

Seeking Persons with passion for mental health to serve on the Board of Directors

Registered as an NGO in Kenya in 2007, Users and Survivors of Psychiatry in Kenya (USPKenya) is a membership organization whose major objective is to promote mental health for all as well as to advocate for the rights of persons with mental health difficulties in Kenya.

Membership to the organization is open to persons who have experienced mental health problems (PWMIs). Caregivers of such persons are also welcome to become members of USPKenya, because we recognize the important role they play in supporting persons with mental illness. People who have experienced various mental disorders including clinical depression, ADHD, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and anxiety disorders, among many others, are also welcome to join USPKenya as members.

What does USPKenya do for PWMIs?

Mental illness is still widely misunderstood and stigmatized in Kenya, with many people believing that Persons With Mental Illness (PWMIs) are only the dirty ones collecting rubbish on the street while studies have shown that one in four people attending a health facility in Kenya suffer from at least one mental disorder that co-exists with the physical illness. In many cases, these disorders are neither diagnosed nor treated despite the sufferers seeking medical attention repeatedly for various symptoms. Due to the widespread stigma, people who portray symptoms of mental illness do not seek treatment but live in denial, until their conditions reach critical stages. The outcome of mental disorders is good when treatment is started early, so many of these conditions progress to critical stages and have poorer outcomes due to the delay in seeking treatment. The result is destroyed lives in form of inability to perform day to day duties to the required standards; harmful behavior such as aggressiveness, lack of control of emotions such as risky sexual behavior, substance abuse, hopelessness and uncontrolled anger with resulting undesirable behavior such as suicide or homicide. Many lives are destroyed or lost due to undiagnosed and untreated mental illnesses with sufferers being blamed and accused of being badly behaved, yet this can be avoided.

The role of USPKenya is to provide right, clear and concise information about mental health, to curb the stigma and encourage more people to put in place preventive measures for mental illnesses while also encouraging more people to seek treatment for untreated and undiagnosed psychiatric disorders. There is a lot of misunderstanding in the concept of coping or living with persons with Mental disorders, there is need to improve the advocacy on the fact

that mentally ill individuals can also live normal lives and with love and support can succeed like anyone else.

We plan to make psychiatric services more acceptable by enabling PWMIs to understand what sort of services they should expect at all times and to demand to be treated right. Through psychosocial support, we empower Users and Survivors of such conditions to be included in the society in spite of their illnesses.

USPKenya is responsible for supporting networks of users and survivors where they meet one another and share their experiences, which serves the psychosocial needs of the persons with mental illnesses and their care givers as well as serving as a forum for information exchange. Mental illness and poverty are inter-related, with PWMIs often being amongst the poorest in society. USPKenya supports PWMIs to engage in income generating activities as a way of supporting themselves financially, besides the therapeutic benefits of being actively engaged in activities.

USPKenya is looking for individuals who are passionate about promoting mental health to serve on the Board of Directors. The individuals will need to show a clear understanding on mental health issues and its challenges, should be conversant with the process and norms of dealing with this phenomenon.

The Responsibility of Board Members

1. Steer USPKenya ahead through formulation of policies
2. Carry forward the vision of USPKenya to ensure that PWMIs are not only treated with honor and dignity but realize their potential
3. Safeguard the rights of PWMIs at all times
4. Oversee the operations of the USPKenya secretariat
5. Spearhead fundraising initiatives of USPKenya
6. Aggressively market USPKenya to become a leading membership organization that incorporates PWMIs from all walks of life
7. Board members meet a maximum of 4 times in a year, and the meetings can take place without necessarily assembling in one place e.g. through teleconference. Having access to computer and internet services is therefore important.

Profile of Board Members

1. Must be Kenyan citizens and people from all parts of Kenya are encouraged to apply. This will provide for the diversity of the Kenyan People as Mental illness is handled differently in different cultures.
2. Must portray passion for promotion of mental health and service to persons affected by mental health problems
3. Must be a professional in one's field of work and able to contribute expertise(technical or best practices) towards the growth of USPKenya
4. Must be person of integrity, serving PWMIs in honesty without seeking favours or financial gain.
5. Persons directly affected by mental illness are particularly encouraged to apply

Terms of Reference

Service on the USPKenya board will not be a form of employment and will therefore not result in remuneration. This being a voluntary position motivated by the passion for service in the mental health field and not financial gain, it is important for board members to be earning a living and supporting themselves.

Board members will be expected to give selfless service to PWMIs through their service on the board, going beyond the call of duty to improve the lives of lives of all whose lives have been touched by mental illness.

The Members of the board will adhere to the rules, regulations and policies that govern boards in Kenya. They are to support the Secretariat on the various activities and give strategic advise on processes in advocacy,

All applications to be directed to kanyi.gikonyo@uspkenya.com no later than **5th February 2011**.

Application forms are available for download at either www.usp-kenya.com or www.uspkenya.com

- The forms must be completed in Microsoft Word and emailed back at address above as part of the requirements above.
- Where the signature of the applicant is required, please type in your full name and in brackets quote your National ID number for verification upon successful shortlisting.



- Do not fill in the areas for official use