What is the Shedding Light Project?

"Shedding Light" is a project run by Mental Health Europe, which looks at transparency issues between the mental health sector and the pharmaceutical industry. The main objective of Shedding Light is to raise awareness about the importance of transparency in the field of mental health and to encourage the adoption of sunshine and transparency laws across Europe.

Why a project on transparency?

Mental Health Europe is concerned about the lack of transparency around financial relationships in the mental health sector *eg. the ways marketing budgets are used to pay professionals to promote particular products and to influence the publication and interpretation of research results.* This has led to a lack of fully informed choice for doctors and patients, over-medicalisation of mental health and a worrying reliance on drugs as the main form of treatment for mental ill health. Transparent relations between the pharmaceutical and medical technologies (MedTech) industries and the mental health care sector are essential to ensuring the effectiveness, independence and quality of health (including mental health) care in Europe. Independent health professionals, informed and empowered patients as well as transparent and collaborative relations between the pharmaceutical industry and the mental health sector are key elements to ensure adequate and appropriate healthcare, which places patients at the centre of the process.

What are the main objectives of the project?

The Shedding Light project aims at providing reliable information about the role of transparency in collaborative decision-making about treatment and hopes to empower people who seek support for their mental ill-health in their relationship with health professionals. Shedding Light will provide a comprehensive overview of the situation in Europe in relation to transparency, sunshine and anti-corruption laws. MHE will investigate means for promoting transparency such as non-binding codes, disclosure obligations and self-regulatory practices. The final report of the project will gather and examine promising practices from Member States to understand better what works and what doesn't when it comes to implementing transparency in practice and will include policy recommendations.

What are the steps of the Shedding Light project?

MHE will develop the project in close collaboration and partnership with other European and international organisations *(users of mental health services/patients, organisations active in the field of public health, pharma and medtech industries, health professionals, medical students etc)*. Representatives from relevant sectors will be invited to join the stakeholder working group and provide their perspective and experience in the field of transparency. Two National workshops will be organised involving the main actors in the field at National level. The first workshop will take place in France. Meetings and discussions will be followed by continuous awareness raising activities promoting the importance of transparency in the mental health field. The project will be concluded with a final report providing an overview of the state-of-play in Europe and recommendations on how to implement greater transparency, as well as high level European Parliament events gathering policy-makers, public authorities, and all relevant stakeholders.

About Mental Health Europe

Mental Health Europe is a European non-governmental network organisation committed to the promotion of positive mental health, the prevention of mental distress, the improvement of care, advocacy for social inclusion and the protection of the rights of (ex)users of mental health services, persons with psychosocial disabilities, their families and carers. More information at: www.mhe-sme.org

Contact:

Marcin Rodzinka (Project Coordinator), Mental Health Europe: marcin.rodzinka@mhe-sme.org