

UPDATE

Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health Focusing On a Rights-Based Approach to Mental Health

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During the 44th Session of the Human Rights Council, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health presented a report on a rights-based approach to mental health. The report clarifies the elements required to ensure a rights-based approach to advancing the right to mental health globally.

While it welcomes global efforts to advance different elements of mental health, including promotion, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and recovery, the report expresses concern about gaps in addressing human rights violations in the context of mental health. According to the Special Rapporteur, this development ‘reinforces a vicious cycle of discrimination, disempowerment, coercion, social exclusion and injustice’.

To address these challenges, the Special Rapporteur recommends a holistic approach to the understanding of mental health, including distress treatment and support, rather than only a biomedical approach. The report advocates for global, regional and national approaches, grounded in human rights, that reflect the lived experiences of those left ‘furthest behind by harmful socio-political systems, institutions and practices’.

The report is available at <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/44/48>.