

Mental Health as a Public Health Challenge: we need resilient, supportive communities to improve personal mental resilience

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*Challenge* – The burden of physical illness successfully decreased over the past decennium. Mental Health problems, however, cast an increasing impact on citizens and society. Improved professional practice and the proliferation of better assessment and targeted evidence-based technologies has raised standards for psychiatric care. However, the global burden remains.

*Ambition* – In the Dutch 'Crossing the bridge'-report clients, families and mental health professionals pledged to reduce suffering of people with severe mental illness by 1/3rd in ten years. It is impossible to realize this aim with a status-quo, new treatment technologies and resources or better dissemination. It requires a concerted action beyond the professional mental health field.

*Solution* – Recovery is an active, personal process. Mental health is a result of the interaction of personal vulnerability and environmental challenges. It cannot be alleviated by treatment technology alone. It also relates to participation roles and identity, lifestyle and context. Successful recovery trajectories do not emerge in the doctor's office. Loneliness, lack of purpose, stigma, or bullying are all contextualised challenges. We need resilient, supportive communities to improve the personal mental flexibility of those who suffer. It exceeds the scope of mental health professionals and becomes a responsibility of society as a whole: peers, families, neighbours, teachers and employers. Care organizations should supplement these resources and integrate radically in neighbourhood where collaboration becomes a natural process that help people to succeed in the daily adaptation functioning and reconnect with meaning.

*Beyond* – Because face-to-face relations (families and neighbourhoods) can be a source of stress, the community activation should extend to virtual networks that allow more choice options and safer heaven for experimentation. This is the agenda of the Dutch New Mental Health Movement.

Public Health – Resilience – Recovery – Neighbourhood care