

Charter of the Sumud Mental Health Network

Preamble

The Sumud Mental Health Network is committed to advancing a decolonial, trauma-informed, and liberation-focused approach to mental health. Grounded in the lived experiences and the steadfastness (sumud) of the Palestinian people, the Network works in solidarity with those worldwide who struggle against oppression and strive for justice, healing, and collective liberation.

Article I: Purpose

This Charter outlines the values, practices, and commitments that guide the members of the Sumud Mental Health Network in their work as mental health professionals, researchers, advocates, and community members.

Article II: Core Values

1. Sumud (steadfastness): Upholding resilience and dignity in the face of injustice and violence
2. Liberation: Centering mental health work within struggles for justice and freedom
3. Solidarity: Building ethical alliances with oppressed communities, locally and globally
4. Dignity and Humanity: Affirming the intrinsic worth of all human beings, especially those dehumanized by systems of oppression
5. Accountability: Maintaining transparency, integrity, and responsiveness in our professional and political commitments
6. Collective Care: Fostering interdependence, mutual support, and shared healing
7. Knowledge Justice: Respecting and integrating indigenous, lived, and community-based knowledge alongside professional expertise
8. Collective Organizational Culture: Emphasizing horizontal teamwork over hierarchy, listening and dialogue over imposition, creativity and flexibility over rigid protocol, and the maintenance of hope and imagination, even in contexts of despair

Article III: Practices of Membership

1. Ethical and Contextual Practice: Delivering mental health care that is culturally rooted, politically aware, and responsive to collective trauma
2. Resistance to Oppression: Challenging systems of colonization, militarization, racism, dehumanization, and structural violence in all their forms
3. Bearing Witness and Accompanying: Acting as compassionate witnesses to suffering while accompanying individuals and communities toward empowerment and recovery
4. Advocating for Justice: Engaging in local and international advocacy to uphold the rights of Palestinians and other oppressed peoples
5. Promoting Community Resilience: Supporting community-based healing initiatives and elevating voices of resistance
6. Engaging in Critical Reflection and Cultural Humility: Continuously examining one's own relative position of power and privilege within groups and one's responsibility to unlearn the internalized dynamics inherent in one's position within the structures of oppression
7. Widening Learning: Sharing knowledge across geographies, disciplines, and generations
8. Safeguarding Confidentiality and Trust: Upholding the highest standards of professional ethics in all interactions

Article IV: Commitments to Palestine and Beyond

While rooted in the Palestinian context, the Sumud Mental Health Network stands in solidarity with oppressed peoples everywhere.

1. Promoting the well-being of Palestinians under occupation, in exile, and in prison
2. Preserving the historical memory and cultural identity of Palestine
3. Linking global struggles for mental health justice

Article V: Adoption and Review

This Charter shall be adopted by all active members of the Sumud Mental Health Network and reviewed periodically to remain responsive to emerging challenges and evolving collective goals.