



Constitution of Syrian Association for Mental Health (SAMH)

Article 1

General:

SAMH aims to have its own identity after completing all the legal procedures for its establishment.

SAMH is a Syrian, Scientific independent association for mental health specialists; i.e. Psychiatry, Psychology and Clinical Social Work. It aims to gain recognition among the international associations of these specialties.

Vision:

The association aims to enhance mental health in general and to become (at the local and international levels) a pioneering scientific association for providing supervision services, consultation, studies and research in the fields of mental health specialties; i.e. Psychiatry, Psychology and Clinical Social Work.

Mission:

Enhancing mental health and providing psychological and social services according to high professional standards, and trusted, evidence-based scientific practices.

Article 2

Headquarters: SAMH is registered in the United Kingdom and in Turkey. It is currently based in Turkey with the aim to be based in Syria at the earliest opportunity.

Remit of activities: the Syrian people in all their ethnicities, ages, groups and sects within and outside Syria, in addition to all residents of Syria.

Article 3

Goals:

The association aims to achieve the following goals:



- 1) Enhancing mental health in general, developing and improving related services.**
- 2) To become one of the accredited and trusted bodies in meeting the psycho-social needs for prevention, treatment, research and training.**
- 3) Encouraging scientific studies that help to develop mental health further.**
- 4) Mitigating people's present psychological and social suffering, helping them to deal with long term consequences of the current war and providing affected groups with the psycho-social support needed.**
- 5) Contributing to the provision of diagnostic, medicinal, psychological, social and spiritual services to mentally-ill people, relying on positive cultural and spiritual resources in the society to the mentally affected groups.**
- 6) Helping stakeholders in organising mental health service programs according to quality assurance standards and evidence-based practice.**
- 7) Improving public knowledge and awareness of mental health culture through dissemination of preventative practices of psychological well-being in society.**
- 8) Collaborating with relevant national and international specialist bodies, for the mutual benefit of our respective services and programs, as well as, enhancing professional collaboration between psychiatrists, psychotherapists and social workers, to work as multidisciplinary team, beside, reaching out to professionals in other relevant fields in order to strengthen collaboration to realize agreed objectives.**
- 9) Providing mental health consultation service to other Syrian bodies and institutions concerned with Syrian affairs.**



Article 4

Scheme(s) of work:

The association works on achieving the goals stipulated in article 3 through:

1-Holding specialist conferences and seminars and organising workshops and courses to develop and train mental health staff, in addition to keeping them up-do-date with the latest scientific developments in their respective specialties, as well as taking part in local and international conferences.

2-Making available professional support and supervision for mental health programmes and services and ensuring that these programmes are provided according to evidence-based professional practices.

3-Establishing direct communication channels (such as hotlines and web sites etc.) for affected groups, that provide specialist psycho-social consultation.

4- Setting up psycho-social support projects for affected groups from all sections of society with emphasis on women, children, the elderly, the wounded mentally-ill and those with learning disabilities.

5- Helping to facilitate the arrival of mental and social healthcare teams to areas where affected groups, from all backgrounds are found.

6- Raising awareness of trauma and disaster-related mental health and educating people about coping strategies for dealing with pressures resulting from crises or disasters.

7- Launching intensive media campaigns that address countries (governments and people) which are hosting the Syrian people during the current crisis, to strengthen social bonds and facilitate the means for a dignified life (such as healthcare, education, housing, work etc.)



8- Launching intensive media campaigns to highlight the positive aspects of the current crisis and instill optimism.

9- Coordinating with experienced international organizations and using mutual expertise in psycho-social support to implement programs and for the mutual benefit of all.

10- Compiling and studying legal and Sharia Law cases which address social and mental health issues of war and disaster.

11- Supporting social and mental health studies and surveys that are related to the Syrian crisis.

12- Stressing the importance of documenting physical, psychological and sexual violations practiced against affected groups (according to adopted scientific, professional and legal standards).

13- Organizing and running training courses for people of direct influence –of all sects- to equip them with the psychological, social and spiritual tools in dealing with crises and disasters.

14-Preparing and teaching professional trainers who can train psychological support workers.

15-Working to reduce social stigma and mitigate its effect on mentally ill people and those who suffer from mental and social problems, such as sexual harassment and the like, and providing for their social and mental health care needs.

16- Boosting communication and cooperation between all psychiatry, psychology and social science professionals and those who are interested in Syrian affairs.

Article 5

Establishing procedures:



1-The association has been established as a result of the recommendations of The Mental and Social Effects of The Syrian Revolution conference held in Istanbul 27-28/9/2012.

2-After taking the decision of establishing the association and until the bodies of the association have been formed, a temporary constituent assembly made up of 21 members, including at least one psychiatrist, one psychologist and one clinical social worker, shall be responsible for all procedures and all the specialties. The constituent assembly shall elect one of its members as head of the assembly. The head of the assembly shall delegate duties to a number of committees. Members of the constituent assembly shall be considered founding members, and the assembly's role shall come to an end as soon as a general assembly has been formed and members of the executive committee have been chosen. Then, the head of the constituting assembly shall provide the general assembly with a detailed report on what the assembly has done to date.

Article 6

Membership: provisions and procedures

Types of membership:

1-Founding member:

Founding members must:

a-be a member of the constituting assembly

b-have a postgraduate degree/certificate in the fields of mental health (such as psychiatry, psychology or clinical social work)

c-pay registration and annual fees

d-adhere to the constitution and by-laws of the association

2-Active member

Active members must

a-submit a registration application form to the association along with the registration fee

b-enclose two reference letters from two founding or active members along with his/her application form



c- have a graduate qualification in the fields of mental health (such as psychiatry, psychology, clinical social work or psychiatric nursing, etc.)

d-pay the annual fee

e-adhere to the decisions and regulations of the association

f-be approved by the executive committee

3-Honorary membership

Is granted by the General Assembly to

- people of high esteem and respected opinion in the fields relevant to the association or who have made significant contributions in those fields

- those who have provided the association with financial or moral support.

An honorary member is exempt from registration and annual fee. An honorary member may attend the sessions of the general assembly and its different committees and participate in discussions without having the right to vote [an honorary member has the right to vote if they have a post-graduate qualification in the field of mental health]

4-associate member:

May be an undergraduate, a graduate or a postgraduate student in the fields of psychiatry, psychology or social sciences. This member may also be a lay person who has not met the provision of holding a degree for being an active member, but is interested in the association's activities.

Associate members must:

a-submit an application form and pay the registration fee

b-enclose two reference letters from two active members with his/her application form

c-pay the decided annual fee

d-adhere to the decisions and regulations of the association

e-be approved by the executive committee

(associate members pay 50 % of the annual fee and he/she can attend the sessions of the general assembly and its different committees and participate in discussions, without having the right to vote)



Article 7

Joining the association:

Anyone who believes in the goals of the association would have the right to join it according to the following:

- a-the applicant should fill in an application form and express their wish to join the association and to abide by its rules and by-laws
- b-The Executive Committee will approve or reject this application in its first regular meeting by simple majority (50% +1)

Article 8

Duties of members:

- 1-abiding by professional practice ethics
- 2-abiding by the constitution of the association and the decisions of the Executive committee
- 3-working on achieving the goals of the association
- 4-cooperating with the Executive Committee in fulfilling those duties to serve the goals of the association
- 5-paying the registration and annual fees

Article 9

Members rights:

One: the rights of a founding member:

- a-nominate himself/herself for the membership of the Executive Committee
- b-nominate members for the Executive Committee and for the other committees and branches of the association
- c-taking part in the available activities of the association
- d-contributing to planning the policy of the association

Two: the rights of an active member:

- a-nominating himself/herself for the membership of the Executive Committee provided that he/she fulfils eligibility criteria in addition to be a member in the association for a year at least and being an effective member. The one year condition does not apply to nominations for the first Executive Committee.
- b-nominating members for the Executive Committee and for the committees and branches of the association
- c--taking part in the available activities of the association



d-contributing to planning the policy of the association

Three: the rights of an honorary members

a-the right to take part in discussions and to attend the meetings of the General Assembly

b- taking part in the available activities of the association

c-participating in discussions about planning the policy of the association

d- [notice: if an honorary member had a postgraduate qualification in the fields of mental health they would have all the rights of an active member]

Four: the rights of an associate member:

a-the right to participate in discussions and to attend the meetings of the General Assembly

b- taking part in the available activities of the association

c-participating in discussions about the policy of the association

Article 10:

Ending a membership:

Membership ends by the decision of the Executive Committee in the following cases:

1-member withdraws or is deceased

2-if a member failed to pay the annual fee within a year of the due date

3-if he/she failed to meet one of the membership requirements

4-if he/she broke the rules of the association or the decisions of the Executive Committee

5-If he/she did anything that may cause a physical/financial or moral harm to the association. And in this event, a member will not lose membership unless decided so by the Executive Committee and after hearing the member's defence, and a member shall be notified within 15 days of the Executive Committee deciding.

6-Registration or annual fees or any donations made to the association will not be refunded to any member or ex-member or those who inherit a member



Article 11:

Returning membership:

Membership can, according to a member's request, be returned to him/her after they have lost it if the above reasons cease to exist

Article 12:

General Assembly:

Constituents and meetings

1-The general assembly is made up of the founding and effective members who have paid the annual fee, and it shall hold meetings once a year, upon request from the Head of the Executive Committee and on a date decided by the Executive Committee. Invites are sent by post, electronic-mail or by direct communication at least 15 days before the date of the meeting, and a meeting shall not be considered valid unless the majority of the members attend it (50 % plus 1)

2-if a General Assembly meeting was valid at the beginning, later withdrawals of members from the meeting shall not affect the validity of the decisions made.

3-If a majority did not attend, another meeting can be held after one week and this meeting shall be considered valid regardless of the number of members who attended.

4- An irregular meeting can be held upon request of the Executive Committee or one fifth of members of the General Assembly if the need arises.

5- Meeting/s of the General Assembly can be held by teleconference if necessary provided that the meeting/s are coordinated with the Executive Committee.

Article 13

Role of the General Assembly:

The General Assembly aims to achieve the goals of the association through:

1-Deciding upon the internal rules and procedures for the association

2-Approving the annual budget and final budget report for each year

- 3-approving the annual report of the association
- 4-choosing members of the Executive Committee
- 5-approving the action plan proposed by the Executive Committee
- 6-Proposing to set up committees and branches for the association as recommended by the Executive Committee
- 7-appointing external account auditor and deciding his/her remuneration
- 8-Proposing to move the headquarters of the association
- 9-proposing the dissolution of the association
- 10-anything else that the General Assembly may decide on in a regular meeting

Article 14

The structure of the Executive Committee:

- 1-The Executive Committee is made up of 9 active members elected by the General Assembly, through anonymous voting. For eligibility, active members should have postgraduate professional or academic qualification in a mental health specialty. Elected members are the ones who received the greatest number of votes. Preferably, among those elected there are, at least one psychiatrist, one psychologist and one clinical social worker.
- 2- Membership of The Committee is for a term of two years and is renewable through election.
- 3-If one of the members of the Executive Committee missed three consecutive meetings without an acceptable reason, the Committee will have the right to consider this member resigned.
- 4-Should the membership of any of the Executive Committee end prematurely for whatever reason, the Board chooses an alternative member from those who received the next highest number of votes after the elected members, provided that the General Assembly consents to this choice in its first meeting.
- 5-The Executive Committee shall elect, through anonymous voting, one of its members as Head of the Committee for a two-year term,

renewable once only by election, and the Board shall also choose from its members a vice president, a secretary and a treasurer.

6-The Head of Executive Committee is considered the Association's representative and shall communicate with official and non-official bodies on its behalf, according to the decided rules and procedures. He/she is also the head of the General Assembly.

Article 15

Executive Committee meetings:

The Executive Committee holds a regular meeting every three months, and a meeting is only considered valid if at least five members attend. The Committee can hold irregular meetings whenever half its members, or one fifth of the members of the General Assembly or the Head of the Executive Committee calls for them. In irregular meetings only the issues for which the meeting was called can be discussed.

Decisions of the Executive Committee are taken according to a simple majority vote, and when votes are equal the Head of the Executive Committee shall decide.

Article 16

The Role of the Executive Committee:

The role of the Executive committee is to:

- 1-Prepare the agenda of the General Assembly
- 2-Propose the general policy of the association, within the framework of the goals set out in the constitution, and to present it to the General Assembly for approval
- 3- Propose the internal rules of the association and regulate its work
- 4- Form the committees and specialist groups that will carry out the duties and activities of the association and decide on the recommendations of these committees and groups
- 5-Assess applications and take decisions regarding them as it sees fit
- 6-determine registration and annual fees for members
- 7-set out a plan of action for elections
- 8-organise the activities and events which contribute to the achievement of the goals of the association



- 9-commission research
- 10-approve seminars, courses and other programs of the association
- 11-propose the budget of the association
- 12-accept gifts, donations, grants and subsidies
- 13-recruit staff as needed and decide their salaries and look after their affairs as approved by the General Assembly
- 14-prepare the annual report of the association and presenting it to the General Assembly
- 15-call for the regular and irregular meetings of the General Assembly, discuss its recommendations and carry out its decisions.
- 16-In case, a member has violated/breached the ethics of professional conduct, the Executive Committee has the right to refer him to SAMH Legal and Ethics Committee to investigate the matter and make an appropriate recommendation.
- 17-any additional roles given to it by the General Assembly

Article 17:

Association resources and budget:

One: the association shall rely on its basic resources which are:

- 1-Annual membership fees
- 2-sales of press, periodicals and the services it offers, within its set goals.
- 3-revenues of the courses and programmes organized by the association
- 4-unconditional gifts, donations and grants made to the association by individuals and organizations
- 5-Awkaf made especially for the association

Two: the association budget and accounts:

- 1-the association's financial year begins and ends with the Gregorian year
- 2-The final budget report or audit of accounts is prepared according to recognized standards
- 3- Association money can only be spent upon approval by the Executive Committee and the issuing of a spending order signed by the head of the Executive Committee and the treasurer
- 4-The association's finances can only be used for the purposes of achieving its stated goals



Article 18:

Dissolution of the association:

- 1-The Executive committee can call the General Assembly to meet in order to consider dissolution of the association, if it should become clear that the association is no longer capable of achieving its goals. The association shall not be dissolved unless a decision by the General Assembly has been made by a two-thirds majority.
- 2-The General Assembly, after a decision of dissolving the association has been made, shall appoint a committee to sort out its legal issues and meet its obligations.
- 3-The association finances shall, after its dissolution, be transferred to those associations whose goals and aims are close to the goals and aims of the association.

Article 19:

General rules:

- 1-The association shall set its executive rules in a way that does not contradict with the rules set out here, and executive rules shall be approved by the Executive Committee and decided by the General Assembly.
- 2-These rules shall take effect from the date of their approval
- 3-these rules shall make void any previously set rules that may contradict them.

This constitution was reviewed and approved by the general assembly during its meeting on 30th April 2017, corresponding to 4th Shaaban 1438 H.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds.