Patient Empowerment

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WHO defines empowerment as “a process through which people gain greater control over decisions and actions affecting their health” and should be seen as both an individual and a community process.
4 components of Patient Empowerment

1. Understanding by the patient of his/her role
2. Acquisition by patients of sufficient knowledge to be able to engage with their healthcare provider
3. Patient skills
4. The presence of a facilitating environment
Patient empowerment needs to happen at all levels

Patient empowerment is not a one-way process. Empowerment of citizens and patients is a task which involves and encourages interaction of communities, health care professionals, policy makers and all other civil society actors with respect to health and well being of individuals.

From a passive recipient of care

an active partner in their health care.
What needs to change?

• Change in mindset of professionals and patients towards dialogue and co-production
• Health care systems need to be more ‘readable’ so patients can navigate the systems according to their needs
• Health professionals need to be effective communicators and listeners
• Information needs to be available and understandable
• Patients need to be prepared to ask questions, express needs and take joint decisions.
The five “E” of Empowerment stand for:

**Education:** patients can make informed decisions about their health if they are able to access all the relevant information, in an easily understandable format.

**Experience:** individual patients work with patient organisations to represent them, and channel their experience and collective voice.

Patient knowledge
**Expertise:** patients self-manage their condition every day so they have a unique expertise on healthcare which needs to be supported. *Patient skills including Health Literacy*

**Equality:** patients need support to become equal partners with health professionals in the management of their condition. *A facilitating and positive environment*

**Engagement:** patients need to be involved in designing more effective healthcare for all, and in research to deliver new and better treatments and services.

*Patient participation*
“An empowered patient has control over the management of their condition in daily life. They take action to improve the quality of their life and have the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and self-awareness to adjust their behavior and to work in partnership with others where necessary, to achieve optimal well-being.”
Empowerment interventions aim to equip patients (and their informal caregivers whenever appropriate) with the capacity to participate in decisions related to their condition to the extent that they wish to do so; to become ‘co-managers’ of their condition in partnership with health professionals; and to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and coping skills to manage the physical, emotional and social impacts of illness in everyday life.”
MHN is currently involved in promoting European Patients’ Rights Day.

Healthcare is a human right Patient Solidarity Day.
Contact us

Please visit our website to find out more:

www.maltahealthnetwork.org

www.facebook.com/MaltaHealthNetwork

List of patient organisations currently members with MHN other organisations can be found on

Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations

www.voluntaryorganisations.gov.mt/
References

- WHO (2009) WHO guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care

- IAPO (2012) Patient Empowerment - Living with Chronic Disease


- https://www.eupati.eu/

- https://www.epaponline.org/what-is-epap/

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