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Developing Partnerships with Service Users and Family Carers  
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Author: M. Amering  
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Charlene was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1991 and her journey since then has exposed her to the challenges experienced by persons with mental disorders within and outside of the mental health sector. This encouraged her to commit herself to fighting the cause for mental health and human rights. She has worked in the field since 2003. Charlene is the Founder/CEO of the Global Mental Health Peer Network ([www.gmhpn.org](http://www.gmhpn.org)). She serves on a number of international boards and committees. previously served on the South African Presidential Working Group on Disability and Ministerial Advisory Committee on Mental Health. Charlene is the former Principal Coordinator for the Movement for Global Mental Health.

She has written and produced theatre plays on life stories of persons living with mental disorders (including one on her life with schizophrenia), and written and produced a short feature film based on the storylines of the theatre plays – to raise public awareness. Charlene had been involved in the review/ drafting of various policies and legislation in South Africa and provided technical assistance to national and international mental health related reports and documents. She annually guest lectures at the Stellenbosch University in South Africa and the Indian Law College's International Diploma on Mental Health, Human Rights and Law in Pune in India.

She has published widely on issues related to mental health and human rights, stigma and the needs of people with mental illness in low- and middle-income countries, and she served as a Commissioner on the Lancet Commission on Global Mental Health and Sustainable Development and on the WPA-Lancet Psychiatry Commission on the Future of Psychiatry. She currently is co-editor of the Lancet Commission on Mental Health Stigma and Discrimination, and a Commissioner on the Lancet Commission on Psychosis. She received a number of national and international awards for her work.