



Bridging the Gap

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Challenges faced by families

- Diagnosis of Mental illness
 - a major life crisis
 - impact on the family structure
- Feelings of disempowerment, misunderstood, isolated, stigmatised
 - psychological turmoil
- Current trend community
 - families are providing a major portion of the care
 - one of the most significant sources of support

Professionals assign responsibilities to families



But the following question
needs to be asked

*Has the professional properly
evaluated –*

*What happens to these families in
this process*

*How best to help them cope with
their particular situation?*



Introducing EUFAMI

European Federation of Associations of Families of People with Mental Illness
Europese Federatie van Verenigingen van Familieleden van de Psychisch Ziekten
Fédération européenne des Associations de Familles de Malades Psychiques
Europäische Föderation von Organisationen der Angehörigen psychisch Kranker

- Founded in 1992
- Represents millions of families in Europe
- 48 member organisations in 28 countries
- Based in Leuven, Belgium





Aims of EUFAMI

- Promotion of best practice
- Help reduce discrepancies - Eastern and Western Europe
- Identify bad practices
- Campaigns for positive change
- Seek new research into the causes and treatment of mental illness
- Campaigns against stigma
- Advocates and promotes
 - partnership and collaboration with health professionals



Partnership and Collaboration – How?

- Identify barriers and tackle them
- Prospect programme
 - Another main aim of the programme - sensitise social and health professionals
 - New approaches
 - Challenges professional concepts
 - Improves communication
- Common module - **users, family and professionals** come together to discuss



Families can help professionals

- Involvement of families - enhance the quality of life
 - Family care - reduces the risk of relapse
 - Help establish routine and encourage adherence
 - Help with compliance to medication
 - Act as patient advocate
 - Can provide useful information to the professionals
 - Knowledge which they are willing to share
 - Fill in the gaps in service delivery
 - Provide services e.g. financial support, budgeting skills, social activities
 - Function as case managers
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Families have needs

- Be involved in discharge plans
 - Want to work with staff
 - Look for support - unity can help to achieve policy changes
 - Break down barriers
 - Include family perspectives in their studies
 - Burden of care from the family perspective
 - To be informed about the illness and side effects of medication
 - Need information
 - Use of common (every day) language
 - Right to live beyond their caring role
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The gap between families and professionals

- Services - top down attitude between professionals and families
 - Contrary to patient and carers empowerment
 - Negative effect on optimal treatment outcomes
 - Services should not be exclusive to professional's thinking
 - Nurses have advantage
 - Do what needs to be done in order to meet peoples' needs
 - Not constrained by boundaries
 - Time factor – can develop very close relationship with relatives
 - Psychiatric Nurses - potential to help empower families
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Allies – not Adversaries

- Families and Nurses together
 - can bridge this gap
 - all parties will benefit
 - can be of an example to other professionals
- Bridging this gap - knowledge of the families required
- Build and maintain relationships that make families



Thank you for listening