

By-Laws

Article I – Name and Status

1.1 This Association shall be known as ‘the International Association for Women’s Mental Health (IAWMH).

1.2 The Association will be registered as a Not for Profit Non-Governmental Organization in the United States of America. Any assets or property shall be dedicated to the not for profit international and scientific activities of the Association.

Article II – Mission, Purpose and Activities

2.1 The **mission** of the Association is:

2.1.1 To improve the mental health of women throughout the world.

2.1.2 To expand the fund of knowledge about Women’s Mental Health.

2.1.3 To promote gender-sensitive and autonomy-enhancing mental health services for women.

2.1.4 To advance collaboration between Societies and Sections.

2.2 The Association’s **purposes** are:

2.2.1. To create a network of national and international societies and sections (hereinafter called “Societies and Sections”), devoted to mental health of women.

2.2.2 Through international collaboration and networks, to promote research and policy in these areas:

- The social, economic, ethical, legal, cultural, psychological and biological factors which affect Women’s Mental Health.
- Women’s roles in relationships, marriage, family, the workplace and society, and the effects on mental health.
- The prevention, causes, effects, remedies and elimination of domestic violence and abuse of women.
- The causes, effects, treatment and prevention of mental diseases or disorders that are specific, more prevalent, more severe or have different risk factors or outcomes in women.
- Gender-specific effects of treatment.
- Basic sciences pertinent to gender difference and female biology
- The collaboration between preclinical, clinical and health policy related to Women’s Mental Health.

2.2.3 Together with Societies and Sections, to act as international advocates for Women’s Mental Health, for

- The elimination of conditions harmful to women's physical and mental health.
- Improved education and autonomy for women.
- Better medical education and public information about Women's Mental Health.
- Increasing the number, status, education and resources of Women's Mental Health providers.
- The appropriate representation of women in research, education and organizations concerned with Women's Mental Health
- Empowerment of women to control their personal fertility.

2.2.4 To pursue any additional action needed to achieve the mission of the Association

2.3 **Main activities:**

Activities of the Association will include, but will not be limited to:

2.3.1 Promotion of research through the development of international networks and focused workshops.

2.3.2 The organization of World Congresses, to which all individuals, Societies and Sections concerned with Women's Mental Health are invited.

2.3.3 The support of international, regional, national and local conferences and symposia, for exchange of information about scientific advances, clinical services, and social or legal developments related to Women's Mental Health (hereinafter called "meetings").

2.3.4 Circulation of information about Women's Mental Health, through the World Wide Web, the Association's co-sponsored journal, other publications and media.

2.3.5 Education of clinicians and the public through educational workshops as well as printed and electronic material.

2.3.6 Collaboration with advocacy groups.

Article III – Membership

There shall be three classes of members – Regular Members ("Members"), Member Societies and Honorary Fellows.

3.1 Regular members are scientists, mental health workers or lay people from any profession or background, active in furthering the aims of the Association.

3.1.1 Membership shall be approved by the Membership Committee and confirmed by the Executive Committee.

3.1.2 Membership will lapse if a Member does not attend World, Regional or Local Congresses or meetings, or participate in any activities related to Women's Mental Health, for a period of three years.

3.1.3 If and when membership dues are installed, membership will lapse if dues are not paid, with no acceptable reason, for three (3) years.

3.2 Member Societies are Societies and Sections devoted to the mental health of women, whose aims encompass all or part of the field. They shall include, but shall not be limited to: International, Regional and National Societies and Psychiatric (or Mental Health) Associations, Sections in the World Psychiatric Association, and advocacy groups.

3.3 Honorary fellows shall be limited to distinguished contributors to Women's Mental Health. Nominations for Honorary fellowship shall be reviewed by the Executive Committee, and approved at the business meeting at the World Congress.

Article IV – Officers

4.1 The Officers of the Association shall be the President, Vice President (President-Elect), Secretary and Treasurer.

4.2 Officers shall be elected by the Membership and Member Societies by a simple majority.

4.3 The president shall serve one term of office – from a World Congress until the end of the next World Congress. If there is no World Congress within four years, the President's term will expire after 4 years.

4.4 The President-Elect shall automatically succeed the President at the end of the World Congress or after four years – whichever comes first.

4.5 The President and Vice President shall not be eligible for re-election for a second term.

4.6 The Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected for a term from a World Congress to the end of the next one. They can be re-elected to the same office for an additional period.

4.7 In case of a vacancy in the office of the President, the Vice President (as President-Elect) shall automatically succeed to the office and complete the unexpired term. Upon completion of this partial term, the new President shall continue as President for her/his own previously elected full term of office. The Nomination Committee will then nominate at least two candidates for election by Members as President-elect.

4.8 In case of a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, Secretary or Treasurer, the Executive Committee shall appoint a person to serve in the vacated office until the next regular elections.

4.9 Duties of the President

The President is the Chief Executive Officer of the Association. S/he presides over all meetings of the Association, including Executive Committee meetings, General Meetings and the World Congress. S/he shall be an ex-officio member of all committees. S/he shall have general responsibility for the Association and supervision of its affairs. S/he shall appoint, in consultation with the Executive Committee, such standing committees and task forces, as s/he deems necessary for the proper functioning of the Association. S/he may sign and execute in the name

of the Association, all authorized documents and contracts, except when the signing and execution thereof shall have been expressly delegated to another officer or agent of the Association. S/he shall perform any other duties as may be requested of her/him by the Executive Committee. S/he will be the spokesperson for the Association.

4.10 Duties of the Vice-President

S/he is the President-Elect, who automatically succeeds the President, when that office becomes vacant. S/he shall substitute for the President when necessary and shall assume executive responsibilities as assigned to her/him by the President and Executive Committee. S/he shall be an ex officio member of all of the Association's committees.

4.11 Duties of the Secretary

S/he shall be responsible for all records of the Association and its committees. S/he shall keep minutes of Executive Committee and Council meetings and General Membership meetings and distribute them to the Membership. S/he shall coordinate the Committees' correspondence and activities and distribute the agenda for Executive Committee, Council and Membership meetings. S/he shall be responsible for distribution of ballots for election and collecting them. S/he shall be responsible for communication with the Membership. S/he shall undertake any other duties which may be assigned to her/him from time to time by the Executive Committee or President. The Executive Committee has the power to divide the responsibilities of the Secretary, appointing and nominating for election the positions of two Secretaries.

4.12 Duties of the Treasurer

S/he shall act as the fiscal-financial officer of the Association. S/he shall be responsible for collection and distribution of funds. S/he shall deposit the funds in the Association's accounts and be responsible for their management, in consultation with the Finance Committee. S/he shall sign all cheques for payments unless the Executive Committee sets an amount above which cheques should be co-signed by the President. The Treasurer, in consultation with the Finance Committee and the Executive Committee, shall prepare a budget for approval by the Executive Committee. S/he shall submit annual reports to the Executive Committee and the membership. If and when the Executive Committee decides to levy Membership dues, the Treasurer shall be responsible for their collection. S/he shall be responsible for complying with all government financial requirements and audits. The fiscal year of the Association shall be from January 1st through December 31st inclusive.

Article V – Committees and working parties

5.1 The **Standing Committees** of the Association shall include:

- a. Executive Committee
- b. Council
- c. Coordinating Committee for Regional and Collaborating Societies
- d. Research and Scientific Program Committees
- e. Policy and Ethics Committee
- f. Education Committee

- g. Membership and Nominations Committee
- h. Finance and Development Committee
- i. Publication and Communication Committee
- j. Congress Organizing Committee

5.2 Other committees or task forces

These may be established by the Executive Committee, as needed, and their membership shall be designated by the President in consultation with the Executive Committee.

5.3 Appointment to committees and task forces

Standing committees and task forces (with the exception of the Executive Committee, which shall be elected) shall be appointed by the President on the recommendation and with the approval by the Executive Committee.

5.4 Membership of committees

Although individual merit and democracy should be the principle for advancement in a professional association, it is expected that women will be the majority (of at least one) in the Association's committees and task forces, and in its regional and cultural groups. In all its activities, the Association will strive to ensure their worthy representation.

The interdisciplinary character of the Association will be maintained by the inclusion of members of diversified professional and lay organizations. In accordance with these principles, the Executive Committee shall be responsible for maintaining the proper balance of committee structure. The Executive Committee may co-opt up to five members to Council, Standing Committees, special committees or task forces, if deemed necessary for diversity, inclusiveness and balance.

5.5 Terms of office.

- The term of officers for all officers and standing committees will be from the end of a World Congress to the end of the next one. Chairs of standing committees should not serve more than two consecutive terms.
- The term of office for special committees will be determined by the Executive Committee.
- Task forces will be disbanded when they have completed the task assigned, or as determined by the President

5.6 Reports from committees and task forces.

All committees and task forces shall present written reports. An annual report shall be submitted to the Executive Committee. Written and verbal reports shall be presented to the Membership at the World Congress.

5.7 The Executive Committee:

The Executive Committee (EC) shall consist of the Officers, the immediate past-President, the immediate past-Secretary, and the Chairs of the Standing Committees on research, policy, and publications.

5.7.1 The EC's duties shall be:

- To further objectives of the Association.
- To advise the President and officers in all aspects of management and affairs of the Association.
- To receive reports from the officers, committees and working parties.
- To plan World Congresses and other activities.
- To replace Officers, Chairs and Regional Representatives, if vacancies arise between World Congresses. Those selected would serve until they were confirmed or replaced at the next World Congress.
- To determine the membership of Societies and Sections, and the Regions to be represented.
- To establish and oversee special committees and task forces.

5.7.2 The EC shall meet regularly in person or by teleconference.

- The Secretary shall send the agenda to all members of the EC one month in advance.
- The Quorum for EC meetings shall be five.
- Decisions will be reached by a simple majority, the Chair (normally the President) having a casting vote.

5.7.3 A Founding Executive Committee shall be established, as determined by the Founding Meeting in Berlin, March 29th, 2001. Thereafter, the membership of the Executive Committee will be determined by elections confirmed at General Meetings held at World Congresses.

5.8 **The Council** shall be composed of members of the Executive Committee, representatives of affiliated Societies and Regional Representatives. It shall meet at every World Congress prior to the General Meeting. It shall be chaired by the President and serve as an advisory board to the Executive Committee.

5.9 Regional Representatives

5.9.1 Regional Representatives represent the main global geographical areas, taking into account populations. They shall include

- North America,
- Latin America,
- Sub Saharan Africa,
- North Africa & the Middle East,
- Western Europe,
- Central and Eastern Europe,
- Central and South Asia,
- Western Pacific Rim

The regions may be determined or amended at the discretion of the Executive Committee, and on the advice of representatives from the regions.

5.9.2 Regional Representatives advise on the mental health needs of women in their regions, and coordinate regional Research and Educational collaborations.

5.9.3 Representatives will be elected at General Meetings following nominations by members from their own regions, and will serve until the election at the next World Congress. They may be re-elected to serve for one additional term.

5.9.4 They may establish subcommittees as needed, in consultation with the Executive Committee.

5.10 The Coordinating Committee for Regional and Collaborating Societies

5.10.1 One of the main purposes of the Association is to strengthen cooperation and collaboration among Societies and Sections. This Coordinating Committee is a key element in its structure.

5.10.2 The Coordinating Committee will seek in all ways to strengthen the relationship between the Association and collaborating societies, and between each other.

5.10.3 The Committee will be the forum through which Societies and Sections advise the Executive Committee.

5.10.4 The Committee shall consist of the President or Chair of each Society or Section, or a person appointed by them.

5.10.5 The Societies and Sections accepted for membership of this Committee will be determined by the Executive Committee, on advice from the Coordinating Committee.

5.10.6 The Committee will meet at each World Congress.

5.10.7 The Chair and Vice-Chair of this Committee will be elected by its Committee Members. They will serve until the elections at the next World Congress. They may be re-elected to the same office for one additional period.

5.10.8 The Chair will be a member of the Executive Committee, where s/he will report and represent the views of the Societies and Sections.

5.10.9 On the Coordinating Committee, each representative present at the meeting will have one vote.

5.11 The **Research Committee** shall initiate and maintain collaborative research projects in clinical and basic sciences. It may have subcommittees, for clinical and basic studies or for other areas. Task forces shall be created for specific projects as needed. The Committee shall be composed of scientists of merit. Chairs of scientific task forces will automatically become members of the Committee. Each member shall serve for two terms. In cases of active research

projects, membership may be extended until the completion or expiration of the project in which the member is a key participant.

5.12 The **Policy and Ethics Committee** shall be composed of a Chair and at least five members from diversified cultures and regions. Its functions shall include the following:

5.12.1. In collaboration with pertinent government, international and professional organizations, the Committee shall initiate, conduct or participate in advocacy, campaigns and/or legislation efforts to promote aspects of Women's Health, equality or any other women's focused issues. The Committee advises the Executive Committee on public policy, and requires the approval of the Executive Committee, before initiating or becoming involved in specific campaigns, or making public statements on behalf of the Association.

5.12.2 It will also be the forum at which ethical matters can be considered.

5.12.3 It will consider any charges relating to unethical behaviour or actions detrimental to Women's Mental Health. In these matters it will make recommendations to the Executive Committee, which will be responsible for taking any action necessary.

5.13 The **Education Committee** shall be composed of a chair and at least 4 other members. It will organize educational workshops, raising the required grants and other funds. In cooperation with the Congress Organizing Committee, it will be responsible for selecting young investigators and advocates as travel awards to the Association's Congresses.

5.14 The **Membership and Nominations Committee** shall consist of a chair, the Secretary and at least four additional Members appointed by the Executive Committee. Its functions include

- Review and approval of new applications for Membership.
- Nominating replacements of the Officers at the appropriate time, i.e. ready for distribution to the general membership at least six months before expiration of the term of office.
- In the case of an unexpected vacancy of any of the Officers, this Committee shall provide names for replacements within three months.

5.15 The **Finance and Development Committee** shall be composed of the Treasurer (in the Chair), a Co-chair – overseer, the Secretary and at least 3 additional members. It shall advise the Executive Committee on the annual budget, provision of financial resources, handling of reserve funds, investments and depositories and all other financial matters. It will recruit corporate support and establish funds for the Association's functions and awards. The Association's balance sheets, financial dealings and proposed budgets will be prepared by the Treasurer, and submitted to the Co-chair, who will examine them and discuss them with the committee.

5.16 The **Publications and Communication Committee** is responsible for communication between the Association and the public, both scientific and general. The official Journal of the Association is *Archives of Women's Mental Health*. Membership of the Committee will include the Editor of that Journal, at least one member of the Editorial Board who is a Member of the Association, a member responsible for electronic communications, other members, and a representative of the publishers of the Journal. The committee should meet at least annually. If there is no congress in that year, it is the responsibility of the Chair(s) to arrange an appropriate

time and place for the meeting. The Committee will evaluate the current status of the Journal and suggest improvements in terms of the number and nature of submitted manuscripts, acceptance rate and publication time, and any other items pertinent to the successful operation of the journal. A subcommittee will establish and supervise a website and other means of electronic communication. The committee will also recommend any other pertinent publications and communications.

5.17 The **Congress Scientific Program Committee** shall be chaired by the Vice President and composed of the Chair of the Local Organizing Committee, at least three of its members, the scientific chair of a previous congress, the immediate Past-President and at least 5 additional members. The Committee shall provide guidance and consultation to the Local Organizing Committee concerning program theme and content, and shall suggest invited participants. For each congress a new committee will be formulated no later than 24 months prior to the scheduled congress.

5.18 The **Local Organizing Committees** for the World Congress, Regional or local Congresses, shall be comprised of a Chair – appointed by the Executive Committee, and members recruited by the Chair – in consultation with the Association’s President and Vice President. The Committees shall be responsible for all organizational and financial aspects of the Congress. A written agreement delineating all aspects of management and responsibilities, as well as financial arrangements and division of responsibilities, will be signed by the Chair of the Committee, the Commercial Congress Organizer – if relevant, and the President or Secretary – in behalf of the Association.

Article VI – Meetings of the Association

6.1 The **World Congress of Women’s Mental Health** shall be the Association’s official meeting, held every three years. Congresses shall be in locations convenient for travel of members that shall not impose political or discriminating restrictions on participants.

6.1.1 The Executive Committee shall solicit proposals for organization of the Congress and shall evaluate the proposals, decide on the location and appoint the Chair of the Local Organizing Committee.

6.1.2 Organization Guidelines for World Congresses will be developed by the Executive Committee. They will be adapted to local conditions.

6.1.3 It is hoped that World Congresses will feature in the meeting schedules of collaborating societies.

6.2 General Meetings

6.2.1 General Meetings are business meetings of the entire Membership.

6.2.2 They shall take place at each World Congress.

6.2.3 The Secretary will send Notices of General Meetings to Members at least three months before the World Congress. These notices may be sent by mail or electronic communication and will include an agenda, background papers and papers regarding nominations.

6.2.4 At General Meetings, Elections of Officers and Regional Representatives will be held.

6.2.5 In view of the expense of attending World Congresses, Members may exercise a postal vote in Elections, and on any issue considered sufficiently important by the Executive Committee.

6.2.6 With the exception of amendments to the Constitution, all decisions will be reached by a simple majority, the Chairperson having a casting vote. Amendments to the Constitution shall require a two thirds majority.

6.3 Regional and National Meetings, and Meetings focused on particular topics

6.3.1 The Association will encourage the activities of Regional Representatives, Chairs of Collaborating Societies and Members to organize other meetings which promote Women's Mental Health.

6.3.2 Provided that the Executive Committee is given prior warning, these organizers shall be able to state that the meeting is held under the auspices of the Association. In such cases, the Association will consider how it can support the meeting, by sending representatives, and in other ways.

Article VII – Amendment of Bylaws

7.1 The Executive Committee shall consider Amendments of the Bylaws proposed by the Executive Committee and Representatives of Collaborating Societies. Input from individual Members and Society Members will be solicited.

7.2 Those Amendments, which are proposed by the Executive Committee or by a petition signed by at least 10% of the individual Membership shall be sent to all Members and voted on by a mail ballot (referendum). At least $\frac{2}{3}$ of the votes cast are needed for approval of Amendments. A referendum shall be null and void if less than 25% of individual Members return the ballots.

Article VIII – Dissolution of the Association

8.1 A proposal to dissolve the Association shall be dealt with in the similar way as an Amendment to the Constitution.

8.2 It shall be proposed by the Executive Committee or by petition, and submitted to the entire Membership.

8.3 It shall then be debated at a General Meeting.

8.4 If confirmed at the General Meeting, it will be submitted to postal vote, as a referendum.

8.5 Dissolution will be approved only if at least 25% of the Membership return the ballot, out of which at least a two thirds majority approves the dissolution.

8.6 The Executive Committee shall be responsible for deciding how any remaining funds will be spent.

8.7 The Treasurer shall be responsible for winding up the financial affairs of the Association.