

Introduction:

In 2012, the new Mental Health Act, (Cap 525 of the Laws of Malta) was launched and came into force. The new law replaced the old Mental Health Law, Cap 262 which has been in force since 1981.

The new Act is far more extensive and far-reaching. It introduces the concepts of rights of users and their carers and the establishment of a Commissioner to safeguard those rights. The new law includes high elements of focus on patients and their needs. Moreover, it highlights the importance of changes in knowledge, perceptions and attitudes towards mental illness and mental health.

Learning Objectives:

During this session, participants will gain insight of how the Mental Health Act:

- Aims to see people with mental health problems as full and active members of the society;
- Brought about new models of care practices, such as the active involvement in their own treatment plans and a more holistic multidisciplinary approach in care;
- Introduced specific sections on mental capacity, minors (people under 18 years of age) and the administration of special treatments;
- Introduced the concepts of community treatment and social inclusion;
- Defined the term ‘informed consent’ whereby patients or their carers actively participate in the treatment after being given all the necessary information in an understandable language and manner;
- Established the role and responsibilities of the Commissioner for Mental Health.