



# **Programme on the Protection of Mental Health in the Republic of Serbia**

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## PROGRAM/STRATEGIC DOCUMENT – THE SCOPE:

Program on the Protection of Mental Health in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2019-2026 covers harmonized system of measures and instruments of public policies carried out by the Republic of Serbia in order to protect mental health of population by preventing the occurrence of mental disorders, analysing and diagnosing the mental state of persons concerned, treat and rehabilitate persons with mental disorders, as well as develop indicators of mental disorders, while respecting human rights and strengthening the dignity of persons with mental disorders throughout the application of the least restrictive forms of treatment.

Initial Programme – The Mental Health Care Development Strategy of 2007



According to the report of the World Health Organization for 2017, (BEFORE COVID-19) in the Republic of Serbia, 419,302 people lived with depression, which makes up 5% of the population, while there were 323,690 people or 3.8% of the population with an anxiety disorder.

#### **NATIONAL LEGISLATION/LEGAL GROUND:**

- Law on the Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders 2013,
- Law on Patient's Rights, 2013/2019
- Law on Prevention of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities, 2006/2016



4.2.3.4. of the Programme is specifically addressed to **OLDER PERSONS** and their mental health state and care

### **OLDER PERSONS I:**

The Programme has notified that according to WHO data and research in the Republic of Serbia, a large number of older persons have mental disorders, the most common of which is dementia being not only a medical problem, but also a significant social problem. Therefore:

1) protection of the mental health of the older population should take place in the community, based on the identified needs of the users and their environment, by experts and society (protection includes preventive interventions as an alternative to, or supplement to, traditional clinical services);



## OLDER PERSONS II:

- 2) organize a network of institutions where elderly people with mental disorders are cared for and medically treated;
- 3) ensure continuous education of experts and society as a whole regarding mental disorders of the older;
- 4) promote autonomy, as well as opportunities for independent living of older persons and enable their participation in all important segments of society;
- 5) stop discrimination based on age and implement anti-stigma campaigns for this population (older persons with mental disorders are doubly stigmatized – due to age and mental/health condition).



## IMPROVEMENTS I:

(regarding treatment of older persons and submitted by the Institute for Mental Health):

- 1) Dementia has been not explained and covered by the Programme sufficiently leaving to be examined and treated individually by health centres (public and private) – lack of coordination,
- 2) Training at the level of primary and high schools in order to understanding the needs of the older people and motivating students to become volunteers is needed,
- 3) Psychological support for people before retirement and presentation of new opportunities available to them in local communities has to be developed,
- 4) Opening new telephone lines for help and counselling of older persons related to their daily activities is necessary,



## IMPROVEMENTS II:

(regarding treatment of older persons and submitted by the Institute for Mental Health):

- 5) Formation of bases of caregivers who will be involved in non-institutional protection is urgent,
- 6) Print brochures, reminders and guidelines for active, healthy and happy aging,
- 7) Psychosocial support for caregivers,
- 8) Psychosocial support for volunteers.



**Thank you!**

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