

19 September 2023, Damascus, Syria – Last week, the Ministry of Health and WHO concluded a two-day workshop on the draft national mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) strategy for Syria. The workshop discussed the vision, goals and actions of the MHPSS strategy under development, which will guide the phased scale-up of MHPSS services across sectors from 2023 to 2027.

Dr Iman Shankiti, Acting WHO Representative in Syria, remarked, “This workshop is a milestone in prioritizing mental health in Syria’s recovery. It reflects our joint commitment with the Ministry of Health, other ministries and partners to create a comprehensive MHPSS strategy. The focus is on both service delivery and community empowerment across sectors. Together, we are paving the way for a more resilient Syria.”

Participants agreed on the need for a comprehensive and effective MHPSS strategy for Syria. They also agreed on the importance of working together to ensure that the strategy is implemented effectively. The workshop explored the main elements of the MHPSS strategy in development.

The draft MHPSS strategy calls for:

integration of MHPSS considerations across all national agencies’ preparedness, response and recovery policies, plans and frameworks;

advocacy for the provision of adequate and sustainable financing for MHPSS;

strengthening of the capacity of the health and social care systems to deliver MHPSS to people in need across the continuum of care;

participation of communities and people with lived experiences in all aspects of MHPSS planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation across the emergency cycle; and

advocacy to strengthen action on mental health promotion and prevention of mental, neurological, and substance use disorders.

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