

Which ethical ground rules do we want to have in the self-help movement?

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The idea for such declaration about ethical ground rules goes back to an [idea by Kalle Pehe](#), Germany, from 1999. Kalle Pehe could not attend at the Vejle conference, because at this time he worked as teacher, and in his town the summer holidays started one week after the conference.

Participants of the workshop No. 1 "Which ethical ground rules do we want to have in the self-help movement?", who together developed the Vejle Declaration, were Olli Stålström (Finland), Olga Riabova & Yakov Kostrovsky (both Russia), Jan Verhaegh (The Netherlands), Mari Yamamoto (Japan), Dominique Laurent (France), David Bonde Henriksen (Denmark) and Peter Lehmann. Later on Mary Nettle (England) helped to optimize the English translation.

We summarized our different and often long-term experiences in the selfhelp-sector so long, until we had a result, everybody agreed. The idea was not, that such a statement would change the people with their different political opinions; but in political discussions the result would be more cooperation, if people can refer to a wide accepted declaration about ethical ground rules. So it was decided in the workshop, that the declaration should be presented to the ENUSP and WNUSP assembly to be adopted as "Vejle Declaration."

Vejle Declaration

**approved by the General Assemblies of ENUSP & WNUSP
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How we propose to deal with each other

In all organisations we should:

- build a constructive, welcoming, friendly, attractive atmosphere, respectful of all the opinions of others, not trying to decide what is good for them and support each other in developing our individual and creative capacities
- underline the importance of transparency, good governance and responsibility in financial matters
- integrate minorities in a proactive way and combat any discrimination, whether is based on origin, gender, age, disability, economy, religious or sexual orientation
- be patient to each other, try to see the whole person behind the label and emotional and physical problems and not to judge others
- be careful in the election of representatives and consider their experiences and prevent ourselves and our colleagues to burn out and subsequently leave the organisation
- appreciate the work of all people who honestly try to improve psychosocial treatment as well as those who work to establish alternatives to psychiatry and we resist any unilateral approach to the understanding of mental health problems
- respect the work of volunteers and recognize the need for paid jobs as well as we are looking for allies, because we face a vast and complex task.
- demand that psychosocial services are made for the users/clients/survivors/people in recovery, under our influence and with respect to our equal rights as citizens in a democratic society.