 

# Written Submission

**to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

# on the Draft Guidelines on Deinstitutionalization, including in emergencies

Submitted by:

# a woman diagnosed with a psychosocial disability

With the support of

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I am a woman diagnosed with a psychosocial disability. I have lived in community all my life but was hospitalized in psychiatric hospital in the past.

The importance of independent living

The essence of independent living is that a person lives freely, is integrated into social life, satisfies his/her needs, necessitates expectations as he or she sees priority. A person decides on their own life and also participates in society. They can be involved in different associations and mental health services, where they can offer support also for other users and suggests what should be changed in community services. It is important that they have enough support if they think they need it. In the personal plan, it has to be determined where and what and in what way a person would like to be offered support. They can be included as a peer support worker in the support network of others.

Peer workers are key

A peer support worker is important because we have experience, because we have survived a psychiatric crisis, know what hospitalization feels like and it is easier to empathize with another who is currently going through difficult moments. Research proves that peer support is welcome, that people have a better self-image, that they receive the information they need, that a trusting relationship is built between users, that it inspires hope that they can more easily get an idea of how to handle their situation. Peer work develops an equal relationship, mutual exchange of help, distress is resolved according to the context of the here and now and focuses on the development of knowledge, skills that will benefit the user to overcome the crisis. Peers often still do not have the same value as professionals, they are cheap labour, they work fewer hours, but studies have shown that they are useful help.

Important to provide peer support:

* Paid peer support work.
* Establishing contacts and cooperation with related peer groups of different NGOs in the field of mental health at the level of local communities - openness and inclusion, development and establishment of independent or partnership programs
* Review and strengthening of personnel, spatial and implementation organisational aspects for peer support, exchange of experiences and selection of forms of implementation according to the structure and topic
* Planning, organisation and implementation of common forms of training at the level of local communities
* Cooperation with other stakeholders of community services (state or local community), horizontally and vertically, and coordination
* Implementation of various forms of training, empowerment, literacy in the field of the National Assembly, ... with our own staff (peer workers) who are previously trained, and with external collaborators or experts; regulation of sources of financing of eligible costs
* Training of leaders and members of groups/teams for peer support work and development of programs
* Training of leaders and members of self-help/help groups/teams - program development
* Training of leaders and members of self-advocacy and advocacy groups/teams - program development

**NOTE: The views presented in this submission are of the person interviewed and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Validity that made it possible for the person concerned to participate in the consultation process.**