wall

Close to one billion of the world population are living with mental illness and the majority have no access to care. In many low-, and medium-income countries most of the help is provided by family members or NGO's (non-governmental organisations). Our health systems are not well equipped to deal with the mental health crisis and emerging illnesses.

To support this year's World Mental Health Day goal of encouraging and facilitating greater collaboration between governments, citizens and planners so that effective processes can be established to deliver mental health and well-being services to the entire global community, the World Federation for Mental Health would like to provide direct support to some small NGO's in low income countries who have difficulty in obtaining the support required to continue the good work that they are doing.

We are calling on our supporters and members to help us to do this and have set up a virtual wall to which you can make a donation.

Click on one of the bricks below to make your donation:

<b>less than \$10</b>	<b>\$35</b>	<b>\$50</b>
<b>\$100</b>	<b>\$500</b>	<b>\$1.000</b>
<b>\$5.000</b>	<b>\$10.000</b>	<b>more than \$10.000</b>

All donors will be named on the 2023 World Mental Health Day Virtual Wall.

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