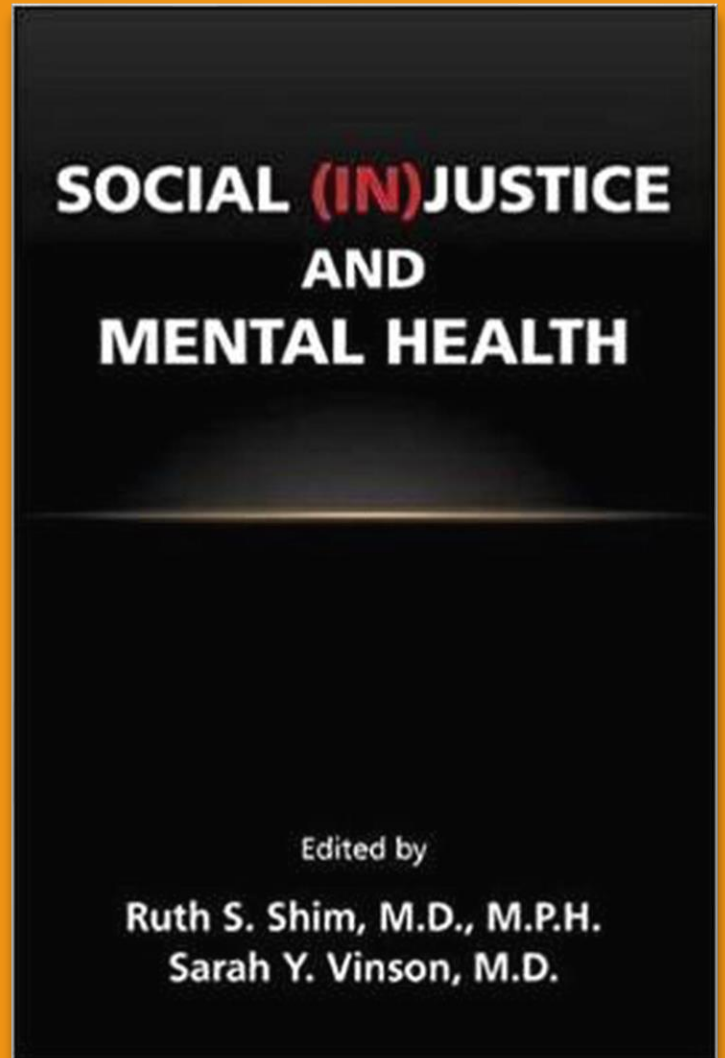


Social (In)Justice and Mental Health

Chapter 4: Social Injustice and Structural Racism



Structural Racism

- Racism = organized system premised on the categorization and ranking of social groups into races and devalues, disempowers, and differentially allocates desirable societal opportunities and resources to racial groups regarded as inferior.
- Social structures = systemic, hierarchical arrangements of economic, political, legal, religious, and cultural systems in societies.
- Structural racism engenders race-based inequity through a range of mechanism, including residential and other forms of spatial segregation, inequitable distribution of financial resources, disproportionate criminalization, unfair employment practices, and differences in access to quality health care.
- Structural racism operates by normalizing social and institutional practices that reinforce socio-economic and political differences among groups.



How Structural Racism Intersects With Mental Health

- Systems and policies may perpetuate inequities by disproportionately impacting the mental health and well-being of a particular racial or ethnic group.
- Bias and discrimination, whether explicit or implicit, by individuals and systems in positions of power within mental health can develop and preserve systems that work against racially oppressed populations at multiple levels.

Acculturation

- An individual-level process through which individuals acquire “behaviors, attitudes, and values prevalent within American society.”
- Mental health professionals and policy makers need to address the pervasive and systemic structural factors that perpetuate health inequities.

Racial Bias and Racialization in Mental Health Diagnosis and Screening

- Structural racism is codified in biased screening tools, diagnostic instruments, and conceptual frameworks that are not normalized for nonwhite populations.
- Mental health screen instruments and diagnostic aids must be developed, tested, and validated with various target populations to increase reliability when assessing individuals across different racial groups.

Racial Bias and Racialization in Mental Health Policy and Research - Cultural Deprivation Theory

- *Historically, mental health experts and policy makers seek to understand mental health and intellectual differences through a cultural deprivation theory - which suggested that the disadvantaged groups lacked proper psychological development due to historical oppression.*
- *Cultural deprivation theory inadvertently pathologized poverty and blamed racially oppressed families for their shortcomings rather than addressing the underlying issues and social structures that explained these inequities.*
- *Mental health leaders' adoption of race neutrality and color-blindness to remove race from social structures proved to be harmful to groups that are racially and ethnically oppressed.*

Future Direction for Combating Structural Racism

- Knowledge of structural causes of disease is essential requirement for mental health care practice.
- Psychiatric and mental health training should incorporate these perspectives to ensure the provision of structurally and culturally informed care and systems of care.
- Structural racism and discrimination shape the lived experiences and mental life of racially, ethnically, and experientially oppressed populations.
- Understanding the role that race and social structures play in mental health care may help disentangle the role of structural racism and address mental health care for all oppressed individuals.

Break Out Session

Discussion Questions:



1. How has structural racism impacted me? My clients? My peers? My colleagues?
2. Are there ways in which cultural deprivation theory may have influenced the way I was taught or supervised?
3. What are the ways in which thinking in a race-neutral manner could negatively impact my relationships with the clients, peers, supervisors, or staff members?

Wrap Up – Chapter 4

Questions & Comments?



We will discuss what we have learned so far at the next MIDD AC meeting.

Meeting: December 14, 2023

Thank you!!