

Alternatives to Coercion: Changing our practice and promoting human rights

Course Directors: John Allan, Silvan Galderisi, Helen Herrman

Course Faculty: Michaela Amering, Guadalupe Morales, Martha Savage

Session date: Thursday, 28 September, 2023

Session time: 08:30 – 11:30 (break at 10:00-10:30)

Background:

The term ‘coercion’ describes a range of interventions, from involuntary treatment to forceful action and threats undertaken in the course of providing treatment or addressing perceived harm a person poses to herself/himself or others due to a mental health condition. There is widespread agreement that coercive practices are over-used and carry the risk of harmful consequences, including trauma and death. The question of whether coercive interventions can ever be justified as part of mental health treatment, to protect rights holders’ own interests or on other grounds, is highly contested. A similar question arises about coercion interventions used with persons with delirium or dementia in general health care systems. The recently revised WPA Position Statement and Call to Action: Implementing Alternatives to Coercion: A Key Component of Improving Mental Health Care stresses that implementing alternatives is crucial to improve quality of care and promote the human rights of people with mental disorders and psychosocial disabilities. It is relevant, and urgent to improving the quality of mental health care in all countries. There is growing evidence that there are effective alternatives to coercion which improve both safety and outcomes.

Course content:

The course will be delivered by members of the WPA Working Group on Implementing Alternatives to Coercion in Mental Health Care including people with lived experience of mental health conditions and of coercion. We will explore practical ways to address coercive practice while considering human rights, practice improvement, recovery-oriented practice, trauma informed care and the role of lived experience in achieving change. It will highlight the important role of psychiatrists, health clinicians and managers, service users and families to achieve change. Practical steps include policy and legislative change, clinical practice, and personal action in a variety of settings: personal, local services and community, national policy and legislation, and regional level initiatives. Examples of good practice will be highlighted, and participants will have an opportunity to consider issues in their own circumstances and how they might become involved. The result of two recent international surveys of WPA member societies, and consumer representative groups and individuals on the state of coercive practice will be discussed

Aims:

- To increase awareness of the growing need to introduce alternatives to coercion in all areas of modern psychiatric practice

- To understand how alternatives to coercion are essential to improving mental health treatment and care and protecting human rights.
- To become familiar with the practical ways to achieve alternatives to coercion at all levels

Program:

8:30 - 8:40 Introduction: Professor Helen Herrman, Orygen and the Centre for Youth Mental Health, The University of Melbourne

Topic: **The role of WPA in taking a global approach to reducing coercion**

8:40-9:20 First speaker and discussion:

Professor Silvana Galderisi, Director of the Emergency Unit of the Department of Mental Health of the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli

Topic: **From coercive practices to recovery-oriented and trauma informed services in mental health care**

9:20-10:00 Second Speaker and discussion:

Associate Professor John Allan Executive Director of Mental Health Alcohol and other Drugs Branch, Clinical Excellence Division in Queensland Health, School of Medicine University of Queensland

Topic: From policy to practice: **Finding practical ways to reduce coercion**

10:00-10:30 Break

10:30-11.10 Third Speaker and discussion:

Guadalupe Morales Cano, Journalist, and director of Fundación Mundo Bipolar (Spain), Commissioner of Lancet Commission on Stigma and Discrimination in Mental Health, and Representative of persons with lived experience at the Spanish Mental Health Strategy.

Topic: **Why codesign with people with lived experience of coercion is important**

(Including results of the international lived experience of coercion survey)

11:10-11:50 Fourth Speaker and discussion:

Professor Martha Savage Professor of Geophysics, SGEES

Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand; Honorary member of the World Psychiatric Association

Topic: **How can family members bring about change to coercive practice?**

11:50-12:30 General Discussion:

Facilitator: Professor Michaela Amering Clinical Division of Social Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, Medical University of Vienna

Topic : **Focused discussion on what practical actions participants may take in their country or practice** (40 minutes)