

## **Integrating Mental Health into Comprehensive Bleeding Disorders Care**

The European Haemophilia Consortium (EHC) recognises that mental health is a fundamental component of comprehensive care for people living with bleeding disorders. While medical advances have significantly improved life expectancy and physical health outcomes, the psychological and emotional burden of living with a bleeding disorder remains under-recognised and insufficiently addressed. Mental health challenges, such as anxiety, depression, stigma and caregiver stress, directly impact treatment adherence, quality of life, and overall well-being.

Despite increasing recognition of mental health within EU policy frameworks, implementation at national and local levels remains inconsistent and fragmented, resulting in a persistent gap between policy commitments and clinical practice that limits patient access to psychological services. At the same time, stigma continues to pose a significant barrier to care, with individuals affected by bleeding disorders experiencing public, self-, and structural stigma, all of which can deter both patients and their families from seeking appropriate support.

Furthermore, existing mental health services often lack the specialised expertise required to address the distinct psychosocial needs associated with bleeding disorders. These challenges are further exacerbated by resource constraints and systemic inequities across Europe, where disparities in service availability, especially in rural and under-resourced settings, continue to widen gaps in comprehensive bleeding disorder care.

The EHC firmly believes that mental health is healthcare, and that people with bleeding disorders deserve equal access to psychological as well as physical care. Addressing mental health is essential not only for individual well-being but also for achieving better treatment outcomes, adherence, and long-term health. To support this, the EHC proposes the following policy recommendations.

### **Policy Recommendations**

#### **Integrate mental health into comprehensive care**

National healthcare systems should embed mental health specialists within haemophilia treatment centres. Psychological support must be a standard element of multidisciplinary care.

#### **Promote education and awareness**

Awareness campaigns should target both healthcare providers and the general public to challenge stigma, normalise conversations on mental health, and encourage help-seeking behaviours.

### **Invest in training and resources for healthcare professionals**

Healthcare professionals need training on the psychosocial aspects of bleeding disorders. Dedicated funding should be allocated to expand access to specialised mental health services.

Mental health and physical health are inseparable. For the bleeding disorders community, neglecting psychological well-being undermines progress achieved in medical care. The EHC is committed to working with policymakers, clinicians, patient organisations, and industry partners to ensure that mental health care is recognised, resourced, and delivered as an essential component of treatment. By integrating access, awareness, and support, we can empower people with bleeding disorders not only to survive, but to thrive.