Umbrella organisation of community-based psychiatry, registered association

Facts:
Over 400,000 persons or approximately 0.5 % of Germany’s population have been admitted to mental institutions and departments as patients annually. About 10% predominantly visit general practitioners for ambulant treatment because of a mental disorder. The average unfitness to work of ca. 1% of the compulsory health insurance’s insured persons amounts to 36 days (without retired persons).
For nearly 0.5 per cent of the population a long-term treatment, rehabilitation, accompaniment and support is necessary due to a severe, chronically continuing psychic disease or disability. 3% of the adults are addicted to alcohol, moreover another five per cent abuse alcoholic drinks. 3 % of the population are addicted to pharmaceuticals and almost 0.6 per cent are addicted to illegal drugs. The contingent of patients diagnosed as depressive is increasing from year to year.

Community-based psychiatry is ambulant psychiatry
Meanwhile ambulant help services have well been developed and differentiated. Numerous hospital treatments can be prevented or shortened by ambulant treatments.
Ambulant psychiatric care, sociotherapy, psychotherapy, ambulant psychiatric rehabilitation, crisis help, integrated supply, medical supply centres, occupational therapy and further benefits beyond integration help present a meanwhile broad spectrum of ambulant therapeutical treatments as alternatives to hospital admittance by now. In networked-ambulant-treatment and – rehabilitation offers community-based psychiatry views a new professional focal
point for the advancement of a psychiatry which takes seriously ambulant before in-patient treatment in all sectors of psychiatry.

Since 2007 the SGB-V Federal Network of the umbrella organization has been informing, networking, coordinating and consulting community-based psychiatric institutions which get involved with the implementation of the Integration Supply (IS) as well as of the ambulant complex benefits.

**Active against going chronic**

Many patients can be checked out of mental institutions after a few weeks, some after a few days – however, this should not hide the fact that with one part the psychic illness takes a long-term development. To suffer from a chronic continuing psychic illness all-too frequently means to lose one’s social benefits, being stigmatized or sometimes being placed in homes for years.

Today it is common knowledge that persons who come down with chronic continuing psychic illness are able to live integrated in the community. And one knows as well that even with a long-term course of disease clear recoveries to the point of cure can occur. Besides therapeutic help psychic ill persons also need psychosocial assistance in coping with everyday life for this way. Because: loneliness, unemployment as well as prejudices by the population, and going with it, psychic and material misery stress the lives of (ex-) psychiatric inpatients appallingly despite all efforts for reform.

**Psychiatry-experienced persons**

In 1991 the first conference for ex-psychiatry patients was accomplished by “the working-team of persons concerned” within the umbrella organization of community-based psychiatry. Here the idea also arose to launch a separate federal Association of Psychiatry-experienced Persons and with that to create a forum for the representation of own interests. It was in October 1992, that on a conference with over 200 Ex-psychiatry-patients the establishment of the “Federal Association of Psychiatry Experienced persons” took place (BPE, www.bpe-online.de ). This federation should not be underestimated in its importance: In its round about 170 year-old history of psychiatry therewith a nationwide association has been founded for the first time in which (ex-) psychic ill persons can stand up for their concerns themselves. To the most important tasks of this association belong besides the advancement of self-help above all also the advocacy for ensuring the concerned persons’ basic rights as well as the inclusion of the psychic ill persons in their treatment, rehabilitation and accompaniment as equal partners.

**Relatives also suffer**

The perception that the whole family is affected by the psychic illness of one family member in manifold ways was the reason that the (Bundesverband der Angehörigen psychisch Kranker e.V./ Familienselfhilfe) Federal Association of Relatives of Psychic Ill Persons, registered ass., formed in 1985. It had been inspired by the umbrella organization of community-based psychiatry and works closely together with it.

**Citizens help citizens**

Voluntary citizens who developed their field of work from layman’s service to citizens’ help are of special significance within these activities. Engagement in volunteering ranges from visiting-services and organization of meeting-points in the community, over participation in the bodies of carrier organization to representation of interests in public. In the meantime ex-patients are
Consultation and Information
Having been brought forward actively by the Federal Ministry of Health, from its office in Bonn the umbrella organization supports the work of the initiatives and associations by consultations, by advanced training and information, by conferences, seminars and booklets.
In cooperation with its member organizations and cooperating federations, the umbrella organization publishes the quarterly appearing information service “Psychosoziale Umschau” (Psychosocial Survey), which informs psychiatry-experienced persons, relatives, citizen helpers, professionals as well as politicians and employees in the public administration about mutual concerns and developments of community-based psychiatry.

Spheres of work and projects of the DACHVERBAND 2009:

- Promoting inclusion - prevention of exclusion.
- Assistance for children of parents with psychic ill helath.
- Development of informing literature about mental health and psychiatric problems for children and juveniles.
- Networking of community based psychiatry and youth welfare service.
- Networking with and conferences on the topic Integrated Care.
- Focal Point for Mental Health Europe.