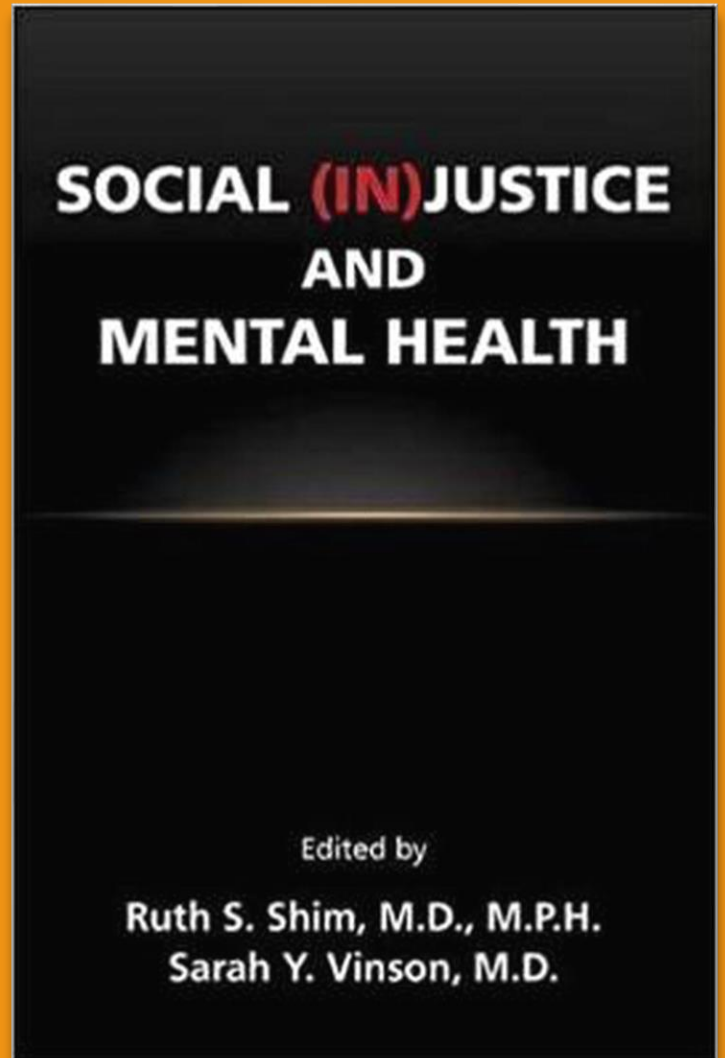


# Social (In)Justice and Mental Health

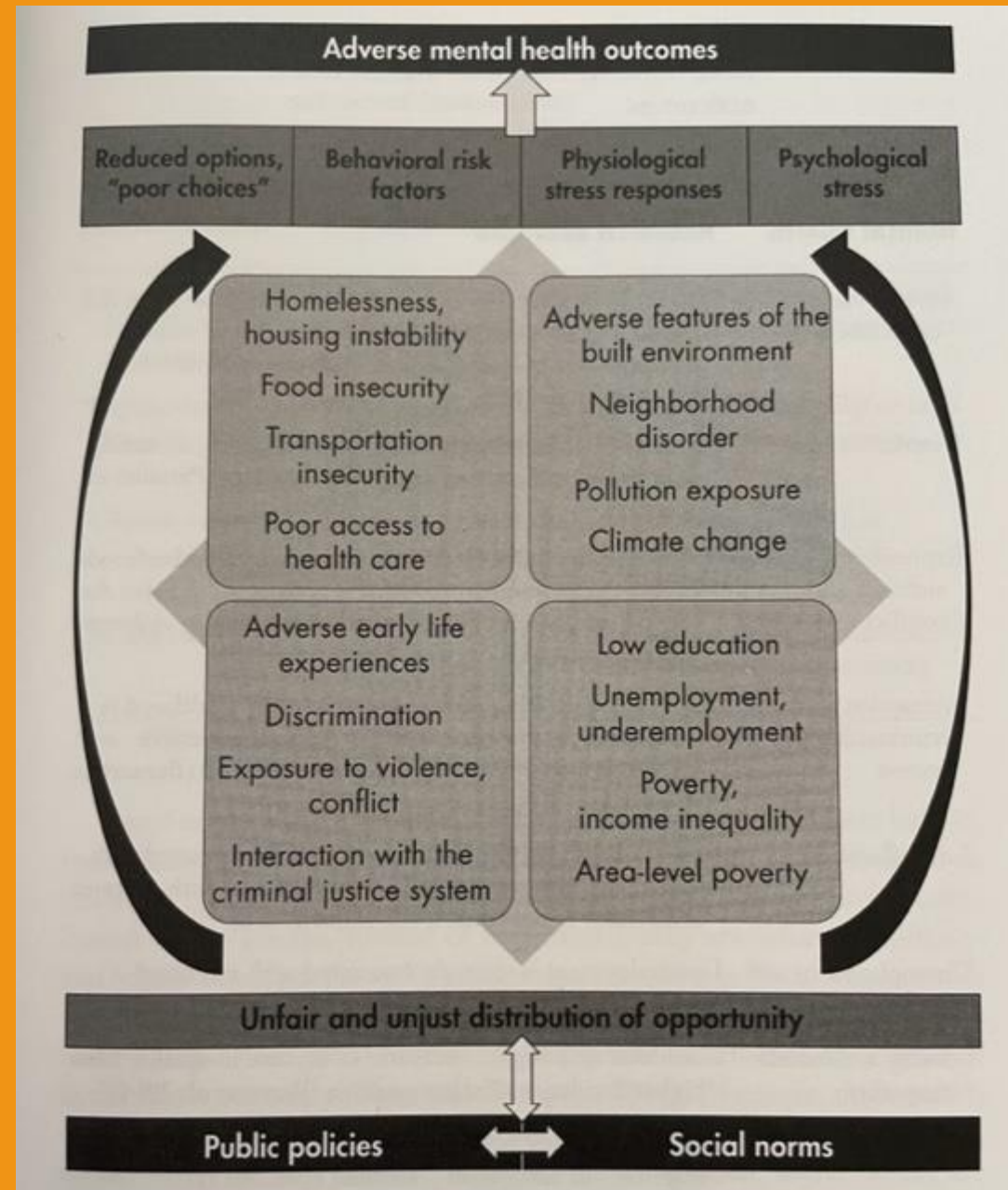
Chapter 2



# Social Determinants of Health

- Conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, which are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources
- Common cause of health inequities
  - Mental health disparities – differences in health status that occur among different population groups
  - Mental health inequities – differences in health that are the result of systemic, avoidable, and unjust social and economic policies that create barriers to opportunity

# Social Determinants of Mental Health





# Social Determinants of Mental Health

Social determinant of mental health	Research example
Adverse early life experiences	There is a graded, dose-response relationship between the number of adverse childhood experiences and suicide attempts, alcohol use disorder, and substance misuse (Merrick et al. 2017)
Discrimination	Racism is associated with poorer mental health, including depression, anxiety, and psychological stress (Paradies et al. 2015)
Exposure to violence and conflict	Women who witnessed violent acts in their neighborhoods experience depressive and anxiety symptoms at twice the rate of women who did not witness community violence (Clark et al. 2008)
Interaction with the criminal justice system	Incarceration during adolescence and early adulthood is independently associated with increased depressive symptoms and suicidal thoughts in adulthood (Barnert et al. 2017)
Low education	School dropout at the elementary level is associated with higher risk of poor mental health compared with dropout at all other educational levels (Hjorth et al. 2016)
Unemployment and underemployment	Unemployment is strongly associated with increased alcohol and substance use disorders (Compton et al. 2014)
Poverty and income inequality	Countries with higher measures of income inequality have higher incidence of schizophrenia (Burns et al. 2014)
Area-level poverty	Childhood family poverty predicts PTSD and MDD diagnoses in adulthood (Nikulina et al. 2011)
Homelessness and housing instability	Unstable housing predicts depressive symptoms in people with substance use disorders (Davey-Rothwell et al. 2008)
Food insecurity	Food insecurity in young adults is associated with increased depression, suicidal ideation, and substance misuse (Pryor et al. 2016)
Transportation insecurity	Good access to public transportation reduces the risk of depression in women and older adults (Melis et al. 2015)
Poor access to health care	Individuals with Medicaid coverage have lower rates of depression than do those with no insurance (Baicker et al. 2013)

# Social Determinants of Mental Health

<b>Social determinant of mental health</b>	<b>Research example</b>
Adverse features of the built environment	Higher levels of neighborhood green space are associated with lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress (Beyer et al. 2014)
Neighborhood disorder	Neighborhood disadvantage is associated with higher rate of depression and substance use disorder (Silver et al. 2002)
Pollution exposure	High-resolution air pollution exposure at age 12 is associated with increased odds of major depressive disorder at age 18 (Roberts et al. 2019)
Climate change	Extreme weather events (e.g., storms, floods) are associated with higher rates of PTSD, particularly in developing countries (Rataj et al. 2016)

*Note.* MDD=major depressive disorder; PTSD=posttraumatic stress disorder.

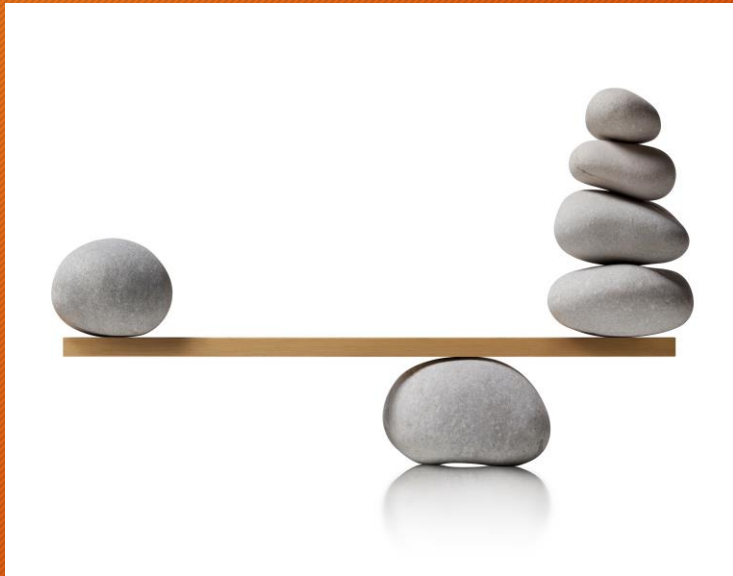


# Social Determinants of Mental Health

- Public policies – codes, rules, regulations, legislation, and court decisions about education, employment, wages, food, housing, neighborhoods, and many other facets of society.
  - Created and enforced in society that seemingly have no discernible connection to health often imparting significant, lasting impacts on health and well-being of the population.
- Social norms – values, attitudes, impressions, and biases held by individuals in society and by the collective.
  - Largely learned and disseminated within groups.
  - Informal opinions and beliefs about people and social groups, including political ideologies as well as views on class, race, and ethnicity, nationality, and gender.
  - Powered by implicit bias.



# Unequal and Unjust Distribution of Opportunity



- Harmful public policies and negative social norms lead to social injustice
- Structural violence – unequal and unjust distribution of opportunity creates structural forces that lead to differential levels of harm in various communities and populations
  - Deeply embedded in society and becomes invisible.
  - Social determinants of health are examples – ACE's, poverty, lack of access to health care, and low education directly lead to differential levels of harm in the form of mental illness and SUD's.
  - Injures the oppressed and exacerbates mental health inequities.



# Applying Social Determinants of MH to People with Disabilities

- 25% of the US population have disabilities
- Highly oppressed group, their “invisibility” leads to exclusion from consideration of social advantages
- The medical model reinforced social norms that people with disabilities were inferior
- Public policies reflected these negative norms, focusing on exclusion and segregation of those with disabilities
- Laws attempting to reverse discrimination against those with disabilities haven’t tackled structural discrimination built into the laws, leading to widening inequities for people of color and the poor
- Reinforced norms and discriminatory policies often exclude people with disabilities from the educational system and workforce, increasing poverty and exclusion



# Break Out Session



## Discussion Questions:

1. How do you identify/recognize social determinants in your work? (both current and prior determinants that motivate individuals and their circumstances)
2. How do these determinants affect racial equity?
3. Social determinants in relation to cultural context – how does it impact you/those you work with?

# Taking Action



- Increased emphasis on the importance of screening and assessing for social determinants of health and mental health
- Health Systems in the U.S. have invested \$2.5 billion to address social determinants of health, through housing, nutritional, income, care coordination, and community outreach support
  - This has not addressed the role injustice plays in driving these determinants – we must take action to address changing public policy and social norms to address this issue.
  - Preferential option for the poor – aims to reverse the damage of structural violence and social injustice, requiring MH professionals to go above and beyond for those most exploited, marginalized, and powerless.



# Wrap Up – Chapter 2

Questions & Comments?



Chapter Three will be discussed at the  
Advisory Committee Meeting:

*Social Injustice and Mental Health  
Inequities*

Thank you!!