THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF MENTAL HEALTH

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BREAKING POINT
The EU has failed us all

We must break free of the EU and take back control of our borders.
Refugees from Syria are now pouring into our great country. Who knows who they are - some could be ISIS. Is our president insane?
The Social Determinants of Mental Health

• Definitions
• Context
• Key Concepts
• A Review of the Evidence
• Taking Action
Objectives

1. Define and describe the social determinants of mental health
2. Understand the evidence for two specific social determinants of mental health – adverse early life experiences and poverty
3. Identify actions that clinicians can take to address the social determinants of mental health
Those factors that impact upon health and well-being: the circumstances into which we are born, grow up, live, work, and age, including the health system.

These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at global, national, and local levels, which are themselves influenced by policy choices.
The social determinants of health are prominently responsible for health disparities and inequities.

*Health disparities*: differences in health status among distinct segments of the population including differences that occur by gender, race or ethnicity, education or income, disability, or living in various geographic localities.

*Health inequities*: disparities in health that are a result of systemic, avoidable, and unjust social and economic policies and practices that create barriers to opportunity.
The Social Determinants of Health

Health begins where we live, learn, work, and play. Your zip code may be more important to your overall health than your genetic code.
Determinants of Health and Their Contribution to Premature Death

- Genetic Predisposition: 30%
- Social Circumstances: 15%
- Environmental Exposure: 5%
- Health Care: 10%
- Behavioral Patterns: 40%

Individuals with serious mental illnesses die, on average, up to 25 years earlier than the general population.
Social Justice
Defining Social Justice

The distribution of good (advantages) and bad (disadvantages) in society, and more specifically how these things should be distributed in society. It is concerned with the ways that resources are allocated to people by social institutions.

-David Miller-
Defining Social Justice

Assuring the protection of equal access to liberties, rights, and opportunities, as well as taking care of the least advantaged members of society.

- John Rawls -
Social Justice and Health

Social justice is considered the moral foundation and a core value of public health.

It ensures that individuals in a society have equal opportunities to lead healthy, meaningful, and productive lives.

Suicide (1897) demonstrated the relationship between social exclusion and suicide described suicide as a social phenomenon
Faris and Dunham (1939). *Mental disorders in urban areas: an ecological study of schizophrenia and other psychoses* suggested an relationship between socially disorganized communities and rates of schizophrenia.
The Rise of Biological Psychiatry

• Shift in the field to the individual factors associated with mental illness – molecular and genetic risk factors and determinants
• This movement has led to major strides in research and treatment of mental illness
• Advances in genetics, neurobiology, and pharmacology
• An unfortunate byproduct is that focus has moved away from examining how social processes contribute to mental illness
Nature and Nurture

• Previously presented as two competing realms at odds
• The interplay between biology and the environment is key
• One cannot understand biology without understanding the socio-environmental context
• Mechanisms underpinning social factors cannot be understood without considering neurobiology
“Even more than other areas of health and medicine, the mental health field is plagued by disparities in the availability of and access to its services. These disparities are viewed readily through the lenses of racial and cultural diversity, age, and gender.”
A Public Health Approach to Behavioral Health

• Population Health
• Epidemiologic Surveillance of the Health of the Population
• Health Promotion/Disease Prevention
• Access to and Evaluation of Services
• Risk/Protective Factors
Risk Factor –
A characteristic that precedes a disorder and is statistically associated with that disorder
Protective Factor –

A characteristic that predates a disorder or outcome and significantly reduces the risk of developing that disorder or outcome
The Causes of the Causes

“The Fundamental Causes of Disease”

If risk factors are the precursors of disease, then the environmental and contextual factors that precede or shape these risk factors are the causes of the causes.

The Causal Chain

“Why is Jason in the hospital?”

Because he has a bad infection in his leg.

But why does he have an infection?

He has a cut on his leg and it got infected.

But why does he have a cut on his leg?

He was playing in a junk yard next to his apartment building and fell on some sharp, jagged steel there.

But why was he playing in a junk yard?

His neighborhood is run down. Kids play there and there is no one to supervise them.

But why does he live in that neighborhood?

His parents can’t afford a nicer place to live.

But why can’t his parents afford a nicer place to live?

His dad is unemployed and his mom is sick.

But why is his dad unemployed?

Because he doesn’t have much education and he can’t find a job.

But why?
Describing the Social Determinants of Mental Health
The Social Determinants of Mental Health

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No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

-Nelson Mandela
The Child is father of the Man.
-William Wordsworth
The school is the last expenditure upon which America should be willing to economize.

-Franklin D. Roosevelt
If a man doesn’t have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty nor the possibility for the pursuit of happiness. He merely exists.

-Martin Luther King, Jr.
Poverty is not just a lack of money; it is not having the capability to realize one's full potential as a human being. - Amartya Sen
There will never cease to be ferment in the world unless people are sure of their food.

-Pearl Buck
The connection between health and the dwelling of the population is one of the most important that exists.

-Florence Nightingale
Where you stand depends on where you sit.

-Nelson Mandela
Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.
- Martin Luther King, Jr.
“To provide a basis for understanding the determinants of disease and arriving at rational treatments and patterns of health care, a medical model must also take into account the patient, the social context in which he lives and the complementary system devised by society to deal with the disruptive effects of illness, that is, the physician role and the health care system. This requires a biopsychosocial model.”

-George Engel-
Example 1: Adverse Early Life Experiences
Adverse Early Life Experiences

Inconsistent, threatening, hurtful, traumatic, or neglectful social interchanges experienced by fetuses, infants, children, or adolescents.
The three types of ACEs include

**ABUSE**
- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual

**NEGLECT**
- Physical
- Emotional

**HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION**
- Mental Illness
- Mother treated violently
- Divorce
- Substance Abuse
- Incarcerated Relative

ACEs are Highly Prevalent

More than 60% of the population surveyed reported one or more ACEs.
Health Problems Associated with ACEs

- Alcohol use disorders
- Depression
- Illicit drug use
- Suicide attempts
- Teen pregnancies
- Smoking
- COPD
- Fetal death
- Ischemic heart disease
- Liver disease
- Hearing voices

- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Multiple sexual partners
- STDs
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early initiation of smoking
- Early initiation of sexual activity
- Early mortality
LIFE EXPECTANCY

People with six or more ACEs died nearly **20 years earlier on average** than those without ACEs.
Relationship of ACE Score to Having Attempted Suicide in Adulthood

Mechanisms by which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan
Example 2: Poverty and Income Inequality
Federal poverty line (2015)
• $24,250 for family of four
• $11,770 for one person

“Near poor” is between 100% and 200% of federal poverty level.

14.8% of Americans (46.7 million) were living in poverty in 2014
The Juvenilization of Poverty

About 40% of children in the United States are poor or near poor.
Neighborhood Deprivation

An “extreme poverty” neighborhood is an area/neighborhood where over 40% of households are below the federal poverty line.
Poverty and Mental Health

• Poverty has been associated with numerous mental health outcomes.

• Timing, duration, and intensity of poverty matter.
Income Inequality in the U.S.

Income growth between 1979 and 2005

- Bottom 5th
- Middle 5th
- Fourth 5th
- Top 5th overall
- Top 1%
Mental Health Related Outcomes Associated with Poverty and Income Inequality

- Depressive disorders
- Poor self-reported mental health
- Drug overdose deaths
- Juvenile homicides
- Delinquency
- Anxiety disorders
- PTSD
- Increased arrests
- Cognitive, behavioral, and attention-related problems in children
Income Inequality and Mental Illness Prevalence by Country

Inequality and Depression Prevalence by State

“I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough, we must apply. Being willing is not enough, we must do.”
Changing the Context to Make Individuals’ Default Decisions Healthy

Long-Lasting Protective Interventions

Clinical Interventions

Counseling & Education

Socioeconomic Factors

All Policies are Health Policies

“Housing policy is health policy. Educational policy is health policy. Anti-violence policy is health policy. Neighborhood improvement policies are health policies. Everything that we can do to improve the quality of life of individuals in our society has an impact on their health and is a health policy.”
Success in Addressing the Social Determinants of Behavioral Health

• Nurse-Family Partnerships
• High/Scope Perry Preschool Program and Head Start
• Good Behavior Game
• Health Leads
• Medical-Legal Partnerships
Clinical Interventions

- Screening and secondary preventive interventions.
- Addressing policies in your work settings.
- Developing resource guides for clients and staff.
- Referring clients to available supports (supported employment, supported education, supportive housing, poverty assistance programs, SNAP benefits, etc).
G X E = Gene by Environment Interactions
Policy Interventions

Public Policies

• Advocate for policies and laws that improve education, increase employment opportunities (or extend employment benefits for the unemployed), decrease food insecurity, end discrimination, improve housing standards, etc.

• Offer your expertise to your elected officials (individually, or through professional organizations)

• Cross-sector collaborations are key
Policy Interventions

Social Norms

• Community Education and Engagement
  • About the importance of cultural competence
  • About the negative impact of stigma
• Use laws to change norms
  • Create a culture of tolerance and acceptance
  • Speak up when this culture is not respected
WHY PUT US IN DANGER
“If we accept and acquiesce in the face of discrimination, we accept the responsibility ourselves. We should, therefore, protest openly everything...that smacks of discrimination or slander.”

– Mary McLeod Bethune
ONE WORLD
ONE FAMILY

REFUGEES WELCOME
NO ONE IS ILLEGAL