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FIGHTING STIGMA OF PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS IN CZECH REPUBLIC

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In the Czech Republic people with mental illness are still stigmatized and exposed to various forms of discrimination not only from the community but also from the professional society. The most stigmatized patients are those suffering from schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, and highly affected are also patients with personality disorders, eating disorders, anxiety and OCD. There can also be a stigma in the psychiatric therapy; psychiatric medication can be labeled as toxins that alter the psyche, psychotherapy as a brainwashing. Stigma of mental disorder is connected with a lack of knowledge about psychiatric disorder, fear, prejudice and discrimination of the patients. Czech mass media significantly contribute to the stigmatization of patients with mental disorder. There are already programs with destigmatization message in the Czech Republic. These programs are in charge of organizations focused on patients with mental disorders, as well as individual professionals or even nonspecialists. The Czech psychiatric association declared the National Psychiatric Program. This program aims to improve the quality of psychiatric care with emphasis on the humane condition of the care and destigmatization. There are also several articles and TV relations describing the psychiatric patients non-stigmatization way published in local newspapers and magazines every year wrote by leading experts in psychiatry. Directly to the patients and their families there were published about 40 books and about 30 booklets with most often psychiatric diagnoses. Many patients found the information and stories helpful and were more comfortable seeking the treatment.

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