It’s Essential! Responding to social determinants of mental health for youth and their families

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Learning Objectives

1. Identify
   Three strategies for addressing SODMH in child and adolescent mental health services

2. Include
   Cultural, and anti-racist approaches in case conceptualization in treatment planning and collaborative solutions

3. Plan
   For operationalizing and sustaining a systematic approach to addressing SODMH for underprivileged communities
Vignette

Diana is a young 15-year-old Latinx girl who immigrated with her family from El Salvador when she was 5 years old. She has a 2-year-old brother she helps take care of. Both her mom and dad are working several jobs to make “ends meet” and they are under significant stress.

Poll question

Which of the below are social determinants of mental health relevant to Diana’s story:

a) Socioeconomic Status
b) Discrimination
c) Immigration stress
d) Social marginalization
e) All of the above
Even after working 7 days a week Diana’s parents barely have enough to pay their bills. Diana usually does well in school and she has supportive teachers. But her family worries about having enough food at home.

Undocumented Status

• Compared the diagnoses and mental health care use of undocumented Latino immigrants (15%) with that of documented (73%) and US born Latinos (12%) treated in a clinical setting.
• Undocumented Latinos in our study were more likely to have a diagnosis of anxiety, adjustment and alcohol use disorders.
• The undocumented also had a significantly greater mean number of concurrent psychosocial stressors (mean number = 5, p < .001) as compared to documented immigrants and US born groups, which both had a mean number of 3 stressors identified at evaluation.
Undocumented Status

- The undocumented were more likely to have psychosocial problems related to occupation, access to healthcare and the legal system.
- Undocumented had a lower mean number of total mental health appointments attended (mean visits = 4.3, p < .001) to documented immigrants (mean visits = 7.9) and US born (mean visits = 13.3).
- The results of this study suggest the importance of early assessment of psychosocial stressors.
- Importance of accessible social services and supports for addressing psychosocial stressors in the lives of undocumented patients.

Diana stories continue--

- Diana worries about her parents being deported, leaving her and her younger brother as orphans. She has experienced discrimination—including being told by adult strangers to go back where she came from.
- She has started to have frequent panic attacks, poor appetite and declining school performance.

Definitions: Structural Inequities

Structural inequities

- The personal, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic drivers—such as, racism, sexism, classism, able-ism, xenophobia, and homophobia

Salient to the fair distribution of health opportunities and outcomes—has physiological, psychological and developmental consequences
Discrimination as an additive contributor to poor mental health

• Racialized disparities in health and stress related physiological changes such as elevated cortisol and low-grade inflammation in adults and children disproportionately impacts Latinx, Black and immigrant adults and youth.

• The heightened risk for low-grade inflammation has potentially important health, mental health and developmental significance.

Integrative Model of Minority Youth Development

Specifically, Racism

- Race is not a social determinant, but racism and discrimination are.
- Discrimination, whether related to race/ethnicity, immigrant status, sexual orientation, and/or occupational status, has repeatedly been associated with negative mental health outcomes.

Latinx, SODMH and COVID-19 in San Francisco

Majority of the critically ill in our intensive care units.
- Mission District—tested almost 3000 people. While 45% of individuals tested were Latinx, 95% of those testing positives were Latinx and 0% were White.

Risk Factors identified in epidemiological studies include:
- Congregate living, multiple housemates
- Sick contacts who had not been tested.
- Structural and social determinants of health as risk
- Many lost their jobs/income but are not eligible for unemployment benefits nor assistance from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.

SODMH and a Pandemic
-Somos Esenciales
Researchers

https://vimeo.com/536607335

Accion Latina
Addressing Social Determinants of Mental Health

Widening our Lens in Medicine and Psychiatry

Mental Health Promoting Environments

• Families
• Schools
• Neighborhoods
• Health Care/Primary Care/Integrated Care
• Communities
• Community based organizations

Learnings from Covid Pandemic

- Navigation to specialty mental health services
- Case management for social determinants
- Peer Supports and navigators, promotoras
- Community partnerships for equity
- Employment
- Supporting Caregivers/families
Widening Our Lens

- **Conventional**: What DSM-5 criteria are met for diagnosis and treatment planning

- **Health equity**: What types of social factors are influencing a child’s development and mental health, and can be addressed as:
  - Prevention (first)
  - Clinical services (secondarily)

“Structural determinants of the social determinants of health”
Widening Our Lens

**Conventional:** How can individuals protect themselves against health disparities?

**Health equity:** What kinds of community organizing, and alliance building are necessary to amplify assets within communities that can support families and their communities?

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**WIDENING OUR LENS**

**Conventional:** What DSM-5 criteria are met for diagnosis and treatment planning

**What types of social factors are influencing a child’s development and mental health, and can be addressed as prevention**

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**WIDENING OUR LENS**

**Conventional:** How can we address individual child behaviors?

**Health equity:** What kinds of community resources can be engaged to support child and family well-being? How do we support families?
Examples of responsive clinical services to SODMH

- Health Steps and early childhood interventions
- Intergenerational trauma-informed care
- Legal-medical partnerships in clinical settings
- Collaborative care and task-sharing models
- Peer and family navigators/partners
- Explicit responsiveness to racialized stress and socioeconomic inequities

Example of medical coding

- Food insecurity
- Legal needs
- Poverty-related issues
- School environment
- Discrimination

Repairing a broken model

- No common framework for defining and understanding behavioral health among and between public systems and clinical care providers.
- Public systems are deeply fragmented and under-resourced.
- Commercial payers have not effectively partnered with child and family serving systems.
- Lack of prioritizing mental health care as an essential benefit
- Definition of medical necessity is outdated and inconsistent with emerging trends and evidence regarding the impact of trauma, social determinants of health, and adversity on social and emotional health.

-- California Children's trust [https://cachildrenstrust.org/](https://cachildrenstrust.org/)
EXPAND WHO IS ELIGIBLE, WHO CAN PROVIDE CARE, WHAT IS PROVIDED

How We Do It
- Redefine medical necessity, provide services without diagnosis e.g., dyadic care
- Expand peer-to-peer & social models
- Integrate CBOs in delivery (social cultural relevance)

How We Center the Beneficiary Experience
- Ensure Access to care in CBO settings
- Integrate non-traditional providers
- Remove diagnosis as prerequisite
- Expand provider designations in CBOs

Maximize Funding
- Expand Access and Participation
- Equity + Justice With Community
- Reinvent Systems

Conclusions
- The social determinants of mental health represent modifiable factors
- Social determinants are categorized into discrete factors they interact with each other in complex ways and exert their effects variably across the lifespan
- Determinants work in concert to drive poor mental health and disparities
- Decisions stemming from institutionalized racism and inequities, public policies and social norms disadvantage some communities over others (We must improve things)
Resources

APA Resource Document on Approaches to Youth in Mental Health Crisis

Coming soon: APA Resource Document on Social Determinants of Mental Health in Children and Youth

California Children’s trust https://cachildrentrust.org/