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Topic: S518 - Patient needs and rights in the light of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities

Advocacy for the needs of the patient & caregiver

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International Bipolar Foundation (IBPF) is an advocacy group founded by four mothers with bipolar children. The organization funds scientific research, provides care & support and educates the public.

Lectures, Webinars, a downloadable book and other measures help educate the consumer and caregivers about pertinent issues related to bipolar disorder, thereby providing the tools to navigate the mental health system and improve treatment outcomes.

Those with mental illnesses (ranging from 26.4% in the U.S. to 8.2% in Italy) are unfortunately targets for stigma. It leaves them feeling like outcasts from society and is a barrier to help seeking behavior, which ultimately impedes recovery.

The downward spiraling behavior impacts everyone; family members, friends, or a boss who is not privy to the person's illness, and may misinterpret behaviors, once again wrongly judging them. Stigma, although powerful, does not have to be inevitable.

IBPF offers global anti-stigma campaigns and public education to combat stigma and its harmful effects, thereby mobilizing communities and personal commitments to end stigma. Examples to be discussed include the global high-school essay contest, 'Say it Forward' campaign, Girl Scout Mental Health Awareness patch, Anti-Stigma Mental Health Week, etc.