

Terms of Reference

European Network of Rehabilitation Centres for Survivors of Torture¹

Background

The European Network of Rehabilitation Centres for Survivors of Torture ('the Network'), formally established in 2003, is a network of centres/ programmes across Europe (area covered by the Council of Europe), for the provision of healthcare and support to survivors of torture.

Aims of the European Network

1. To enable the sharing of information on clinical work, assessment and documentation, research, good practice and innovations in the field, as well as on fundraising both for the Network as a whole and individual centres.
2. To stimulate a range of activities related to the field of rehabilitation and treatment for survivors of torture and other grave human rights violations², hereafter referred to as 'survivors of torture'.
3. To provide support to members centres and participants of the Network, working with torture survivors or in areas related to this field.
4. To promote common standards, where appropriate in various aspects of work conducted by member centers and participants.
5. To enable the sharing of information on the implementation and impact of domestic and European policies, in relation to survivors of torture and other gross human rights violations.
6. To inform and develop advocacy efforts and contribute to the prevention of torture, based on the direct, professional experience of clinical work with survivors of torture seen within the centers and other settings.
7. To collaborate with other international institutions focussing on torture and with shared objectives.

¹ The definition of torture used here is as envisaged by the concept of torture and other ill-treatment in international law. This can include torture in the context of war, organized violence etc.

² At the Network's meeting/conference in Antalya, 2007, it was agreed that the term 'other grave human rights violations' required further discussion to reach a shared understanding.

Membership

1. Membership of the Network is open to all centres/ programmes in Europe providing healthcare, support and other services to survivors of torture.
2. Participation within the Network meetings/conferences is open to those working with, or whose work relates to survivors of torture, in other settings or institutions (e.g. NGOs, universities). All participants (Network members or not) can participate in group sessions and plenary sessions.
3. Any queries about membership or participation in the Network's meetings/ conferences should be directed to the Steering Committee which will discuss the relevant issue at the next Steering Committee meeting, or wherever appropriate, by email. New members and participants will be acknowledged and invited to the following annual conference/ meeting.
4. If members choose to withdraw their membership they should inform the Steering Committee so that membership details may be amended and circulation of consultation and other documents can be modified.

Structure of Network and Operation

The structure of the Network shall comprise a Steering Committee and Working Groups comprised of individuals from participating centres/programmes.

Steering Committee

1. The Steering Committee shall comprise of all Working Group Coordinators, as well as the organisers of the previous, current and next conference/meeting, to ensure continuity and support. The Working Group Coordinators, and hence the Steering Committee, shall be comprised of those individuals working within member centres/programmes.
2. The Steering Committee shall be chaired by an individual with experience of a minimum of three years within the Steering Group, to ensure continuity. The chairperson shall be agreed by consensus within the Steering Committee.
3. The Steering Committee shall meet on two occasions during a year. One meeting shall be held at least 4 months in advance of the forthcoming annual conference/ meeting. In addition, the Committee shall meet at minimum, both at the beginning and at the end of each conference/ meeting.
4. Records shall be kept of all Committee meetings and the minutes of each meeting, noting decisions and actions, shall be circulated to Committee members. Once agreed as an accurate record of the meeting, the minutes shall be made available to all members.
5. The Steering Committee is responsible for:

- (i) Ensuring an appropriate and effective structure for the Network, which may be open to revision as the Network develops.
- (ii) Maintaining an accurate list of member centres and participants.
- (iii) Developing appropriate mechanisms and protocols for electronic communication between member centres and participants and between Steering Committee members.
- (iv) Planning future conferences/ meetings.
- (v) Responding to queries or requests from external organisations or professionals.
- (vi) Maintaining appropriate links with other organisations.
- (vii) Reviewing, and where necessary, guiding the activities of the Working Groups
- (viii) Responding to requests to establish new, additional Working Groups.
- (ix) Coordinating responses on behalf of the Committee, and where appropriate, in consultation with the Committee, to 'daily business' and miscellaneous queries in-between the meetings of the Steering Committee.
- (x) Nominating a spokesperson, in addition to the Chairperson of the Network, to speak on behalf of the Network where appropriate and where agreed by the Steering Committee.
- (xi) Ensuring the administration and maintenance of the Network's website.
- (xii) Ensuring that any changes proposed to the Terms of Reference are discussed and agreed at the Final Plenary session of the forthcoming annual conference/meeting of the Network.

6. Individual members of the Steering Committee are responsible for:

- (i) Ensuring that all relevant concerns, viewpoints and opportunities from their Working Group and/or countries of member centres are brought to the Steering Committee.
- (ii) Ensuring that all matters requiring discussion and decision are brought to the Steering Committee and the views and decision of the Committee are conveyed to Working Group members.
- (iii) Ensure that the values of the Network and its aims are promoted in each Working Group.
- (iv) Active participation in the decision-making process of the Steering Committee. This can entail reading all communication by Steering Committee members, responding in a timely fashion to messages calling for a response or specific input, volunteering, as appropriate, for specific tasks etc.
- (v) Assuming their own costs incurred as a result of their participation in the Steering Committee (e.g. long-distance phone charges, attending meetings), except in situations where funding is available specifically to support this participation.
- (vi) Assisting the Steering Committee in accessing resources to support the development of the Network and its activities, wherever possible.
- (vii) Ensuring that accurate contact details of members of the Steering Committee are circulated or made available on the Network's website.

Working Groups

1. Key themes which could constitute the focus of Working Groups shall be collectively identified by the Network, or suggested by member centres.

2. All suggestions for the establishment of new Working Groups must be sent, in addition to the rationale, key aims, supporting information, and nominated Coordinator to the Steering Committee for discussion. The Committee's decision and its rationale shall be communicated to the proposer(s) and to the Network at its annual conference/ meeting. Where a proposal

originally rejected by the Committee is proposed again to the Committee, the Committee shall only consider this if there is sufficient new supporting evidence which may be important in deciding whether a new Working Group can be established.

3. Working Group Coordinators are nominated and agreed within the Working Group and serve for the period between conferences. The name of the Coordinator is to be communicated to the Steering Committee. Each Working Group will determine who leads the Group for the next 12 months at each conference. Any change in the Coordinator of a Working Group must be communicated in writing to the Steering Committee.

If the Coordinator has to stop coordinating the Working Group within the 12-month period, then he/she must ensure that the Working Group nominates an interim Coordinator who will be responsible for maintaining activities until the next annual conference. As coordinators act in their capacity as individuals (rather than as representing their Centres) they cannot be automatically replaced by an individual working from the same centre, unless agreed by the Working Group.

4. The responsibilities of the Coordinator of a Working Group are to lead the activities of the Group, coordinate meetings of the Group, prepare an agenda for each meeting/ working session of the Working Group, chair each session of the Working Group, ensure the appropriate allocation of tasks, write/ensure minutes for the Working Group and for the Steering Committee; liaise with the host to ensure room bookings, write a summary of key aims, ongoing activities and decisions of the Working Group for the Steering Committee at its meeting (usually in December) preceding each conference, present the work and issues identified by the Group to the whole Network at annual conferences/ meetings and maintain a list of Working Group participants and their contact details.

5. The Coordinators of the Working Groups are accountable to the Steering Committee, of which they are automatic members.

6. The Working Groups shall be reviewed both within the Working Group, by its members, and by the Steering Committee on an annual basis at each annual conference / meeting to consider the viability and necessity of their continuance. Working Groups may elect to become dormant/closed between conferences if they have no active agenda.

7. The Working Groups are to be task or project-focused, though not precluding opportunities to share information, offer mutual support, discuss dilemmas or emerging challenges relevant to the focus of the Working Group. Tasks or projects may be short, medium or long-term, involving a minimum of three partners/ member centres. This may mean that a Working Group has a project on which three member centres are actively participating, though other member centres may participate in the Working Group discussions (through their representatives) to enable exchange, dialogue and to foster opportunities for future collaboration or dissemination of any resulting outputs of the Working Group.

8. Working Groups are not permanent. In cases where there are no specific tasks or projects in the design, planning, operation or evaluation stages, then the viability of the Working Group must be reviewed within the Group, and where necessary it may be agreed, by consensus of Group members, that the Working Group is to be closed. Such a decision must be communicated in writing to the Steering Committee.

9. Tasks or projects evolving from Working Groups must have a named Lead Centre, and a named individual responsible for coordinating the project (i.e. a Project Manager, not necessarily the Coordinator of a Working Group). Partnerships may include other member centres. Fundraising for such projects must be the responsibility of the partner centres, although all pursuits for funding must be communicated to the Fundraising Working Group to minimise conflicting projects or interests. Ideally, Project Managers will attend Working Group meetings and may, at the request of the Steering Committee, attend Steering Committee meetings to present progress reports.

10. Any outputs resulting from projects arising from any Working Group should be communicated to the Steering Committee, and where appropriate, disseminated amongst all member centres.

11. Dissemination of project outputs should ideally be at annual conferences/ meetings of the Network, which can be themed according to the overall aims of the project/ Working Group.

12. In seeking funding for individual projects bids should include a requirement for the presentation of findings to a conference which will be the earliest convenient conference of the Network. Thus the funding for each project will potentially contribute towards the funding of the conferences.

13. All reports, publications or other material arising from projects initiated by or carried out by member centres as part of their work within the Working Group should be communicated to the Steering Committee and they must acknowledge the Network and the member centres, as appropriate, in addition to the individuals responsible for producing the reports, publications and other materials arising therefrom.

Discussion Groups

1. To allow for clinical exchange not conducive to task or project-focused activities, member centres or individual participants may hold Discussion Groups at the annual conference/ meeting.

2. Proposals for Discussion Groups must be put in writing to the Steering Committee, with a named coordinator. The approval of new Discussion Groups will be communicated by the Steering Committee to the nominated Discussion Group coordinator. Where a vacancy for the coordination of Discussion Groups arises, the Steering Committee shall ensure that a room for clinical exchange will be available during the following annual conference/meeting.

3. The Coordinator shall be responsible for coordinating and facilitating the Discussion Groups, liaising with the host to ensure room bookings, time allocations, and for informing participants at the conference/ meeting of the Discussion Group, its aims and meeting times and for communicating any points or information arising from the Discussion Group of potential interest or relevance to the whole Network, to the Steering Committee.

Annual conferences/ meetings

1. The Network shall hold a conference/ meeting on at least an annual basis, whilst recognising that ideally there should be no more than 15 months between conferences, but understanding that particular commemorations, anniversaries etc. may make attractive dates. The conference/ meeting shall be between 2.5 to 3 days, structured to allow a minimum of four separate sessions for Working Groups to meet and to continue their work; and a maximum of three plenary speakers.

2. Each year at the annual conference/ meeting one member centre shall propose to host the forthcoming conference/ meeting. Although one centre is always the 'host' collaborations between centres and nations are very much encouraged so long as lines of responsibility are clear. This proposal should be made to the Steering Committee, who shall communicate the decision to the Network at the closing plenary of the conference/ meeting. Where possible, the conference/ meeting in the following (second) year will also be announced to allow for strategic planning over a two year cycle.

3. The host centre is responsible for proposing in writing to the Steering Committee, a date, a detailed agenda, location, speakers and planned social or other events. The details of the forthcoming conference are to be communicated electronically in advance, and presented in person to the Steering Committee by individuals representing the host centre, where they are to be discussed and finalised at the Steering Committee meeting at least four months preceding the conference.

4. Specifically with regards to the responsibilities of the host centre, the host centre shall:

(i) Send to the Steering Committee at least:

- 6 months before the meeting: a firm date, provisional agenda, theme(s), proposed speakers
- 4 months in advance: a firm agenda, proposed and confirmed speakers to be discussed by the Steering Committee at its December meeting.
- 3 months in advance: confirmed agenda, venue, confirmed speakers, to be approved by the Steering Committee.

(ii) Ensure that information on options for accommodation is provided to member centres, although the organisation of accommodation for all delegates to a conference/ meeting is not mandatory. Depending on its capacities delegates may be required to arrange accommodation themselves. Where host centres do choose to organise accommodation, a conservative estimate for delegates is recommended, and it may be advisable to circulate a registration form specifying that the number of rooms available is limited, which may mean that delegates registering after a deadline or when accommodation is no longer available will be asked to arrange their own accommodation.

(iii) Ensure an appropriate agenda. Important considerations are:

- Ensuring a plenary session at the start of the Conference/ meeting, to enable a review of key aims and past/current activities of each Working Group; and a report from Steering Committee.

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- Allowing for no more than 3 key-note speeches over the 2.5/3 days in total, including a minimum of one speaker from the local context, one speaker external to the Network, and where relevant to the theme(s) of the conference, one from the Network.
- Ensuring that Working Groups are allocated at least four meetings during the course of the conference/ meeting (including at least 2 meetings of 3 hours minimum);
- Allowing opportunities and where necessary, rooms for Clinical Discussion Groups to offer space for clinical exchanges, clinical/case presentations etc. However, the host will need to specify how many Discussion Groups are possible (depending on room availability), and potential convenors of Discussion Groups must be identified or make themselves known to the host and the Steering Committee, preferably in advance of the Conference/meeting.
- Ensuring that there is a final closing plenary session (approximately 1.5 hours) to allow for brief reporting from each Working Group, and discussion on future themes/ concerns/ conferences.

(iv) With regards to premises, the host centre shall book one large room for plenary sessions and one small room for each Working Group (and Discussion Group where needed). The size of Working Groups can be checked with Working Group Coordinators in the Steering Committee.

(v) In circulating information to the whole Network the host centre shall use the updated Network centre membership and mailing list, held by a nominated member of the Steering Committee. Feedback on undelivered messages (incorrect addresses) to the nominated member of the Steering Committee is mandatory to ensure accurate membership and participant details.

Steering Committee
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Last updated following Barcelona 2009 Network meeting