# THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF MENTAL HEALTH

Ruth S. Shim, MD, MPH

Vice Chair, Education and Faculty Development

Lenox Hill Hospital Department of Psychiatry, Northwell Health

Associate Professor, Hofstra – Northwell School of Medicine

# BREAKING POINT

The EU has failed us all

We must break free of the EU and take back control of our borders.

**Donald J. Trump** ✓
@realDonaldTrump

Refugees from Syria are now pouring into our great country. Who knows who they are - some could be ISIS. Is our president insane?

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# The Social Determinants of Mental Health

- Definitions
- Context
- Key Concepts
- A Review of the Evidence
- Taking Action

# Objectives

1. Define and describe the social determinants of mental health

2. Understand the evidence for two specific social determinants of mental health – adverse early life experiences and poverty

3. Identify actions that clinicians can take to address the social determinants of mental health

Those factors that impact upon health and well-being: the circumstances into which we are born, grow up, live, work, and age, including the health system.

World Health Organization: Closing the Gap in a Generation: Health Equity through Action on the Social Determinants of Health: Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, 2008.

These circumstances 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
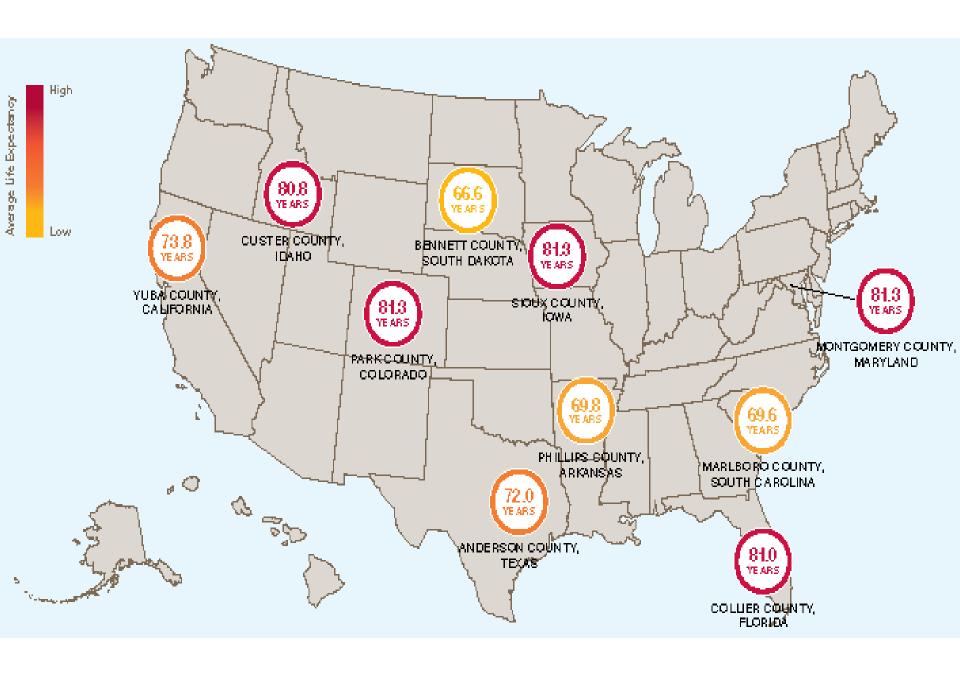**health disparities and inequities.**

*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
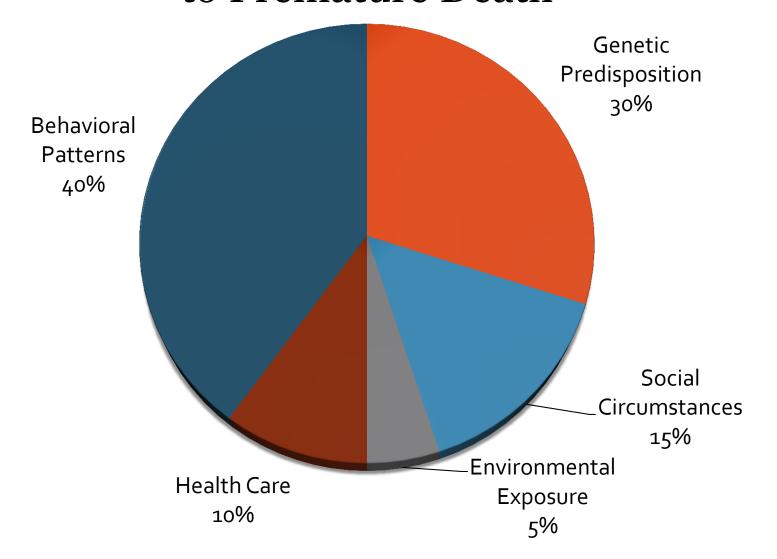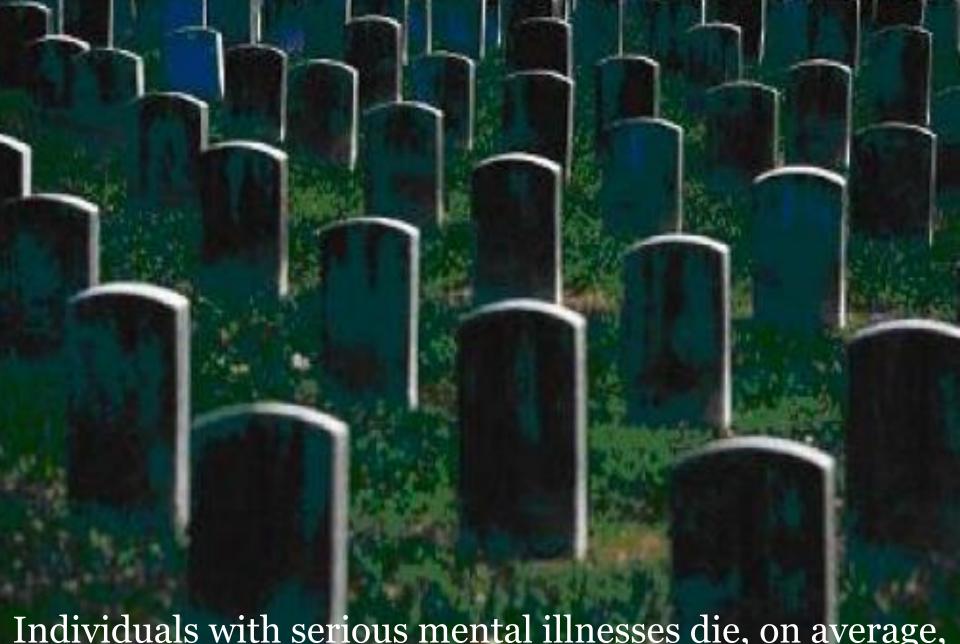
# The Social Determinants of Health



**LIVE**   **LEARN**   **WORK**   **PLAY**

*Health begins were we live, learn, work, and play. Your zip code may be more important to your overall health than your genetic code.*

Average Life Expectancy

High

Low

80.8 YEARS
CUSTER COUNTY, IDAHO

66.6 YEARS
BENNETT COUNTY, SOUTH DAKOTA

81.3 YEARS
SIOUX COUNTY, IOWA

73.8 YEARS
YUBA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

81.3 YEARS
PARK COUNTY, COLORADO

81.3 YEARS
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

69.8 YEARS
PHILLIPS COUNTY, ARKANSAS

69.6 YEARS
MARLBORO COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA

72.0 YEARS
ANDERSON COUNTY, TEXAS

81.0 YEARS
COLLIER COUNTY, FLORIDA

# Determinants of Health and Their Contribution to Premature Death



Behavioral Patterns 40%

Genetic Predisposition 30%

Social Circumstances 15%

Environmental Exposure 5%

Health Care 10%

McGinnis, J. M., Williams-Russo, P., & Knickman, J. R. (2002). The case for more active policy attention to health promotion. Health Affairs, 21(2), 78-93

Individuals with serious mental illnesses die, on average, up to **25 years earlier** than the general population.

**Social Justice**

# 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-

# Social Justice and Health

Social justice is considered **the moral foundation and a core value** of public health.

It ensures that individuals in a society have equal opportunities to lead healthy, meaningful, and productive lives.

Powers M, Faden R: Social Justice: The Moral Foundations of Public Health and Health Policy. New York: Oxford University Press; 2008.
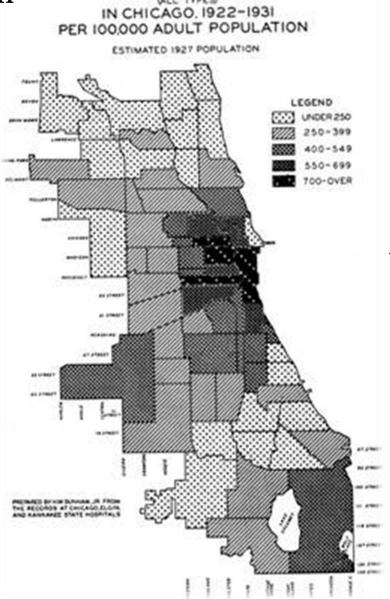
*Suicide* (1897)

demonstrated the relationship between social exclusion and suicide

described suicide as a social phenomenon

Faris and Dunham (1939).
*Mental disorders in urban areas: an ecological study of schizophrenia and other psychoses*



MAP VII
SCHIZOPHRENIA RATES
(ALL TYPES)
IN CHICAGO, 1922-1931
PER 100,000 ADULT POPULATION

ESTIMATED 1927 POPULATION

LEGEND
UNDER 250
250-399
400-549
550-699
700-OVER

PREPARED BY H.W. DUNHAM, JR. FROM
THE RECORDS AT CHICAGO, ELGIN,
AND KANKAKEE STATE HOSPITALS

suggested an relationship between socially disorganized communities and rates of schizophrenia

# The Rise of Biological Psychiatry

- Shift in the field to the individual factors associated with mental illness – molecular and genetic risk factors and determinants

- This movement has led to major strides in research and treatment of mental illness

- Advances in genetics, neurobiology, and pharmacology

- An unfortunate byproduct is that focus has moved away from examining how social processes contribute to mental illness
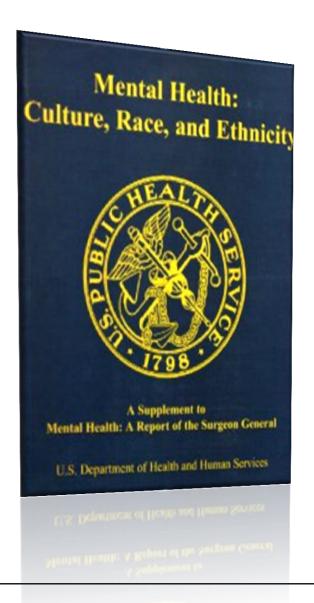
# Nature *and* Nurture

- Previously presented as two competing realms at odds
- The interplay between biology and the environment is key
- One cannot understand biology without understanding the socio-environmental context
- Mechanisms underpinning social factors cannot be understood without considering neurobiology

# Culture Counts



"Even more than other areas of health and medicine, the mental health field is plagued by disparities in the availability of and access to its services. **These disparities are viewed readily through the lenses of racial and cultural diversity, age, and gender.**"
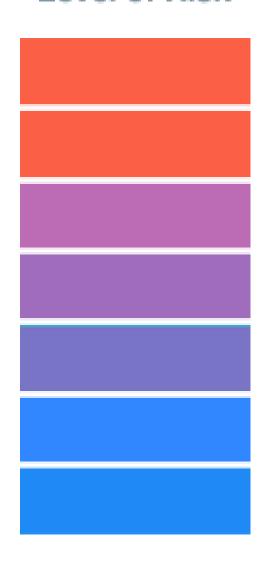
# A Public Health Approach to Behavioral Health

- Population Health
- Epidemiologic Surveillance of the Health of the Population
- Health Promotion/Disease Prevention
- Access to and Evaluation of Services
- Risk/Protective Factors

# Risk Factors

# Level of Risk

# Protective Factors

# Risk Factor –

A characteristic that precedes a disorder and is statistically associated with that disorder

Protective Factor –

A characteristic that predates a disorder or outcome and significantly reduces the risk of developing that disorder or outcome

# The Causes of the Causes

## *"The Fundamental Causes of Disease"*

If risk factors are the precursors of disease, then the environmental and contextual factors that precede or shape these risk factors are **the causes of the causes.**

Link, B. G., & Phelan, J. (1995). Social Conditions As Fundamental Causes of Disease Social Conditions as Fundamental Causes of Disease, *35*, 80–94.
Rose, G. (1992). The strategy of preventive medicine.

# The Causal Chain

"Why is Jason in the hospital?"

*Because he has a bad infection in his leg.*

But why does he have an infection?

*He has a cut on his leg and it got infected.*

But why does he have a cut on his leg?

*He was playing in a junk yard next to his apartment building and fell on some sharp, jagged steel there.*

But why was he playing in a junk yard?

*His neighborhood is run down. Kids play there and there is no one to supervise them.*

But why does he live in that neighborhood?
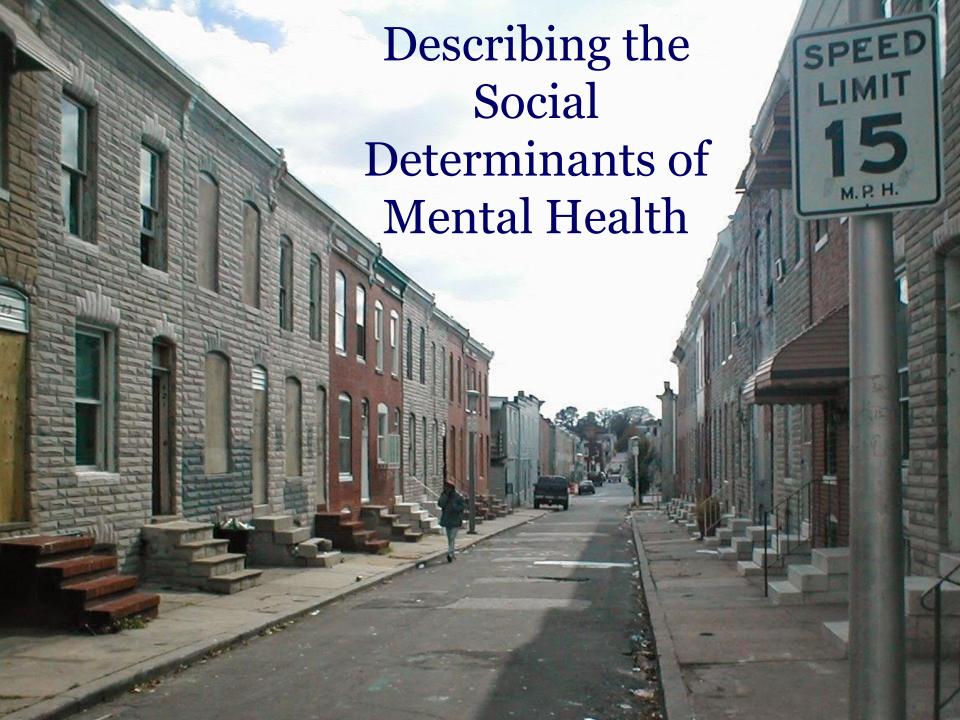
*His parents can't afford a nicer place to live.*

But why can't his parents afford a nicer place to live?

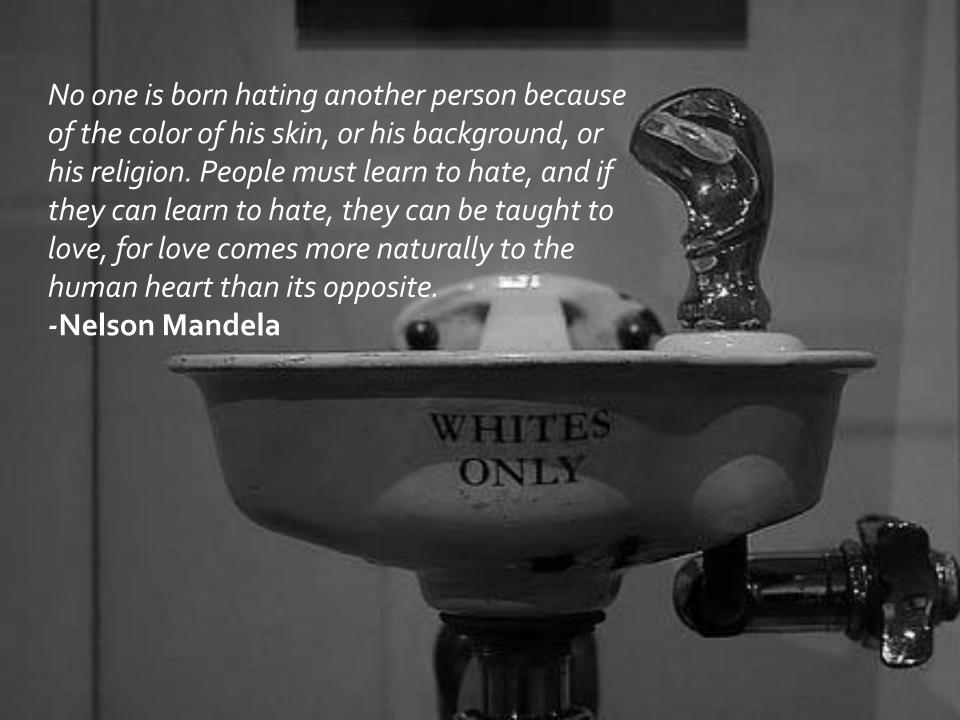*His dad is unemployed and his mom is sick.*

But why is his dad unemployed?

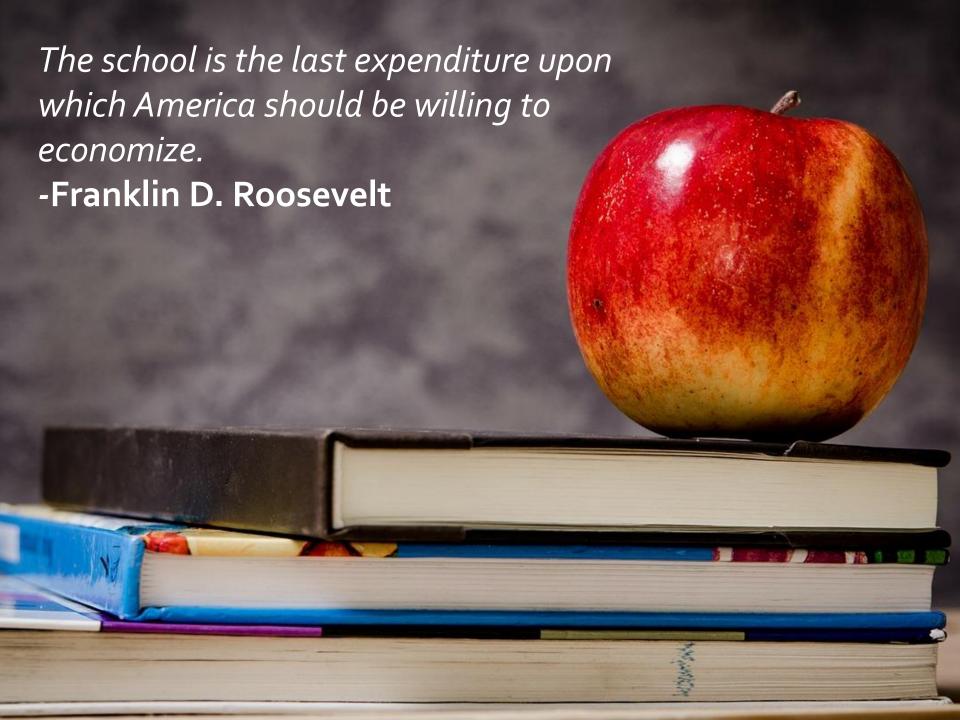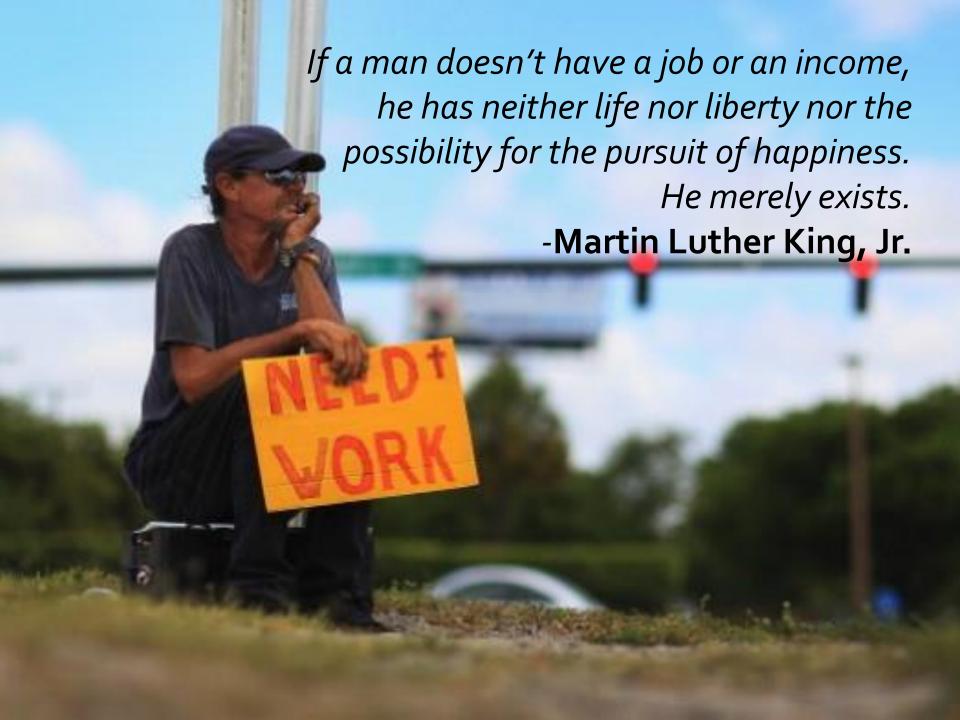*Because he doesn't have much education and he can't find a job.*
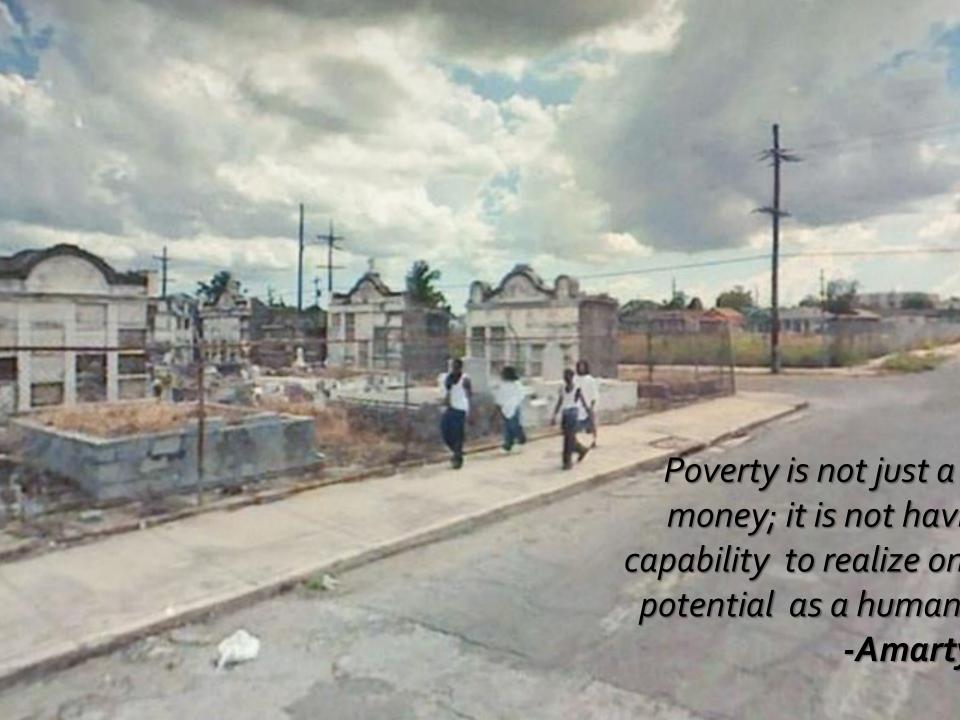
**But why?**

Describing the Social Determinants of Mental Health

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

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

*No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.*
**-Nelson Mandela**

WHITES
ONLY

*The Child is father of the Man.*
**-William Wordsworth**

*The school is the last expenditure upon which America should be willing to economize.*
**-Franklin D. Roosevelt**

*If a man doesn't have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty nor the possibility for the pursuit of happiness. He merely exists.*
**-Martin Luther King, Jr.**

*Poverty is not just a
money; it is not hav
capability to realize or
potential as a human*

**-Amart**

*There will never cease to be ferment in the world unless people are sure of their food.*
**-Pearl Buck**

*The connection between health and the dwelling of the population
is one of the most important that exists.*
**-Florence Nightingale**

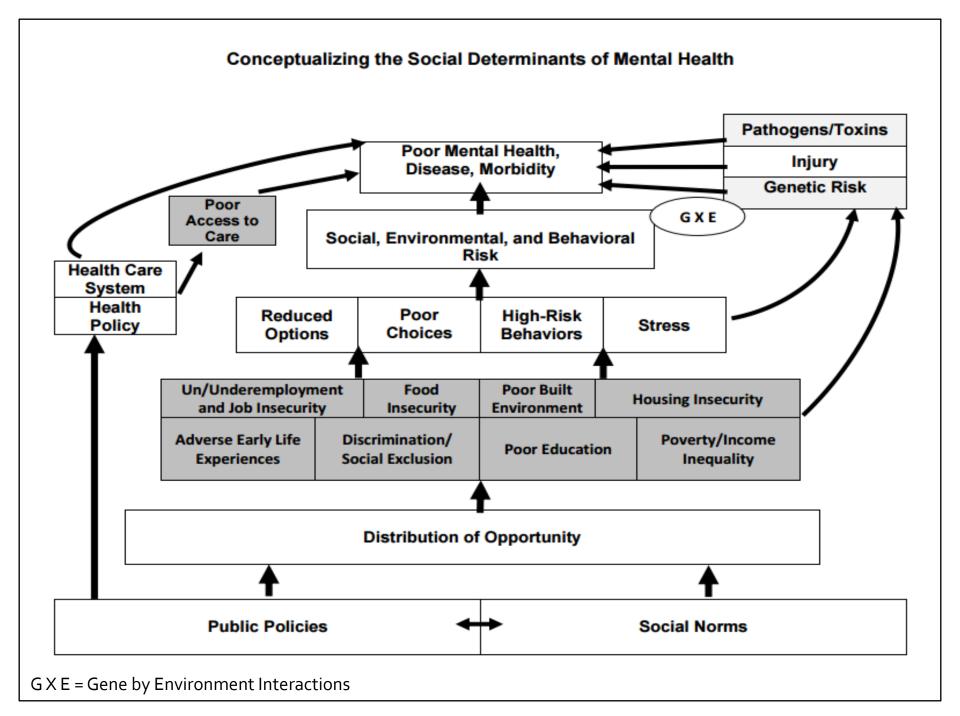*Where you stand depends on where you sit.*
**-Nelson Mandela**

*Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.*
**- Martin Luther King, Jr.**

"To provide a basis for understanding the determinants of disease and arriving at rational treatments and patterns of health care, a medical model must also take into account the patient, the social context in which he lives and the complementary system devised by society to deal with the disruptive effects of illness, that is, the physician role and the health care system.

**This requires a biopsychosocial model.**"

-George Engel-

# Conceptualizing the Social Determinants of Mental Health



G X E = Gene by Environment Interactions

Example 1: Adverse Early Life Experiences

# Adverse Early Life Experiences

Inconsistent, threatening, hurtful, traumatic, or neglectful social interchanges experienced by fetuses, infants, children, or adolescents.

# The three types of ACEs include

## ABUSE
- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual

## NEGLECT
- Physical
- Emotional

## HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION
- Mental Illness
- Incarcerated Relative
- Mother treated violently
- Substance Abuse
- Divorce

Felitti VJ, Anda RF, Nordenberg D, et al.: Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study. Am J Prev Med. 1998 May;14(4):245–58.

# ACEs are Highly Prevalent

**More than 60%**

of the population
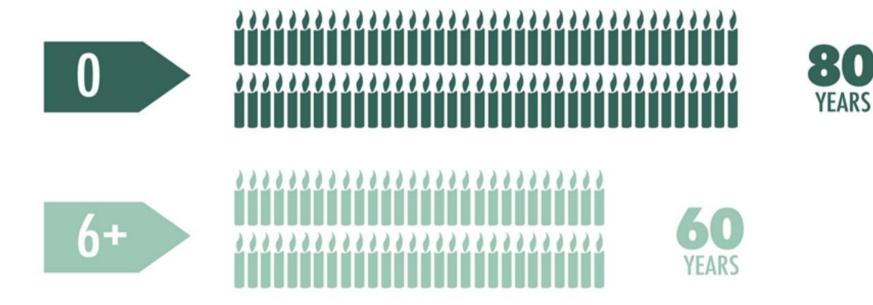
surveyed reported

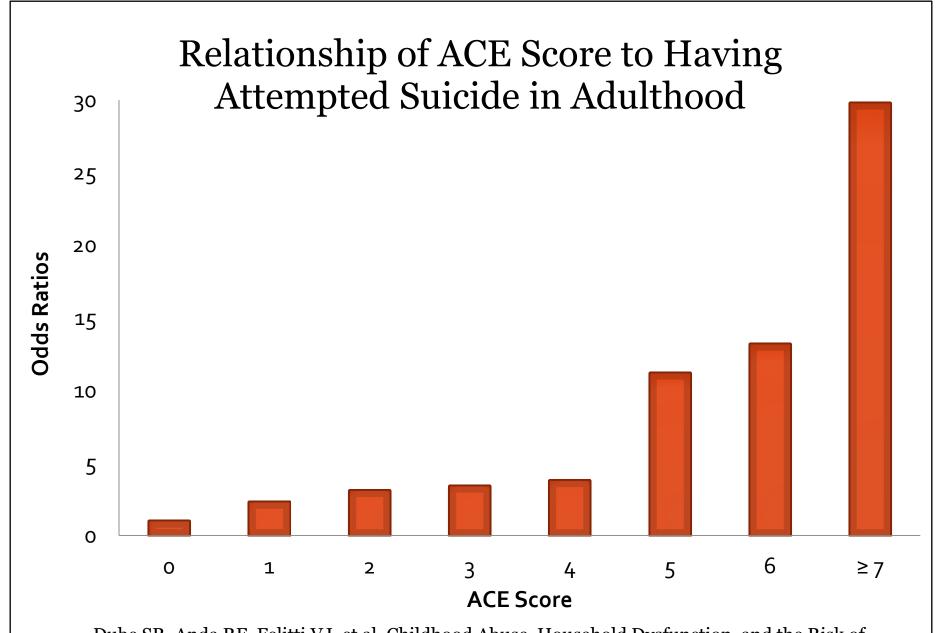one or more ACEs.

# Health Problems Associated with ACEs

- Alcohol use disorders
- Depression
- Illicit drug use
- Suicide attempts
- Teen pregnancies
- Smoking
- COPD
- Fetal death
- Ischemic heart disease
- Liver disease
- Hearing voices

- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Multiple sexual partners
- STDs
- Unintended pregnancies
- Early initiation of smoking
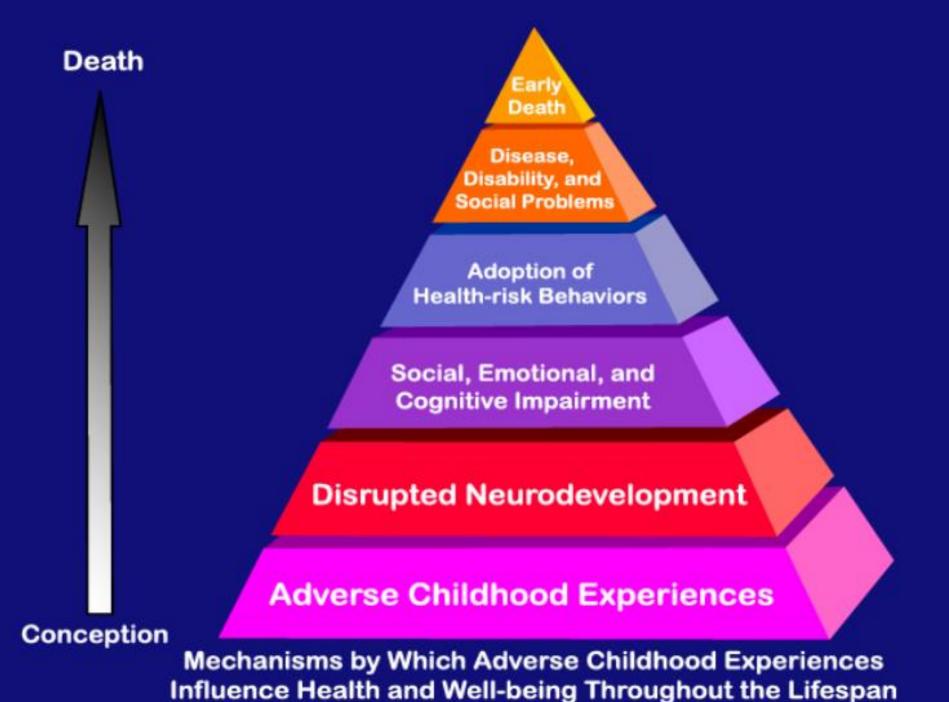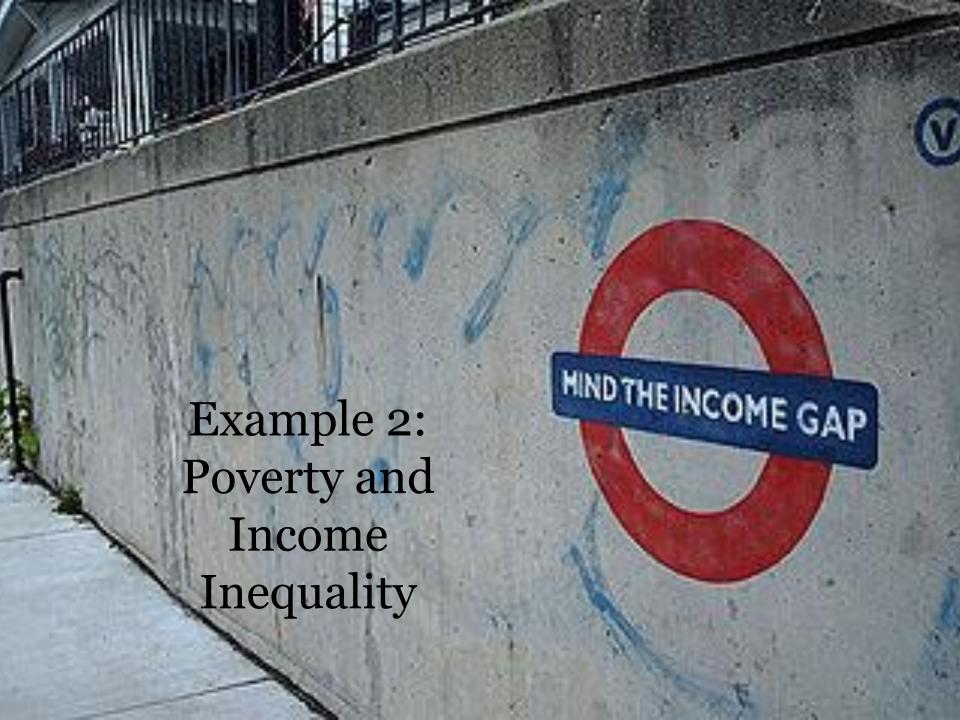- Early initiation of sexual activity
- Early mortality

# LIFE EXPECTANCY

People with six or more ACEs died nearly **20 years earlier on average** than those without ACEs.

# Relationship of ACE Score to Having Attempted Suicide in Adulthood



Dube SR, Anda RF, Felitti VJ, et al. Childhood Abuse, Household Dysfunction, and the Risk of Attempted Suicide Throughout the Life Span. JAMA 2001;286(24):3089.

Death

Conception

Early Death

Disease, Disability, and Social Problems

Adoption of Health-risk Behaviors

Social, Emotional, and Cognitive Impairment

Disrupted Neurodevelopment

Adverse Childhood Experiences

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

Example 2: Poverty and Income Inequality

Federal poverty line (2015)
- $24,250 for family of four
- $11,770 for one person

"Near poor" is between 100% and 200% of federal poverty level.

**14.8%** of Americans (**46.7 million**) were living in poverty in 2014

# The Juvenilization of Poverty

About **40% of children** in the
United States are
poor or near poor.

# Neighborhood Deprivation

An "extreme poverty" neighborhood is an area/neighborhood where **over 40% of households** are below the federal poverty line.
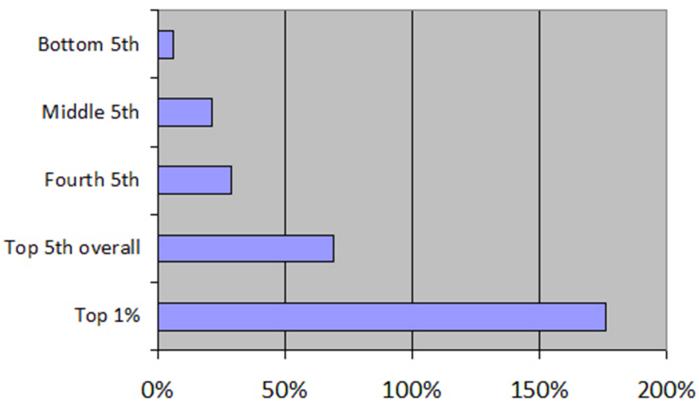
# Poverty and Mental Health

- Poverty has been associated with numerous mental health outcomes.

- Timing, duration, and intensity of poverty matter.

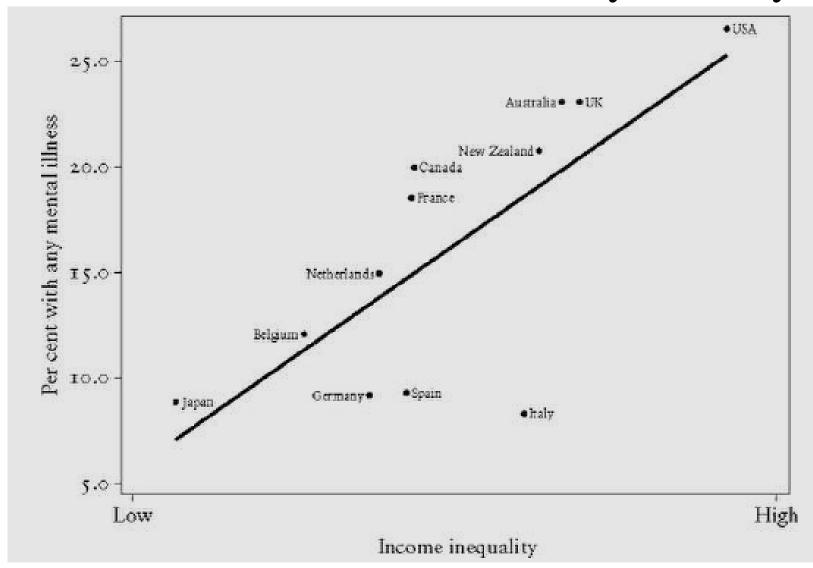# Income Inequality in the U.S.

Income growth between 1979 and 2005

# Mental Health Related Outcomes Associated with Poverty and Income Inequality

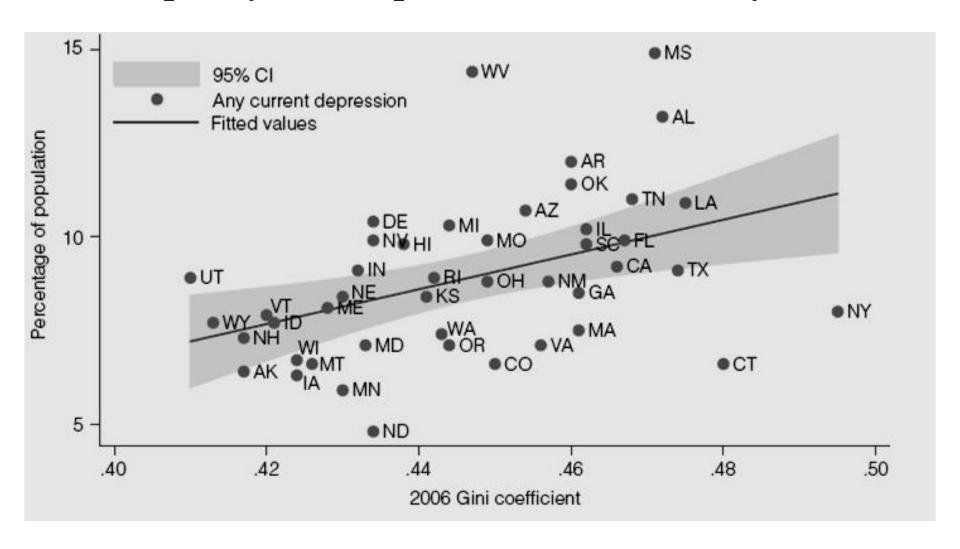- Depressive disorders
- Poor self-reported mental health
- Drug overdose deaths
- Juvenile homicides
- Delinquency

- Anxiety disorders
- PTSD
- Increased arrests
- Cognitive, behavioral, and attention-related problems in children

# Income Inequality and
# Mental Illness Prevalence by Country



Wilkinson, R. G., & Pickett, K. (2011). *The spirit level*. Tantor Media, Incorporated.
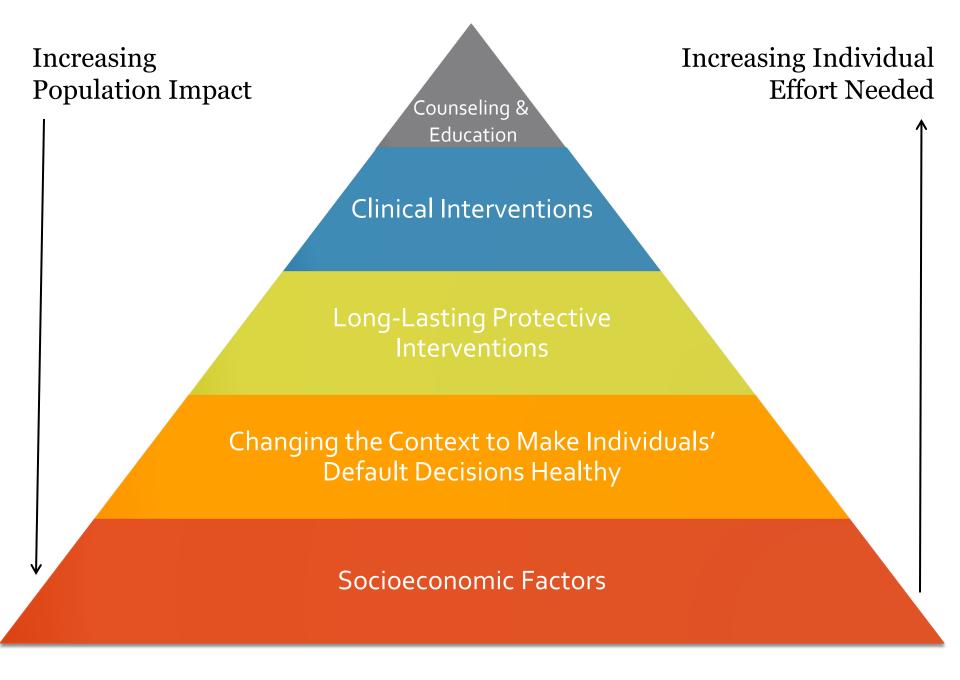
# Inequality and Depression Prevalence by State

Messias E, Eaton WW, Grooms AN. Economic Grand Rounds: Income Inequality and Depression Prevalence Across the United States: An Ecological Study. Psychiatric Services 2011 July 1, 2011;62(7):710–712.

"I have been impressed with the urgency of doing. Knowing is not enough, we must apply. Being willing is not enough, we must do."

Increasing Population Impact

Increasing Individual Effort Needed

Counseling & Education

Clinical Interventions

Long-Lasting Protective Interventions

Changing the Context to Make Individuals' Default Decisions Healthy

Socioeconomic Factors

Frieden, T.R. (2010). A Framework for Public Health Action: The Health Impact Pyramid. *American Journal of Public Health, 100*(4), 590.
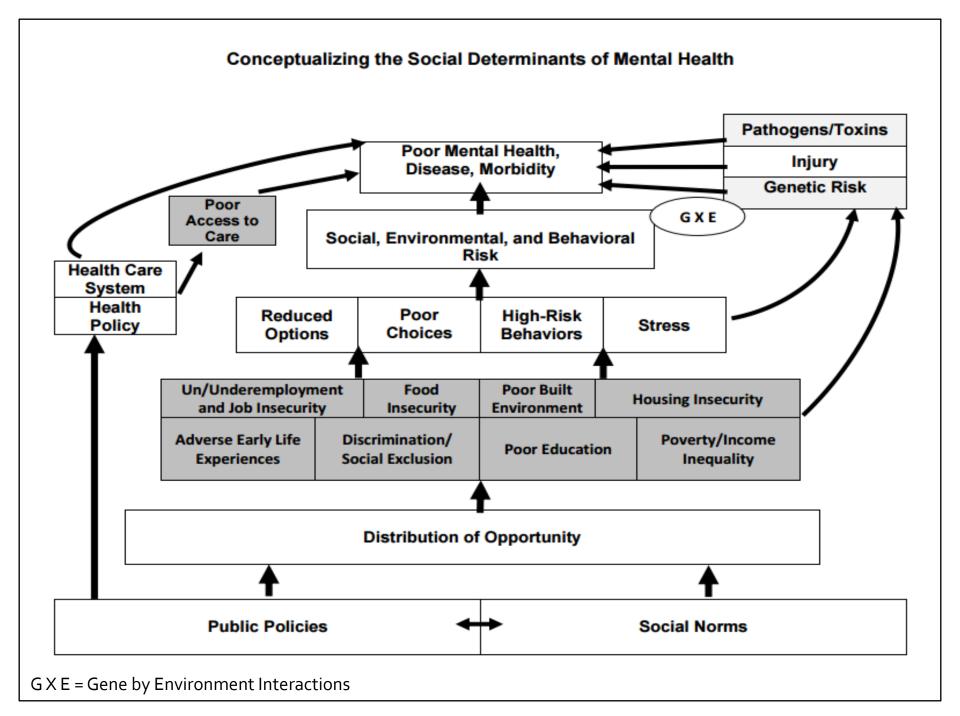
# All Policies are Health Policies

"Housing policy is health policy. Educational policy is health policy. Anti-violence policy is health policy. Neighborhood improvement policies are health policies. **Everything that we can do to improve the quality of life of individuals in our society has an impact on their health and is a health policy.**"

# Success in Addressing the Social Determinants of Behavioral Health

- Nurse-Family Partnerships
- High/Scope Perry Preschool Program and Head Start
- Good Behavior Game
- Health Leads
- Medical-Legal Partnerships

# Clinical Interventions

- Screening and secondary preventive interventions.

- Addressing policies in your work settings

- Developing resource guides for clients and staff.

- Referring clients to available supports (supported employment, supported education, supportive housing, poverty assistance programs, SNAP benefits, etc).

# Conceptualizing the Social Determinants of Mental Health



G X E = Gene by Environment Interactions

# Policy Interventions

Public Policies
- Advocate for policies and laws that improve education, increase employment opportunities (or extend employment benefits for the unemployed), decrease food insecurity, end discrimination, improve housing standards, etc.
- Offer your expertise to your elected officials (individually, or through professional organizations)
- Cross-sector collaborations are key

# Policy Interventions

Social Norms

- Community Education and Engagement
  - About the importance of cultural competence
  - About the negative impact of stigma
- Use laws to change norms
  - Create a culture of tolerance and acceptance
  - Speak up when this culture is not respected

*"If we accept and acquiesce in the face of discrimination, we accept the responsibility ourselves. We should, therefore, protest openly everything...that smacks of discrimination or slander."*

**– Mary McLeod Bethune**