



International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses

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Social Justice & Social Responsibility

An official statement from The International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses

The International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses (ISPN) is committed to Social Justice and Social Responsibility. The following statement defines our aspirations to move forward with our beliefs. Our mission is to support advanced-practice psychiatric-mental health nurses in promoting mental health care, health literacy, and policy relevant to mental, behavioral and substance use worldwide. ISPN is also a collaborative partner with the Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice, joining many professional voices on mental and behavioral and substance use health issues. Social justice means that the rights of all people are cared for and defended in a fair and just manner. ISPN, an organization committed to social justice and social responsibility, embraces diversity and purposefully seeks inclusivity and equitable opportunities to promote individual and societal health, behavioral health, and well-being.

Changing the conversation will be difficult, especially when assisting those with mental, behavioral and substance use disorders to actively engage and propel their voices to the forefront of policies and programs.

Historically, the term social justice has evolved in meaning since the 1840s introduction by a Jesuit priest, Luigi Taparelli D'Azeglio, who revived and contemporized the *general justice* term advocated by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. Monumental stands on social justice have followed social upheaval. Exemplars include the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* (adopted by the United Nations in 1948) and, more specific to health, the *World Health Organization (WHO) Constitution* (1946) which declared health and access to healthcare a fundamental human right. Broadening attention to specific groups, the WHO treatise on mental, gender and sexual health leads to a focus on determinants of health, including both social (WHO, 2013) and structural (PAHO, 2017). While numerous gaps in adherence exist, the injustices confronting those with mental, behavioral and substance use problems demand special attention (Gil-Rivas, Handrup, Tanner, & Walker, 2019). Notable sources of disparities in social justice include associated stigma and powerlessness due to lack of consumer voice and provider-client power differentials (Newbigging & Ridley, 2018) that contribute to blatant violations of basic human rights and establish barriers to access to care (McKellar and Rodrigues, 2017).

ISPN is committed to promoting social justice globally through addressing the social determinants of health and equity within health, mental health, behavioral, and substance use problems by the following:

- 1) Advocating for human rights for all through the design of policies, engagement in strategic actions, and commitment to overall behavioral health and well-being in line with local, national, and international efforts.
2. Proactively identifying and providing appropriate support for groups and individuals at risk for mental illness and substance use who have poor access to services.
3. Practicing equity and parity justice designed to repair harm done to the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.
4. Encouraging clinical scholarship and sustainable initiatives to inform the transformation of healthcare organizations and behavioral health payment systems to reduce barriers to health service utilization.

5. Supporting trauma-informed systems of care, interventions, and preventative measures to reduce the root causes of violence.
6. Integrating self-reflective approaches that assist individuals, to explore their personal biases and work to transcend them.
7. Supporting culturally competent educators in schools of nursing who are literate in social justice equity and recognize their responsibility to develop curricula inclusive of the rights of all persons.
8. Engaging in consumer-driven research and practice with stakeholders, including those with mental health challenges and psychosocial disabilities.
9. Promoting participatory parity in community-generated research and practice to better meet mental health needs while expanding knowledge of and quality healthcare for diverse populations.

The International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses is pledged to sharing the message of social justice and social responsibility with those unaware, uninformed or powerless about the current state of neglect and human rights violations associated with mental health parity. ISPN recognizes the need to increase collaborative partnerships, to join professional and consumer voices in addressing mental, behavioral and substance use issues impacting society. ISPN commits to the belief that everyone deserves equal economic, political, social, human rights and opportunities. With this commitment in mind, ISPN supports the work of its members who promote social justice and equity and treats all within its organization with social fairness and equity.

We are fully aware that engaging in this conversation will be challenging. Helping those with mental, behavioral and substance use disorders bring their voices and needs to the forefront of policies and program planning. This critically important social justice work is the imperative of the new decade.

Adopted by ISPN Board of Directors

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