



Enosh – The Israeli Mental Health Association Substantive Input on the Right to Work and Access to the Labor Market

Enosh is honored to contribute to the subject and highlight the intersection between elderly and mental health in light of the right to work. We also want to emphasize the importance of article 27 to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the right to work and Employment and its implementations regarding the discussion on the right to work.

Elderly and mental health

1 in 4 people around the world copes with a mental health event during their lives. The elderly is among the most vulnerable groups and are more likely to need mental health support due to physical and emotional situations. They are also one of the most impoverished populations in Israel. Moreover, we know that people with severe mental illness are aging earlier than the general population (at the age of 50), and their lifespan is shorter (average of 20 years from the general population). Senior citizens are typically suffering from several concurrent physical conditions that restrict their independent function in all life spheres. The problem is severer among the elderly who, in addition to physical problems, face daily challenges that stem from their mental health condition. There is an increase in the number of suicides among the elderly. Creating employment opportunities and necessary funding is essential to fulfilling their rights.

The challenges

There is a lack of comprehensive legislation that addresses employment for the elderly and specifically lack of supportive employment services for the elderly with psychosocial disabilities. Social and occupational frameworks, which are two core components for inclusion and independent, are not compatible with this population's changing needs.

- There is a vaguely around the definition of the elderly when it comes to the mental health community-based services that are part of the community rehabilitation services for people with mental illness law from the year 2000. Hence, community-based mental health services are not providing employment support to this population.
- Since this specific group is aging earlier, there is a need to adjust services and benefits eligibility to the needs and functioning assessment and not to connect between services and benefits with the biological age.



- The digital and technological advancements are a massive barrier for employment opportunities of the elderly in general and people with psychosocial disabilities.
- Lack of comprehensive services and policies that address the elderly with psychosocial disabilities right to work as part of the recovery process in mental health.
- Lack of collaborative inter-governmental cooperation among the ministries of Health, Social Services, Gender equality and elderly, and the ministry of Economy. In these policy issues we support the government collaborative policy processes with NGO's, civil society organizations and elderly with disabilities, family members and care giver.
- There is a need for prevention programs that aim to educate people on elderly life and how to access services and prepare for the time. There is a need to promote and advocate against the stigma associated with mental health and the elderly (sanism and ageism).
- There is a need for supportive housing services in the community as it is an essential part of tackling poverty and encourage independence. Many housing services in mental health are not accommodating the group of elderly; instead, they are likely to be institutionalized.
- We call for the development of services that promote active and healthy aging and prevent harmful isolation and psychiatric deterioration

Addressing the intersection - Good Practice example

The recovery process is one of the most effective methods to improve the lives of people with psychosocial disabilities. However, while there are some suitable rehabilitative occupational and social frameworks for people with psychosocial disabilities, Enosh recognized a substantial need for **creating designated frameworks for elderly individuals** who cope with psychiatric disabilities, which aims to address financial and social needs.

In recent years Enosh has developed programs aimed to support the elderly with psychosocial disabilities that show the impact of personal approach to needs. Enosh Social and Occupational Rehabilitation Center for Elderly with psychosocial Disabilities provides a daily framework of activities that brings structure into everyday life alleviates loneliness, and enhances recovery and social integration through meaningful rehabilitative activities and community involvement. The Center serves members in the age of 60+ that are low functioning capabilities due to their age and prolonged illnesses. We focus on vocational and social activities that enhance independent functions and overall wellbeing, including regular physical activity, workshop on various subjects

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and more. The center prevents harmful isolation, and psychiatric deterioration caused by old age and psychiatric illness encourages social acceptance and involvement and reduces self-inflicted stigma. Through our work with the elderly, we explore new avenues for innovation in elderly mental healthcare and lay the foundations for best practice standards. We are working in and with the community to encourage inclusion and connections. This model is replicable to other countries cultures and settings.

[Enosh – The Israeli Mental Health Association](#) Is a nonprofit organization based in Israel that provides support and promotes the rights of people with psychosocial disabilities and their family members and aims to eliminate the stigma associated with mental health. Enosh is part of a coalition of different stakeholders led by **LISHMA consumer's organization**. Our coalition discusses the intersection of mental health and elderly in order to create a policy recommendation document for the Israeli government.