NEW YORK STATE | Office of Mental Health

Strategies for Behavioral Health Equity: Leveraging Social Determinants of Mental Health to Promote Recovery

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OMH's Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Supports, coordinates and implements policies aimed at reducing disparities in access, quality and treatment outcomes for OMH State Operated, licensed and funded programs

Conducts comprehensive trainings and provides technical assistance on the importance of infusing cultural and linguistic competence throughout Agency policies and clinical practices

Language Access - ensures language access services for individuals who have limited English proficiency

OMH's Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Workforce Diversity - oversees OMH's efforts to plan for and implement activities to recruit and create a diverse workforce and to maintain an inclusive environment across OMH's offices and facilities

Monitors the advancement of research through the Centers of Excellence in Culturally Competent Care (NKI/NYSPI) and applies those research findings to our real-world practices of delivering, overseeing and funding mental health services statewide

Facilitates meetings between the Office of Mental Health and the Statewide Multicultural Advisory Committee

Office of Prevention and Health Initiatives (OPHI)

Provides an infrastructure within OMH for the development of policy, training, and research to further OMH's prevention agenda

Works to actively incorporate and address social determinants of mental health that are increasingly recognized as critical to overall health and wellness of individuals

Areas of activity include:

- Identifying synergies and avoiding redundancies within OMH and across agencies
- Development of and/or support for programmatic initiatives
- Training
- Collaborating on research and evaluation efforts

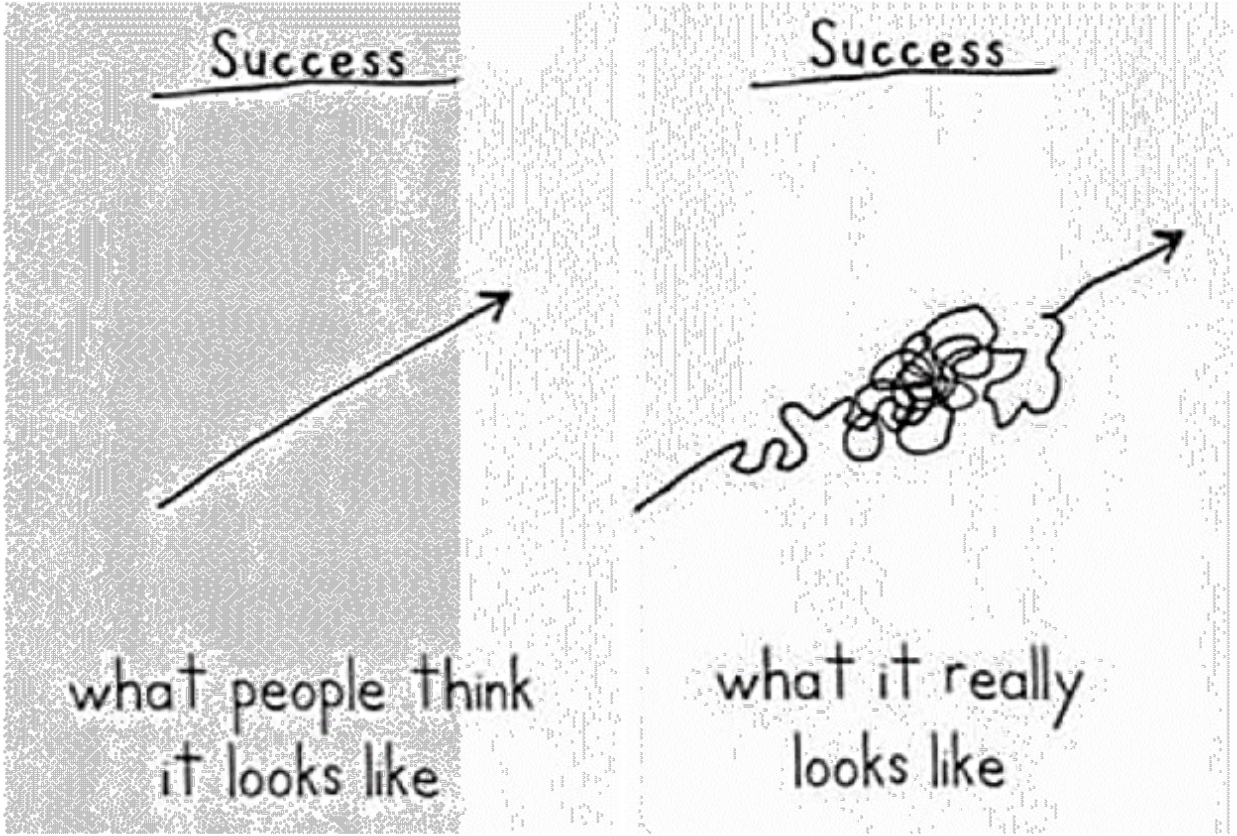
Today's Objectives

Gain a better understanding of social determinants of mental health and their intersection with behavioral health equity

Understand the basis of what behavioral health equity is and the importance of working towards achieving behavioral health equity

Identify key action steps that can be implemented to promote behavioral health equity within an individual's respective role

Why I LOVE MY Job! (My Story)



Definition: Disparities

"Particular type of health difference that is **closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage**. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on their **racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location**; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion (SAMHSA 2018)".

Definition: Health Inequities

"Health inequities are **avoidable** inequalities in health between groups of people within countries and between countries. These inequities arise from inequalities within and between societies. Social and economic conditions and their effects on people's lives determine their risk of illness and the actions taken to prevent them becoming ill or treat illness when it occurs (WHO, 2018)."

OMH's Recent Policy Advances to Address Disparities

Progress and phased in release of the **Vital Signs Dashboard**, depicting racial, ethnic, and gender-based disparities in NY's mental health system (currently in OMH clinics, full system release in early 2022).

The inclusion of equity language in all RFP's being exclusively released by OMH, based on the National CLAS Standards.

Actively working to uniformly include the National CLAS Standards into additional regulatory, policy and funding mechanisms.

Emerging collaboration with SUNY and CUNY to implement diversity pipeline programs to increase the level of diversity in NY's MH workforce.

OMH's Recent Policy Advances to Address Disparities

Enhanced infrastructure at the Center for Practice Innovations, including the hiring a Diversity and Inclusion Director to:

- Implement an online training curriculum to **support broad mental health system adoption of the National CLAS Standards**;
- Developing and coordinating an ongoing virtual **Behavioral Health Learning Community**
- Infusing the topics of mitigating bias, workforce diversity and inclusion and behavioral health equity concepts across all CPI internal and external activities;

Embarking on a structural racism organizational assessment process with the NKI-Center for Research for Cultural and Structural Equity to identify agency policies and practices that contribute to racial inequities in NY's mental health system.

Mental Health Disparities - Special Populations

Asian American males, in grades 9-12, were 30% more likely to consider attempting suicide as compared to non-Hispanic white male students, in 2019

Black and African American individuals are more often diagnosed with schizophrenia and less often diagnosed with mood disorders compared to white people with the same symptoms. Additionally, they are offered medication or therapy at the lower rates than the general population

46% of LGBTQ youth report they wanted psychological or emotional counseling from a mental health professional but were unable to receive it in the past 12 months

American Indian and Alaskan Native individuals report experiencing serious psychological distress 2.5 times more than the general population over a month's time

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Mental Health America, Trevor Project, CDC

Mental Health Housing and Racial Disparities - Causes

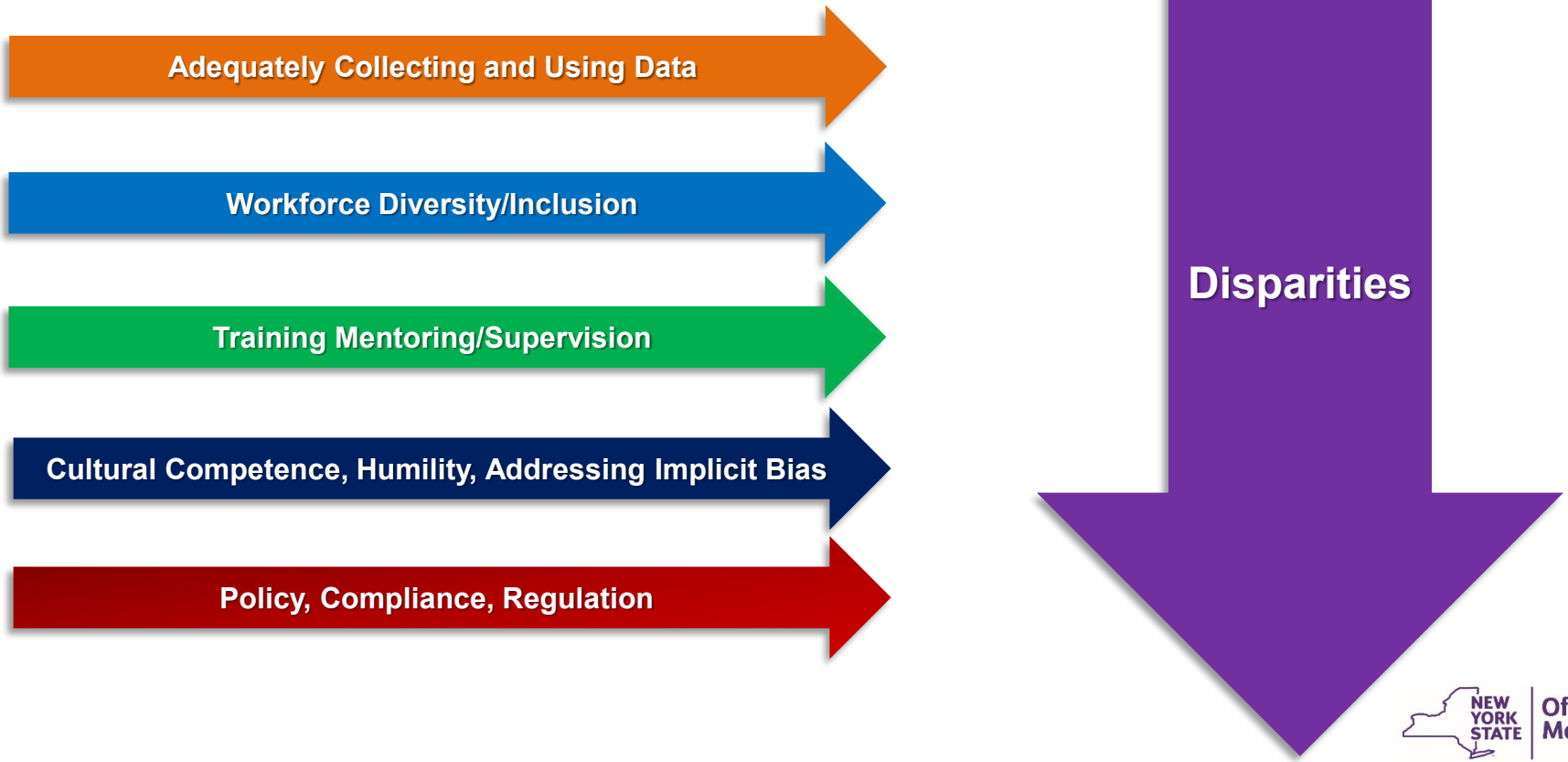
History - from slavery to segregation, people of color have been denied rights and socioeconomic opportunities. The disproportionality in homelessness is a by-product of systemic inequity: effects of racism continue to perpetuate disparities in critical areas that impact rates of homelessness.

Poverty - is a strong predictor of homelessness. Black and Latinx groups are overrepresented in poverty relative to their representation in the overall population - with rates of 10.8% and 7.6% percent, respectively.

Criminal Justice - people of color are overrepresented in the criminal justice system

- A criminal history can keep people from successfully passing background checks to secure both housing and employment
- People exiting jails and prisons often face significant problems in accessing safe and affordable housing and their rate of homelessness is high.

Reducing Disparities



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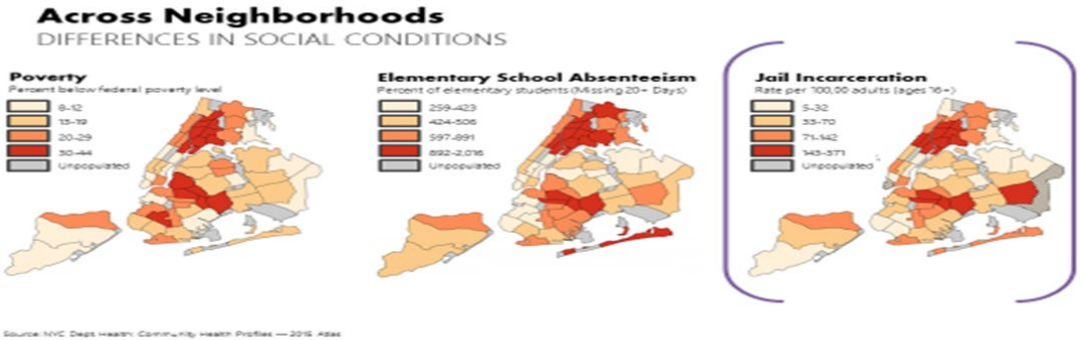
Zip Code vs. Genetic Code



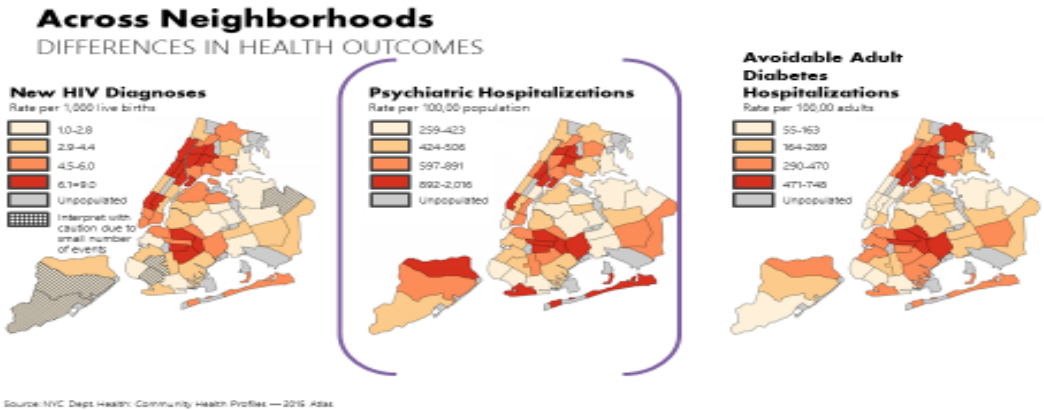
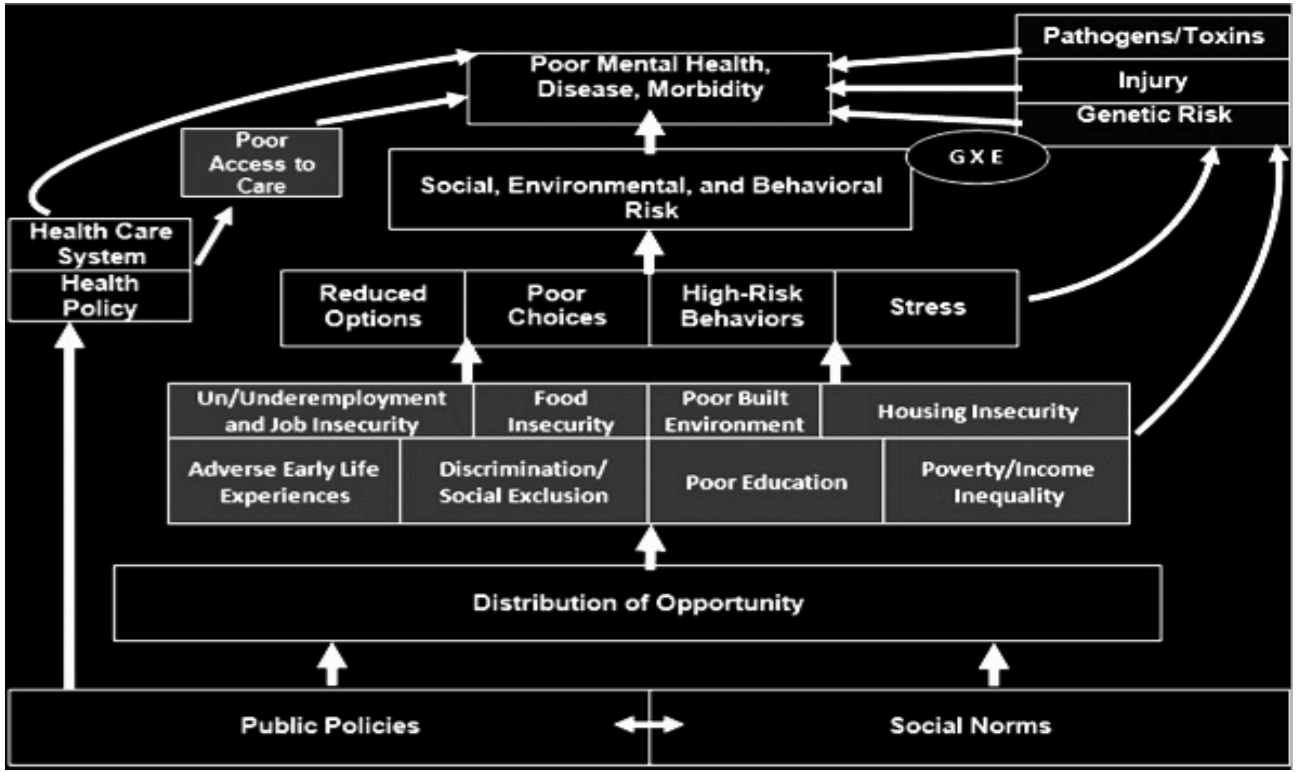


FIGURE 1. Conceptualizing the Social Determinants of Mental Health



Clinical

Compton and Shim, 2015

US Dept .of Health and Human Services, 2010

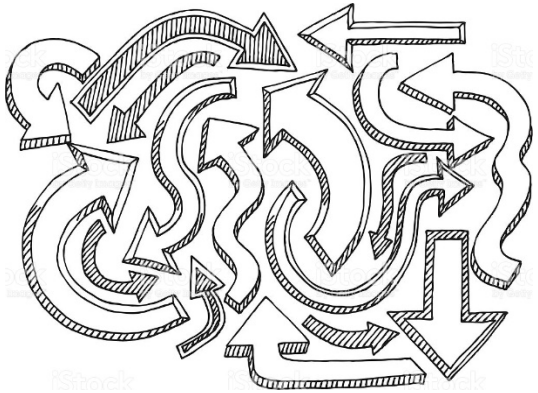
- Access to Foods that Support Healthy Eating
- Quality of Housing
- Crime and Violence
- Environmental Conditions

- Access to Health Care
- Access to Primary Care
- Health Literacy

- Social Cohesion
- Civic Participation
- Discrimination
- Incarceration

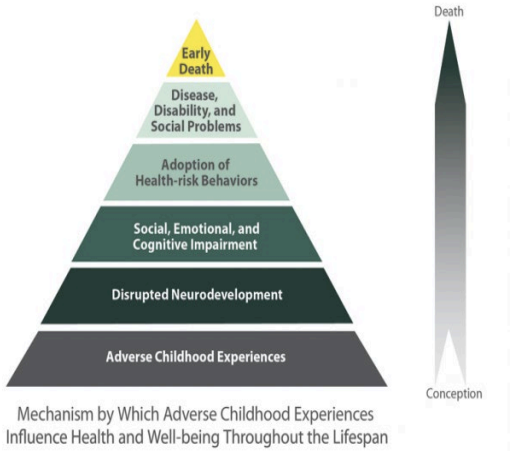
- High School Graduation
- Higher Education
- Language and Literacy
- Early Childhood Education

- Poverty
- Employment
- Food Insecurity
- Housing Instability



- Altered community demographics
- Fractured family
- Children trapped in poverty
- Diminished educational opportunity
- Stagnated economic mobility
- Widened income equality
- Exacerbated homelessness
- Restricted access to benefits

Cloud, 2014



Mechanism by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan

Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often… Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often… Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?

Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever… Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way

Did you often or very often feel that … No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?

Did you often or very often feel that … You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you?

Were your parents ever separated or divorced?

Was your mother or stepmother:
Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?

Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?

Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt
suicide?

Did a household member go to prison?

Now add up your "Yes" answers:
This is your ACE Score

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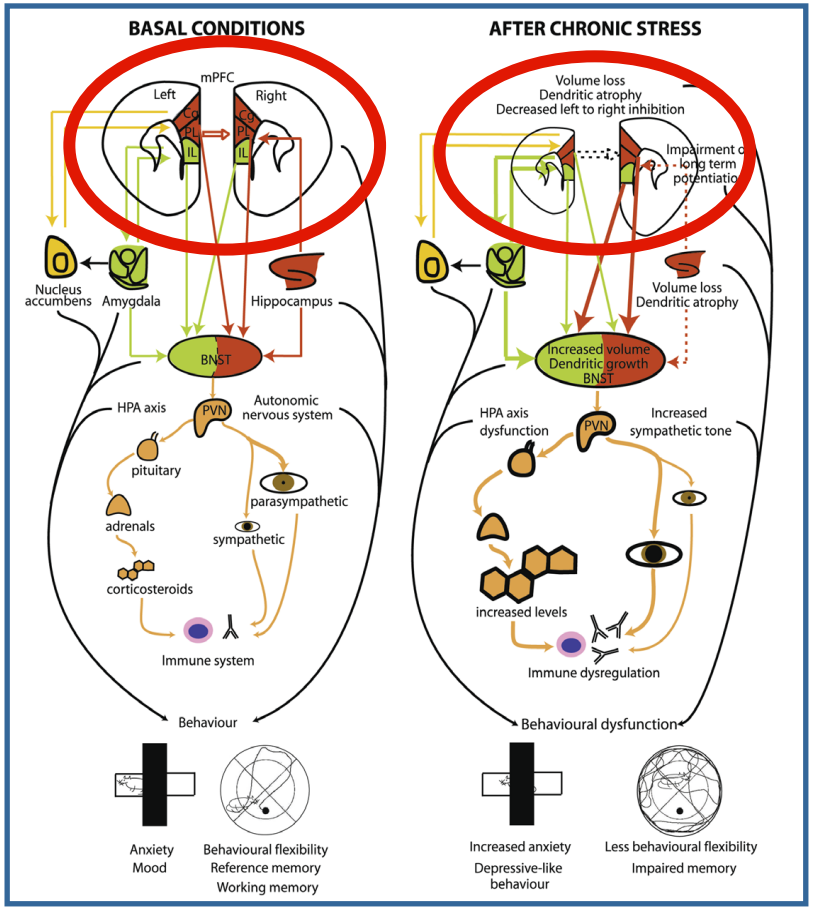
Systemic Racism

- Disproportionately exposed to the social determinants associated with behavioral health consequences

- Discrimination is a social determinant

Discrimination

Discrimination



Cerqueira J et al. (2008)

Biopsychosocial Model

- WHO (Constitution, 1946) : Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity

- Engel (AJP, 1980):
  - “to best serve the patient, higher-system-level occurrences must be approached…the physician identifies and evaluates the stabilizing and destabilizing potential of events and relationships in the patient’s social environment…” including the effect of the illness on others that may feedback as destabilizing influence on the patient.
  - A framework for scientific inquiry

AMA: Advocate for social, economic, educational, and political changes that ameliorate suffering and contribute to human well-being.
(Declaration of professional responsibility. Adopted 12/4/01)

APA: A physician shall recognize a responsibility to participate in activities contributing to the improvement of the community and the betterment of public health…. Psychiatrists may interpret and share with the public **their expertise in the various psychosocial issues** that may affect mental health and illness.

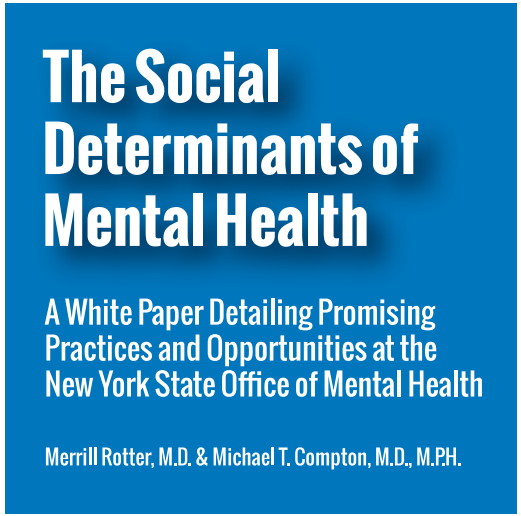
(APA Ethics, 2013)

Social Justice

- Social justice means fair distribution of advantages and equal sharing of burdens while focusing on those most disadvantaged.
    - Race
    - Gender
    - Age
    - Sexual Orientation
    - Religion
    - Nationality
    - Education
    - Mental or Physical Ability

SDMH White Paper (published on OMH website - 8/20)

- Spheres of influence
- Ongoing work
  - Children and Families
  - Health Equity Focus
- New opportunities
  - Data
  - Research
  - Dissemination
  - Policy coordination within OMH
    - Especially with Health Equity Office



Social Determinants of Mental Health (NYS MH System)

2017 PCS Sample, *n*=103,416

Educational Attainment	NHW	NHB	Hispanic	Other
<12 years	11.0%	**28.3%**	**34.3%**	17.2%
12th grade/high school graduate	39.3%	**40.1%**	36.0%	31.0%
>12th grade	49.7%	**31.6%**	**29.8%**	51.8%

Employment Status	NHW	NHB	Hispanic	Other
Unemployed	73.9%	**86.3%**	82.0%	75.1%
Employed Part-Time	12.4%	**5.6%**	8.1%	11.5%
Employed Full-Time	13.8%	**8.1%**	10.0%	13.4%

Criminal Justice Involvement	NHW	NHB	Hispanic	Other
Current Criminal Justice Involvement	10.8 %	**17.2%**	10.3%	7.5%

Homelessness	NHW	NHB	Hispanic	Other
Homelessness within the Past Six Months	5.4%	**12.7%**	8.9%	6.7%

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OPHI's Current Projects

- OMH is working in the prevention, social determinants and equity space across many of its offices
  - Housing
  - Suicide
- OPHI helps coordinate and collaborate
- OPHI is currently leading several projects, for example
  - Children and Families
    - Project Teach
    - Healthy Steps
  - Social Determinants
    - Post-pandemic Prevention (e.g. Project Hope sustainability)
    - Social Determinant screening and intervention
    - Food Insecurity (Healthy Foods Grant)

Questions/Discussion

Contact

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