

# SOCIAL (IN)JUSTICE & MENTAL HEALTH

## **Ruth S. Shim, MD, MPH**

Luke & Grace Kim Professor in Cultural Psychiatry  
Associate Dean of Diverse and Inclusive Education  
University of California, Davis School of Medicine

## **Sarah Y. Vinson, MD**

Founder and Principal Consultant, Lorio Forensics  
Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Pediatrics  
Morehouse School of Medicine

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1** DEFINE KEY CONCEPTS ASSOCIATED WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE IN MENTAL HEALTH
- 2** EVALUATE THE EVIDENCE BASE OF THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OUTCOMES
- 3** IDENTIFY SOLUTIONS TO DISMANTLE SOCIAL INJUSTICE IN PSYCHIATRY

# DISCLOSURE/DISCLAIMER

- THIS IS A DIFFICULT AND UNCOMFORTABLE TOPIC
- COMPLEX FEELINGS OFTEN EMERGE, INCLUDING GUILT, ANGER, RESENTMENT, AND DEFENSIVENESS
- YOU MAY PERCEIVE ME OF ACCUSING YOU OF BEING RACIST/SEXIST/ETC.
- YOU MAY FEEL I HAVE A SPECIFIC POLITICAL AGENDA OR THAT I LACK OBJECTIVITY

**"I'M NOT INTERESTED  
IN ANYBODY'S GUILT.**

**GUILT IS A LUXURY THAT WE  
CAN NO LONGER AFFORD.**

**I KNOW YOU DIDN'T DO IT,  
AND I DIDN'T DO IT EITHER,  
BUT I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR  
IT BECAUSE I AM A MAN  
AND A CITIZEN OF THIS  
COUNTRY AND YOU ARE  
RESPONSIBLE FOR IT, FOR  
THE VERY SAME REASON."**



OPINION | COMMENTARY

# Take Two Aspirin and Call Me by My Pronouns

At 'woke' medical schools, curricula are increasingly focused on social justice rather than treating illness.

By Stanley Goldfarb  
Sept. 12, 2019 5:54 pm ET

The American College of Physicians says its mission is to promote the "quality and effectiveness of health care," but it's stepped out of its lane recently with sweeping statements on gun control. And that isn't the only recent foray into politics by medical professionals. During my term as associate dean of curriculum at the University of Pennsylvania's medical school, I was chastised by a faculty member for not including a program on climate change in the course of study. As the Journal reported last month, such programs are spreading across medical schools nationwide.

### RECOMMENDED VIDEO

1. Saudi Arabia Suspends About 10% of Its Oil Output After Drone Attacks
2. Why Making App iPhones in America So Hard
3. What the U.K.'s Political Drama Means for America

**"WHY HAVE MEDICAL SCHOOLS BECOME A TARGET FOR INCULCATING SOCIAL POLICY WHEN THE STATED PURPOSE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION SINCE HIPPOCRATES HAS BEEN TO DEVELOP INDIVIDUALS WHO KNOW HOW TO CURE PATIENTS?"**



**"SOCIAL AND HEALTH POLICIES HAVE ALWAYS DETERMINED WHO GETS SICK AND WHO GETS CARE, AND WHERE, AND HOW. UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL DRIVERS OF HEALTH AND ILLNESS IS NOT PERIPHERAL OR TANGENTIAL TO HEALTH. IT IS THE KEY TO DIAGNOSING AND MEETING A PATIENT'S FUNDAMENTAL NEEDS."**



# 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

## ***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:***

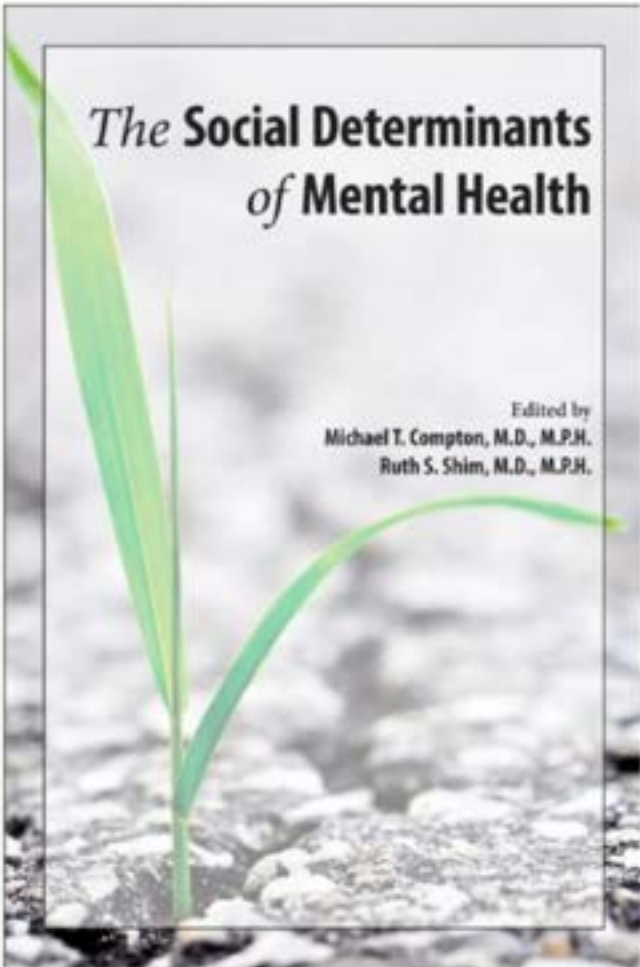
**DISPARITIES IN HEALTH THAT ARE A  
RESULT OF SYSTEMIC, AVOIDABLE,  
AND UNJUST SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC  
POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT  
CREATE BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY**

# THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF MENTAL HEALTH

**THE SOCIETAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS THAT IMPACT AND AFFECT MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES ACROSS VARIOUS POPULATIONS**

**THESE CONDITIONS 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 SEEN WITHIN AND AMONG POPULATIONS**



*The* **Social Determinants**  
*of* **Mental Health**

Edited by  
Michael T. Compton, M.D., M.P.H.  
Ruth S. Shim, M.D., M.P.H.

**SOCIAL (IN)JUSTICE**  
**AND**  
**MENTAL HEALTH**

Edited by  
Ruth S. Shim, M.D., M.P.H.  
Sarah Y. Vinson, M.D.





"THE FUNDAMENTAL CLINICAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF DRUG TREATMENT PROFESSIONALS TO INDIVIDUAL PATIENTS HAS BEEN SUBORDINATED TO THE GOALS OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM."

ERNEST DRUCKER, A PLAGUE OF PRISONS



The Washington Post

# Crack Babies: The Worst Threat Is Mom Herself

By Douglas J. Besharov

**L**AST WEEK in this city, Greater Southeast Community Hospital released a 7-week-old baby to her homeless, drug-addicted mother even though the child was at severe risk of pulmonary arrest. The hospital's explanation: "Because [the mother] demanded that the baby be released."

The hospital provided the mother with an apnea monitor to warn her if the baby stopped breathing while asleep, and trained her in CPR. But on the very first night, the mother went out drinking and left the child at a friend's house—without the monitor. Within seven hours, the baby was dead. Like Dooney Waters, the 6-year-old living in his mother's drug den, whose shocking story was reported in The Washington Post last week, this child was all but abandoned by the authorities.

## Children of the Opioid Epidemic

In the midst of a national opioid crisis, mothers addicted to drugs struggle to get off them — for their babies' sake, and their own.

By JENNIFER EGAN MAY 9, 2018



# KEY CONCEPTS

# PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE IN MENTAL HEALTH

- **ESSENTIALISM**

The belief that there are distinct, unchanging, and natural characteristics that define social groups and facilitate their categorization

- **ERASURE OF CONTEXT**

Failure to consider sociohistorical context when seeking to understand the etiology of inequities

- **BIOLOGICAL DETERMINISM**

The false belief that racial groups are biologically and genetically different

- **CULTURAL DETERMINISM**

The false belief that differences in racial groups are the result of cultural factors



# TYPES OF OPPRESSION

## **EXPLOITATION**

The unequal exchange of one group's labor and energies for another group's advantage and advancement

## **CULTURAL IMPERIALISM**

Establishing the ruling class culture as the norm; othering of groups that are not part of the dominant culture

## **POWERLESSNESS**

Oppressed groups lack power and are blocked from routes to gaining power

## **MARGINALIZATION**

Expelling specific groups from meaningful participation in society

## **VIOLENCE**

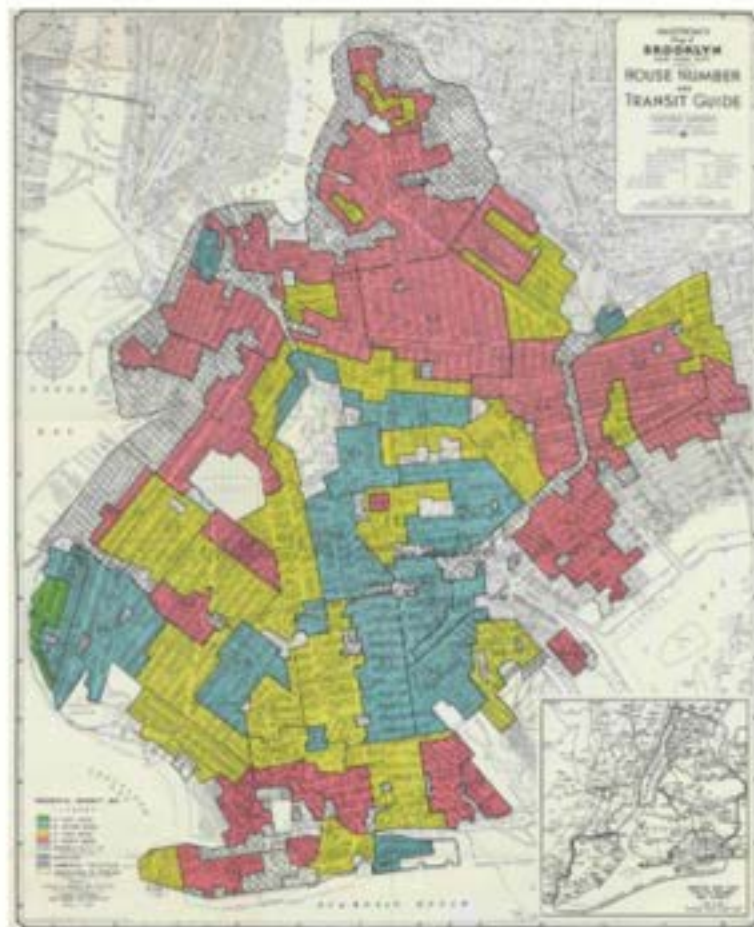
Threats and experiences of physical and structural violence

# STRUCTURAL RACISM

A SYSTEM IN WHICH  
PUBLIC POLICIES,  
INSTITUTIONAL  
PRACTICES, CULTURAL  
REPRESENTATIONS,  
AND OTHER NORMS  
WORK IN VARIOUS,  
OFTEN REINFORCING  
WAYS TO PERPETUATE  
RACIAL GROUP INEQUITY.



THIS SYSTEM IDENTIFIES  
DIMENSIONS OF OUR  
HISTORY AND CULTURE  
THAT HAVE ALLOWED  
**PRIVILEGES ASSOCIATED  
WITH WHITENESS AND  
DISADVANTAGES  
ASSOCIATED WITH  
COLOR** TO ENDURE AND  
ADAPT OVER TIME



**STRUCTURAL RACISM  
IS NOT SOMETHING  
THAT A FEW PEOPLE OR  
INSTITUTIONS CHOOSE TO  
PRACTICE. INSTEAD, IT  
HAS BEEN A FEATURE OF  
THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC,  
AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS  
IN WHICH WE ALL EXIST**

**STRUCTURAL MECHANISMS DO  
NOT REQUIRE THE ACTIONS  
OR INTENTIONS OF OTHERS**



**EVEN IF INTERPERSONAL DISCRIMINATION  
WAS ELIMINATED TODAY,  
RACIAL AND ETHNIC INEQUITIES WOULD  
REMAIN DUE TO PERSISTENCE  
OF STRUCTURAL RACISM**

# **SOCIAL INJUSTICE IN PSYCHIATRY**

# HOW SOCIAL INJUSTICE IMPACTS HEALTH



**“THE WAR ON DRUGS”**



**MENTAL HEALTHCARE**



**RESIDENTIAL  
SEGREGATION**



**CHILD TRAUMA**

# IN 2018:

69%



OF BLACK  
ADULTS WITH  
ANY MENTAL  
ILLNESS  
RECEIVED NO  
TREATMENT

67%



OF LATINX  
ADULTS WITH  
ANY MENTAL  
ILLNESS  
RECEIVED NO  
TREATMENT

42%



OF BLACK  
ADULTS WITH  
SERIOUS  
MENTAL  
ILLNESS  
RECEIVED NO  
TREATMENT

44%



OF LATINX  
ADULTS WITH  
SERIOUS  
MENTAL  
ILLNESS  
RECEIVED NO  
TREATMENT





of Latinx adults with **substance use disorders** reported receiving **no treatment**



of Black adults with **substance use disorders** reported receiving **no treatment**

**COST IS THE MOST COMMONLY CITED  
REASON FOR NOT SEEKING CARE  
TWICE AS OFTEN AS MINIMIZATION  
OF SYMPTOMS AND NEARLY FIVE  
TIMES AS OFTEN AS STIGMA**

# CHILD TRAUMA

“The developing child's positive sense of self depends on the caregiver's benign use of power.”\*



\*Dr. Judith Herman, Trauma and Recovery



**“I WAS PROUD TO MAKE IT TO 21, EVEN THOUGH I WAS IN PRISON.”**

*- Adult Defendant in Capital Murder Case*

**“SCHOOL WAS ALL I EVER REALLY HAD TO WORRY ABOUT.”**

*- Software Programmer in Private Practice Clinic*

**“THEY SAY I'M SUPPOSED TO CARE ABOUT PEOPLE WHEN AIN'T NOBODY CARED FOR ME.”**

*- Detained Teenager*

# A SOLID FOUNDATION



## A TRUE HOME

Housing Stability  
Food Security  
Basic Needs Met



## A RELIABLE CAREGIVER

Consistent, Available Adult  
Instill Sense of Worth  
Advocate for Child



## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Safe Schools  
Prep. for Career or College  
Special Ed. Resources



## HEALTHCARE

Medical Care  
Mental Health  
Adequacy and Access



# CHILD POVERTY

- **12 MILLION (1/6) U.S. CHILDREN LIVE IN POVERTY**

<\$25,710 for family of 4

- **73% ARE CHILDREN OF COLOR**

- **CHILD POVERTY RATE IS NEARLY 1.5 TIMES HIGHER THAN THAT FOR ADULTS AGES 18-24**



# CHILD POVERTY

- **IN A COUNTRY THAT SPENDS \$732 BILLION DOLLARS ON DEFENSE**

More than the next ten countries combined

- **WHERE A MAJORITY OF U.S. LAWMAKERS ARE MILLIONAIRES**
- **AND 76.8% ARE MEN**



# A POOR FOUNDATION - POVERTY



## NO TRUE HOME

Housing Instability  
Food Insecurity  
Heavily Policed Neighborhoods



## IMPAIRED CAREGIVERS

Poorly-supported adults  
Lack of Living Wage  
Unavailability - M.I.,  
Incarceration, Work



## UNMET EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Under-Resourced Schools  
Replication of Extant Social  
Hierarchies



## LIMITED ACCESS

Gaps in Coverage and Capacity  
Untreated Illness Impacting  
Attendance and Behavior



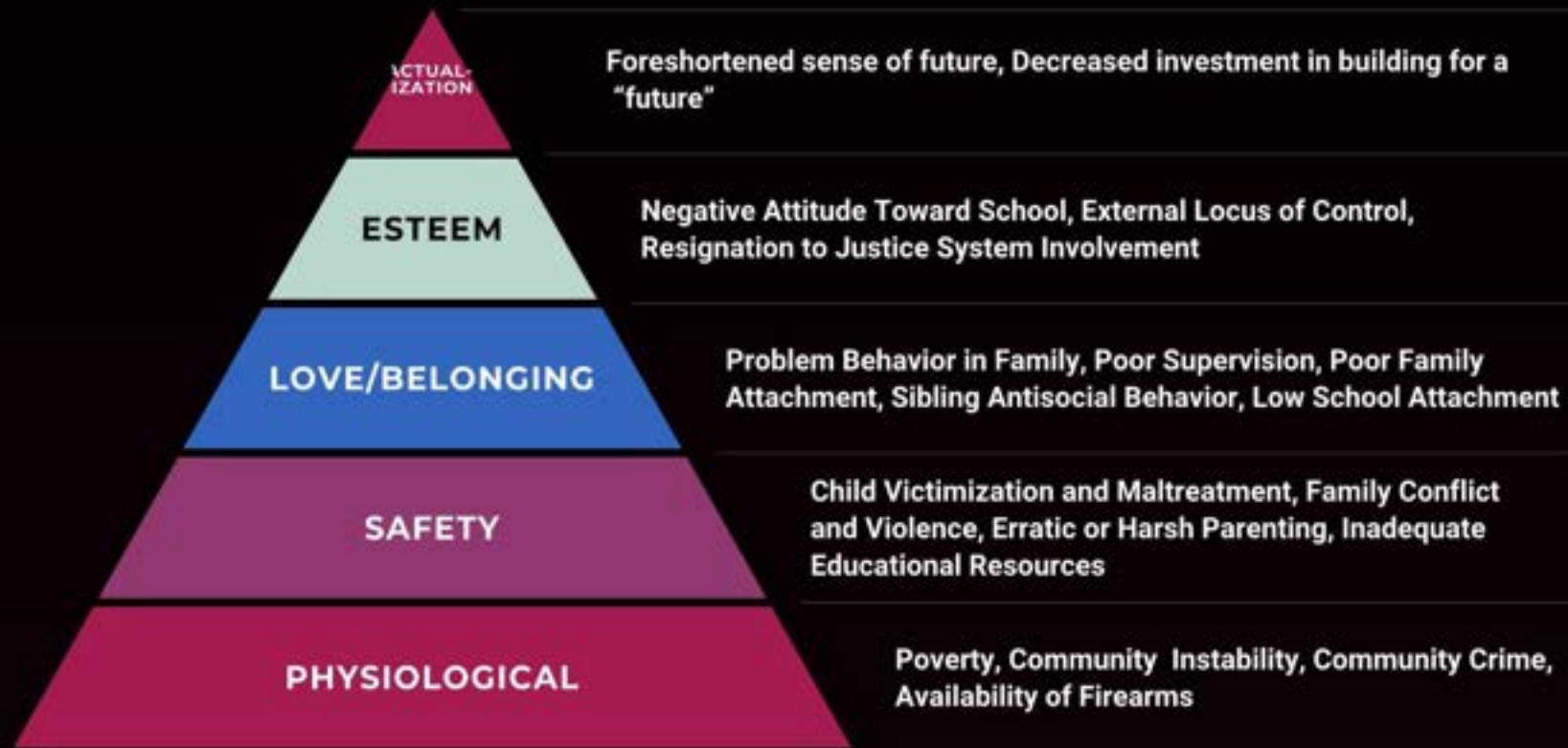
## MIGUEL'S RECORD

**“I WAS PROUD TO MAKE IT TO 21, EVEN THOUGH I WAS IN PRISON.”**

- *Incarcerated from the age of 17-21*
- *Violation of plan after being found in possession of small amount of marijuana*
- *Original charge non-violent*

# MIGUEL'S ENVIRONMENT





**UNMET NEEDS = DJJ RISK FACTORS**

70%



Mental Illness

30%



"Serious" Mental Illness

**AND SET THE STAGE FOR OVER-REPRESENTATION FOR  
YOUTH WITH MENTAL ILLNESS IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

**WHO'S TRAUMA COUNTS?**

IN OUR DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA?

IN OUR WIDELY USED INSTRUMENTS?

**WHEN WE ARE THE  
BYSTANDERS...**

**...AND  
PERPETRATORS**



**THE "CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE"  
SYSTEM**



# WHEN THE TRAUMA'S NOT POST



SIGN IN

NPR SHOP

DONATE

NEWS

ARTS & LIFE

MUSIC

SHOWS & PODCASTS

SEARCH

NATIONAL

## Parents Of 545 Children Separated At U.S.-Mexico Border Still Can't Be Found

October 21, 2020 · 3:34 AM ET

MARK KATKOV





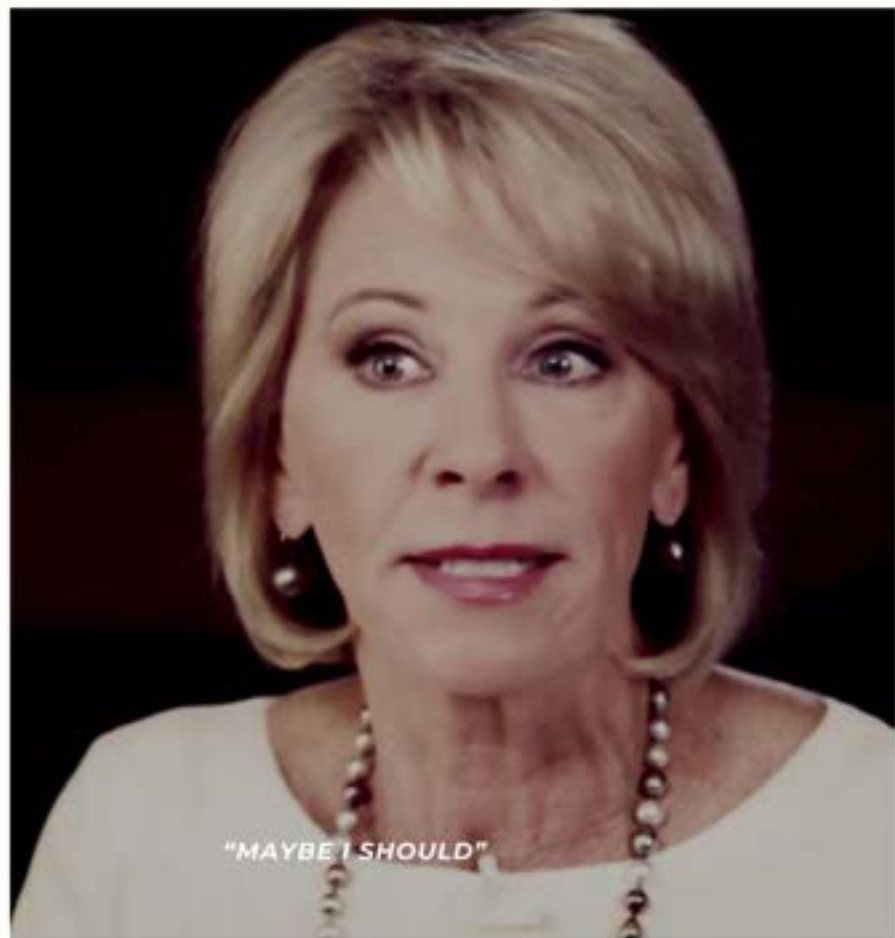
**Video**

# RELIABLY RACIST OUTCOMES



- **MOST JUDGES ACKNOWLEDGE THE SYSTEM IS RACIST**
- **80% OF STATE JUDGES ARE WHITE**
- **SENTENCING OUTCOMES DIFFER NOT ONLY BY RACE BUT ALSO BY SHADE**

**23%**  
**60%**



**A CALL TO ACTION**

# ALL HANDS ON DECK



**RAYMOND  
SANTANA**

**14 7 12**

**START WHERE YOU ARE.  
USE WHAT YOU HAVE.  
DO WHAT YOU CAN.**

**- ARTHUR ASHE**

# 3 STEPS TO ADVOCACY



- 1 DEVELOP A KNOWLEDGE BASE**
- 2 RECOGNIZE INJUSTICE AND YOUR ROLE IN ADDRESSING IT**
- 3 RESPOND TO INJUSTICE THROUGH AN ITERATIVE, SUSTAINABLE PROCESS**

# YOUR ADVOCACY AIN'T LIKE MINE



 **MOREHOUSE**  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

About MSM

Admissions

Home • Education • Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences • Child and /

Child and Adolescent  
Psychiatry Fellowship

Chi

Program Overview



*"One of the most important psychiatric works to be published since Freud."—New York Times*

## Trauma and Recovery

*The Aftermath of Violence—  
From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*





# Inequality

Unequal access to opportunities



# Equality?

Evenly distributed tools and assistance



# Equity

Custom tools that identify and address inequality



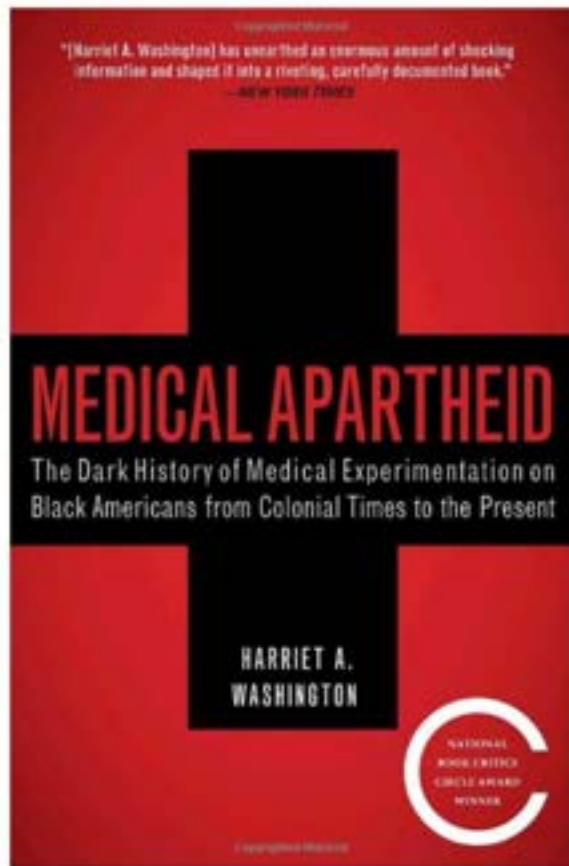
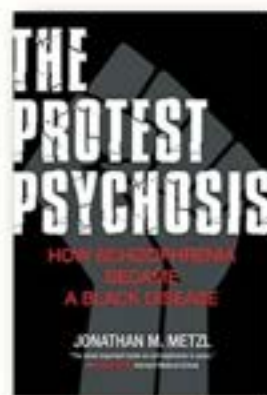
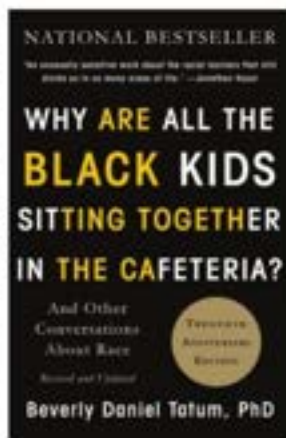
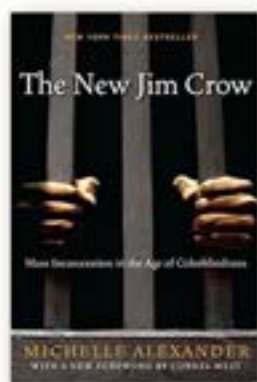
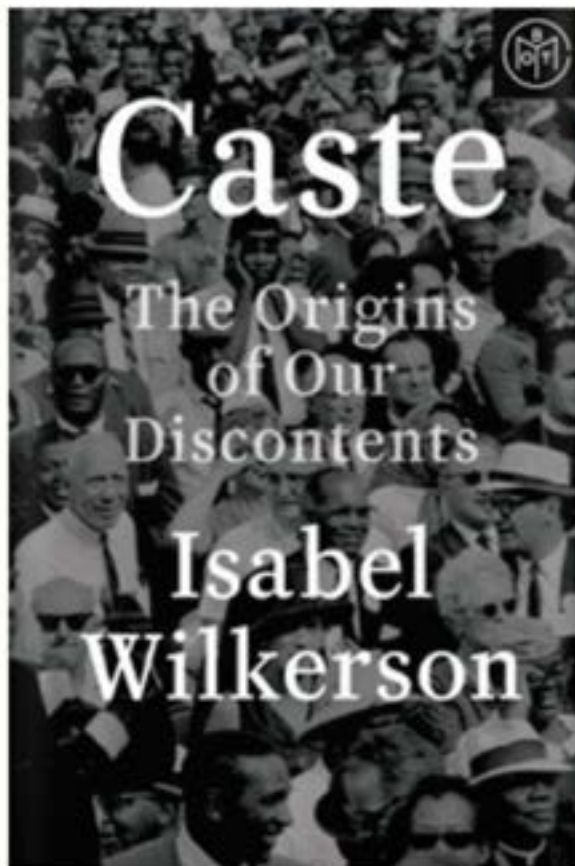
# Justice

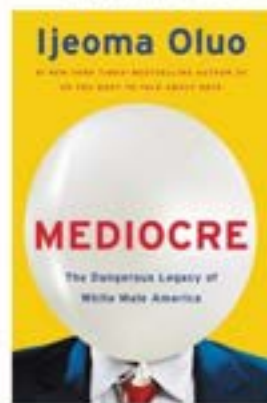
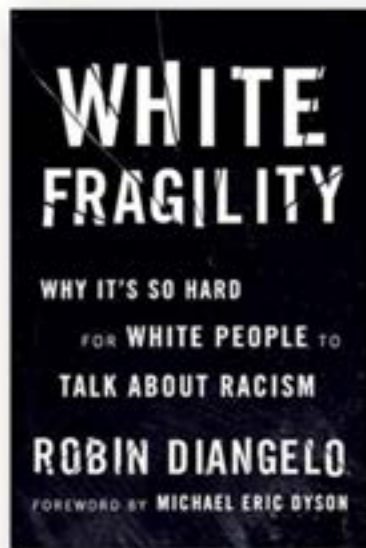
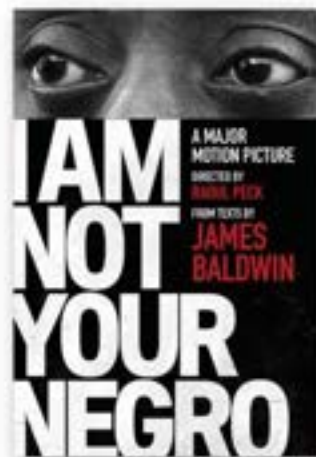
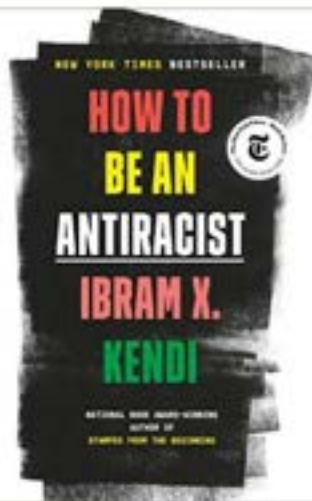
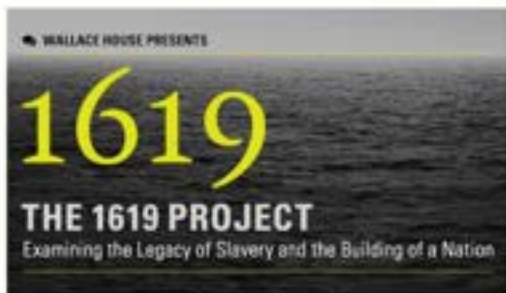
Fixing the system to offer equal access to both tools and opportunities



# EDUCATION AND SELF-REFLECTION







# PRACTICING CULTURAL HUMILITY



- **COMMIT TO A LIFELONG PROCESS OF SELF-EVALUATION AND SELF-CRITIQUE**
- **DESIRE TO FIX POWER IMBALANCES BETWEEN PROVIDERS AND CLIENTS**
- **DEVELOP COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS TO ADVOCATE WITHIN THE LARGER ORGANIZATIONS IN WHICH WE PARTICIPATE**

# STRUCTURAL COMPETENCE

THE TRAINED ABILITY TO DISCERN HOW A HOST OF ISSUES DEFINED AS SYMPTOMS, CLINICAL PROBLEMS, ATTITUDES, OR DISEASES (E.G., DEPRESSION, HYPERTENSION, OBESITY, SMOKING, MEDICATION “NON-COMPLIANCE,” TRAUMA, PSYCHOSIS) ARE INFLUENCED BY UPSTREAM SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH.



# PROMOTE SOCIAL NORMS OF INCLUSION, EQUITY, AND RESPECT

- 1 ENFORCE SOCIAL NORMS OF INCLUSION AND EQUITY
- 2 EDUCATE OR LEGISLATE TO CHANGE SOCIAL NORMS
- 3 OBSERVE AND CHALLENGE YOUR IMPLICIT BIASES
- 4 EVALUATE AND BREAK DOWN UNNECESSARY HIERARCHIES



# ADVOCATE FOR EQUITABLE PUBLIC POLICIES

- 1 TAKE ACTION BEYOND THE WALLS OF CLINICS, HOSPITALS, AND TREATMENT CENTERS
- 2 ADVOCATE FOR POLICIES THAT ADDRESS SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF MENTAL HEALTH
- 3 COMMUNICATE WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS AND PROMOTE EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION
- 4 FORM CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATIONS AND COMMUNITY COALITIONS

**POLITICAL STANCES AND POLICY  
INTERVENTIONS ARE REQUIRED.**

**TO REMAIN APOLITICAL, OR  
NEUTRAL, IS A POLITICAL STANCE.**

**IT IS A TACIT ACCEPTANCE  
OF THE STATUS QUO.**

## **PROGRESS**

Made through the passage of legislation, court rulings and other formal mechanisms that aim to promote racial equality

## **RETRENCHMENT**

Refers to the ways in which progress is very often challenged, neutralized or undermined in key policy arenas



**"DO NOT GET LOST IN A SEA OF DESPAIR.  
BE HOPEFUL, BE OPTIMISTIC.**

**OUR STRUGGLE IS NOT THE STRUGGLE OF  
A DAY, A WEEK, A MONTH, OR A YEAR,  
IT IS THE STRUGGLE OF A LIFETIME.**

**NEVER, EVER BE AFRAID TO MAKE  
SOME NOISE AND GET IN GOOD  
TROUBLE, NECESSARY TROUBLE."**

