PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF MENTAL HEALTH
2021-2022

For APA BOT Meeting on 10-16-2021
April/May: Task Force established; Call for nominations for appointments
June: Task Force Chair and members appointed and begin meeting monthly

Task Force Charge

• Build on the 2018 APA Position Statement on Mental Health Equity & the Social and Structural Determinants of Mental Health, and 2020-21 APA Presidential Task Force on Structural Racism

• Develop evidence-based pragmatic strategies that may be used by clinicians, teachers, researchers, and administrators to assess SDoMH and improve individual and community well-being
TASK FORCE WORKGROUPS

Clinical Workgroup
Francis Lu, MD (Chair), Steve Koh, MD, Tresha Gibbs, MD

Research & Education Workgroup
Dolores Malaspina, MD (Chair), Elie Aoun, MD, Kimberly Gordon-Achebe, MD

Public Health Workgroup
Kenneth Thompson, MD (Chair), Michael Compton, MD, Sanya Virani, MD

Policy Workgroup
Allan Tasman, MD (Chair), Gary Belkin, MD, Lisa Fortuna, MD
SDOMH: TASK FORCE WORKGROUP TARGETS

- **Clinical**: Clinical competency; Practice Guidelines
- **Research and Education**: Bio-psycho-social studies of mechanisms & interventions; Training in SDoMH
- **Public Health**: Public education; Prevention
- **Policy**: Advocacy, Healthcare access; Healthcare economics
Addressing Social Determinants of Mental Health: If Not Now, When? If Not Us, Who?

Ruth S. Joe, MD, MPH, and Michael T. Compton, MD, MPH

In public health, the recognition of the importance of the social determinants of health has led to significant shifts in practice and research. Psychiatry is playing a crucial role in this evolution towards a health care system that focuses on improving outcomes for people who are not only receiving health care but also living in environments that contribute to their well-being. In public health, these social determinants of health, which are defined as the circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, have led to significant shifts in practice and research. The generalist psychiatrist identifies the social determinants of health, such as poverty, lack of access to health care, and exposure to violence, as key contributors to mental illness. Ignoring these factors can lead to the underestimation of mental illness and its treatment, as well as to the perpetuation of health disparities. Therefore, it is essential to address the social determinants of mental health in order to improve mental health outcomes and promote the well-being of all individuals.

Position Statement on Mental Health Equity and the Social and Structural Determinants of Mental Health

 Approved by the Board of Trustees, December 2019

"Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. These are... position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects..." - APA Operations Manual

Issue:

Unfair access to care who b and application health include discrimination, include to a

APA Resource Document

Resource Document on Social Determinants of Health

Approved by the Assembly, November 2016


Social Determinants of Health

What are social determinants of health?

Social determinants of health (SDOH) refer to the conditions in the environments where people are born, grow, live, work, and age that influence and modify their health. These conditions include access to health care, education, employment, housing, and exposure to violence. Social determinants of health are risk factors for the development of physical, mental, and social health outcomes. Effective solutions to address the social determinants of mental health require interventions that improve the health of children and young people, reduce poverty, and increase access to mental health care. The APA has developed a resource document on social determinants of health to guide practitioners in addressing these issues.

Healthy People 2030

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SDOH: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

- **6th to 4th century BCE**: Ancient Greeks considered physical & social determinants of health and recognized the importance of supportive environments and of healthy public policy (Tountas, 2009)

- **Early 19th century**: Social disconnectedness increased with industrial revolution

- **1840**: “If medicine is to fulfill her great task, then she must enter the political and social life. Do we not always find the diseases of the populace traceable to defects in society?” – R. Virchow

- **1946**: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.” – WHO

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH (WHO, 2002)

- Early childhood development
- Education, job opportunities, and income
- Social inclusion and freedom from racial & other forms of discrimination
- Safe housing, transportation, neighborhoods
- Access to clean air and water
- Access to nutritious foods & physical activity opportunities
- Access to decent-quality affordable health services
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF MENTAL HEALTH (SDoMH)

- Exposure to the Impacts of Global Climate Change
- Exposure to Conflict, Violence, Shootings, War, Migration, etc.
- Interaction and Involvement with the Criminal Justice System
- Adverse Features of the Built Environment

Compton and Shim, 2020
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH: ODDS OF REDUCED MORTALITY

WHY TASK FORCE ON SDOMH?

- 75% of SMI begin in early life – hence, there is more adverse impact of SDoH in SMI patients than in non-SMI persons

- More people with SMI are in jails/prisons than in hospitals

- Mortality gap between SMI and general population has increased in recent years, likely due to continued marginalization of SMI patients
EDITORIAL: BRAIN HEALTH AND ITS SOCIAL DETERMINANTS

Vivian Pender, the newly elected President of the APA pronounced in July that “we need to be more aware of the broader context in which (mental) illness occurred and how that context has shaped the health outcome.” …….. Pender has felt the need to create a taskforce to examine this issue, reporting to the APA’s annual meeting in May, 2022………… Much evidence has been published supporting Pender’s call for social determinants to be considered as key in understanding and treating mental illness.

TASK FORCE - PROPOSED BROADENING OF SDOMH

• Stigma against mental illnesses

• Healthcare inequities for psychiatric patients

• Structural & functional milieu – Quality of education & opportunities

• Criminal justice system

• Quality of Social connections (including Social media)

• Positive psychosocial factors: Community-level Resilience, Compassion, Wisdom
• Assessment of SDoMH in clinical practice
• Identification of social causes of health inequities in individual patients
• Focus on Social Prescribing
SUMMARY

• SDoMH is a unique construct that is distinct from (though with some overlap with) general SDoH

• APA’s proposed work on SDoMH is generating wide interest outside APA

• We must focus on pragmatic but evidence-based strategies