Cultural Influences on Mental Health

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Course Description

The Cultural Influences on Mental Health course examines the historical roots and intergenerational context of the United States' mental healthcare system and the persistence of systemic socioeconomic inequity. We explore the Western ideology and philosophies of mental healthcare for diverse populations, cultural assumptions and myths, and causation of mental health disorders on race, identity, and ethnicity.

Course Description

Additionally, the course evaluates the impact of cultural assumptions and blind spots, conscious and unconscious provider bias, mental health diagnosis and treatment disparities, and cultural perceptions of trust across the mental health sector. Following, the course will emphasize the significance of cultural beliefs associated with religion, spirituality, and the faith community.

Course Description

Participants explore the power of self-advocacy and advancement of cultural awareness, cultural competency, and mental healthcare equity as well as promoting individual and group acculturation and resilience, cultural adaptations, and therapeutic alliances.

Learning Outcomes & Objectives

✓ After this course, participants will be able to examine the historical roots and intergenerational context of the United States' mental healthcare system and the persistence of systemic socioeconomic inequity.

✓ After this course, participants will be able to investigate the Western ideology and philosophies of mental healthcare for diverse populations and causation of mental health disorders on race, identity, and ethnicity.

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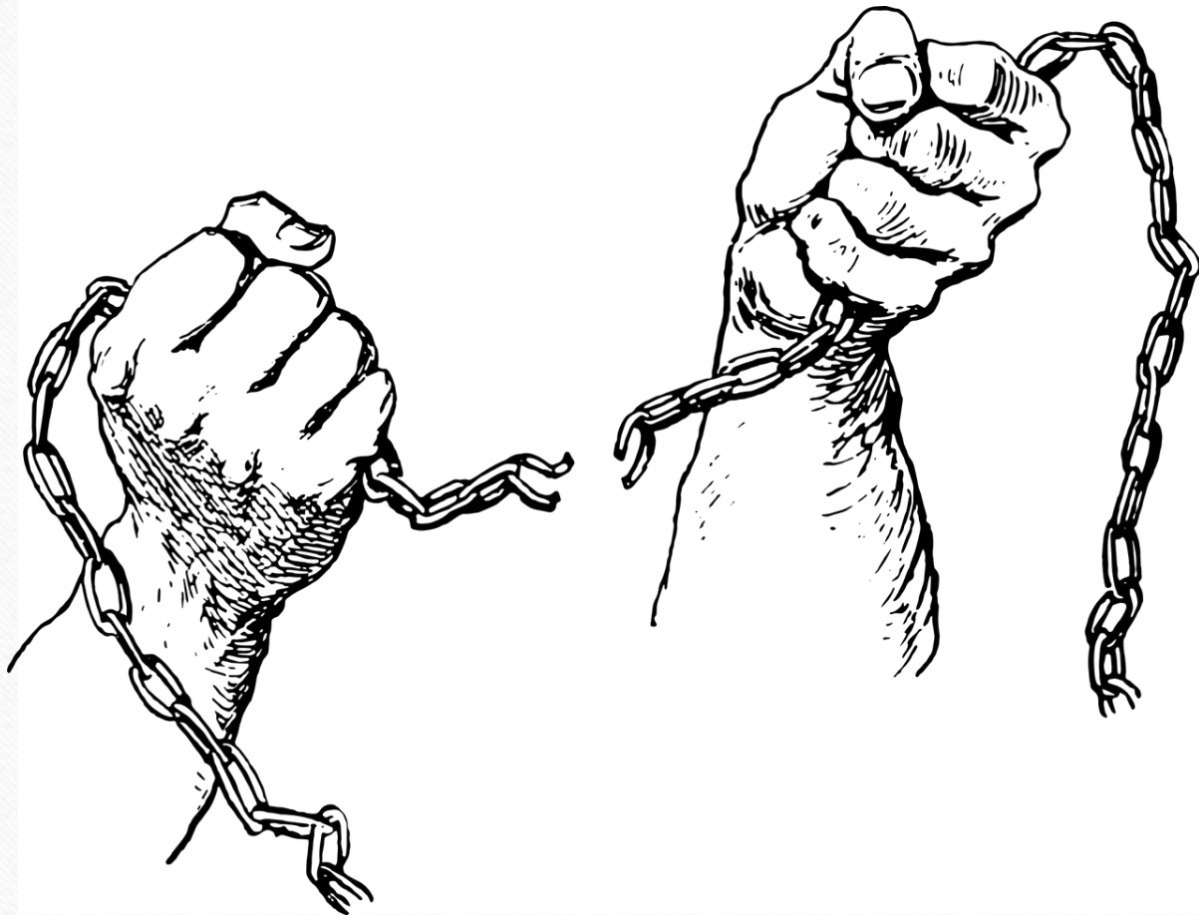
Scientific Racism

Race and **insanity** share a **troubled past**.

Scientific Racism

During the transatlantic slave trade, African American men were **labeled** as having **primitive psychological organization** and uniquely **fitted for bondage**.

Scientific Racism

African American men were **encapsulated** as "**negroes suffering from an affliction of negritude**" and "**emotionally and mentally unfit for freedom.**"

Scientific Racism

Imagine the atrocities, of a mental healthcare institution, with a medical director and team of psychiatrists, psychiatric nurse practitioners, and mental health practitioners administering a history and physical and diagnostic mental health evaluation (i.e., intake assessment and/or biopsychosocial assessment).

Scientific Racism

During the visit, the medical director and psychiatrist says, "The **physical pain** and **psychological trauma** you're experiencing is an outcry of negritude. Let me explain. **Negritude** is a medical disease and/or mental health condition in which enslaved African American men, or "you people," reject the political, social, and moral domination of the Western world's ideologies and beliefs.

Scientific Racism

Based on medical and clinical necessity, I advise you to accept the total consciousness of belonging to the black race. In approximately two weeks, I will have our appointment scheduler to contact your slaveholder and book a follow-up visit. Does that sound like a great treatment plan for continuity of care?"
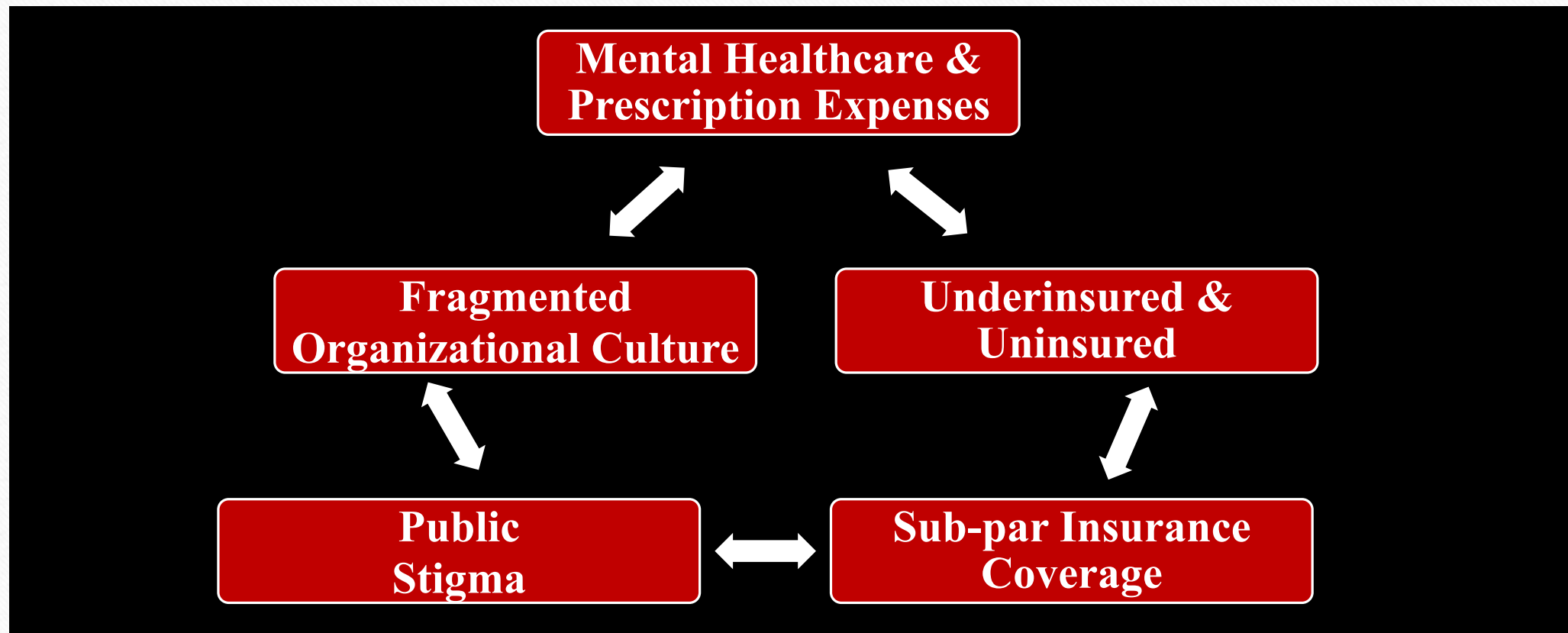
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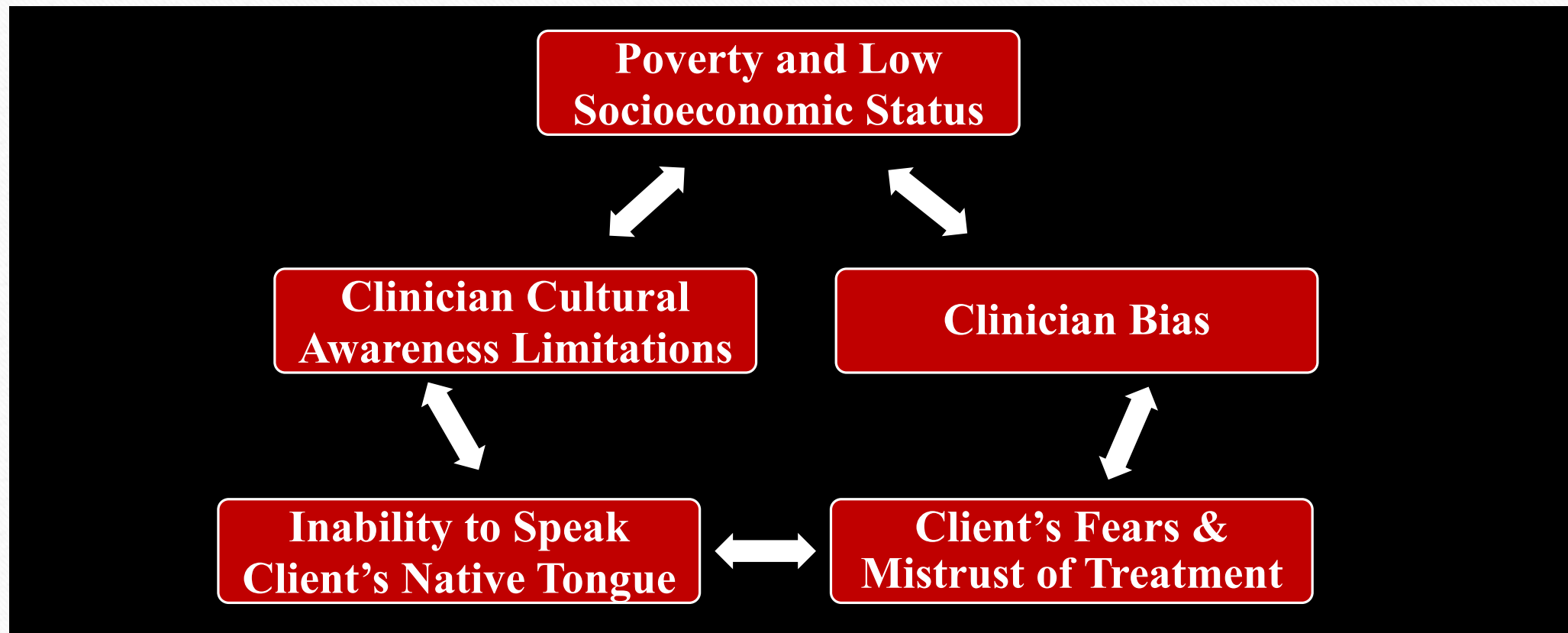
Mental Health Barriers

✓ Compared to Caucasian Americans, minority populations are least likely to access mental healthcare services.

✓ Even with substantial community rates of mental health disorders, ethnic minority groups are disproportionally exposed to inadequate mental healthcare treatment, higher risk factors, and substandard holistic health and wellness outcomes.

✓ With limited mental healthcare utilization and low-quality healthcare outcomes, ethnic minority communities consistently have unmet psychological needs.
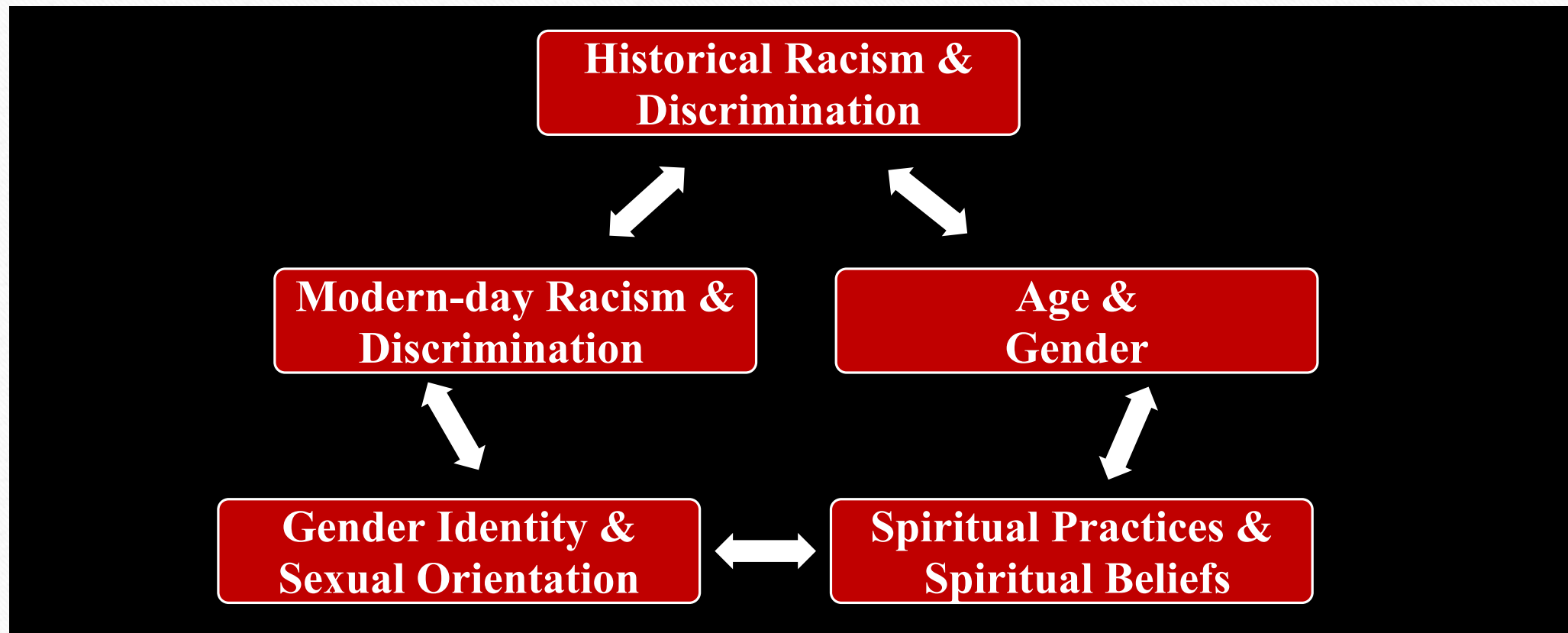
Mental Health Barriers

Mental Healthcare & Prescription Expenses

Fragmented Organizational Culture

Underinsured & Uninsured

Public Stigma

Sub-par Insurance Coverage

Mental Health Barriers

Poverty and Low Socioeconomic Status

Clinician Cultural Awareness Limitations

Clinician Bias

Inability to Speak Client's Native Tongue

Client's Fears & Mistrust of Treatment

Mental Health Barriers

Historical Racism & Discrimination

Modern-day Racism & Discrimination

Age & Gender

Gender Identity & Sexual Orientation

Spiritual Practices & Spiritual Beliefs

Mental Health Barriers for Individuals

Genetic Vulnerability

Chronic Physical Illness

Below-Average Intelligence

Gender

Language Disabilities

Child Abuse or Neglect

Low Birth Weight

Neuropsychological Deficits
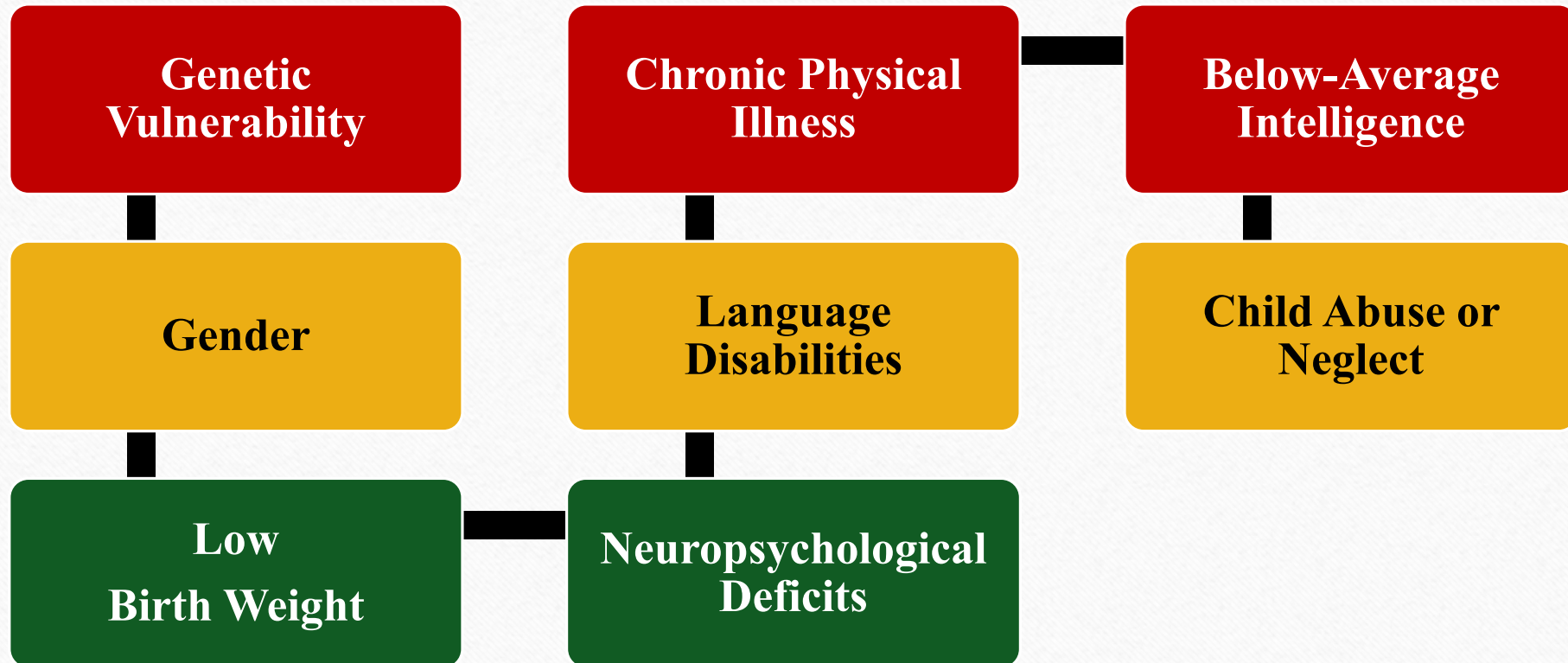
Mental Health Barriers for Families

Irreconciled Marital Discord

Foster Care Placement

Social Disadvantage

Maternal Mental Health Disorder

Overcrowding or Large Family Size

Paternal Incarceration
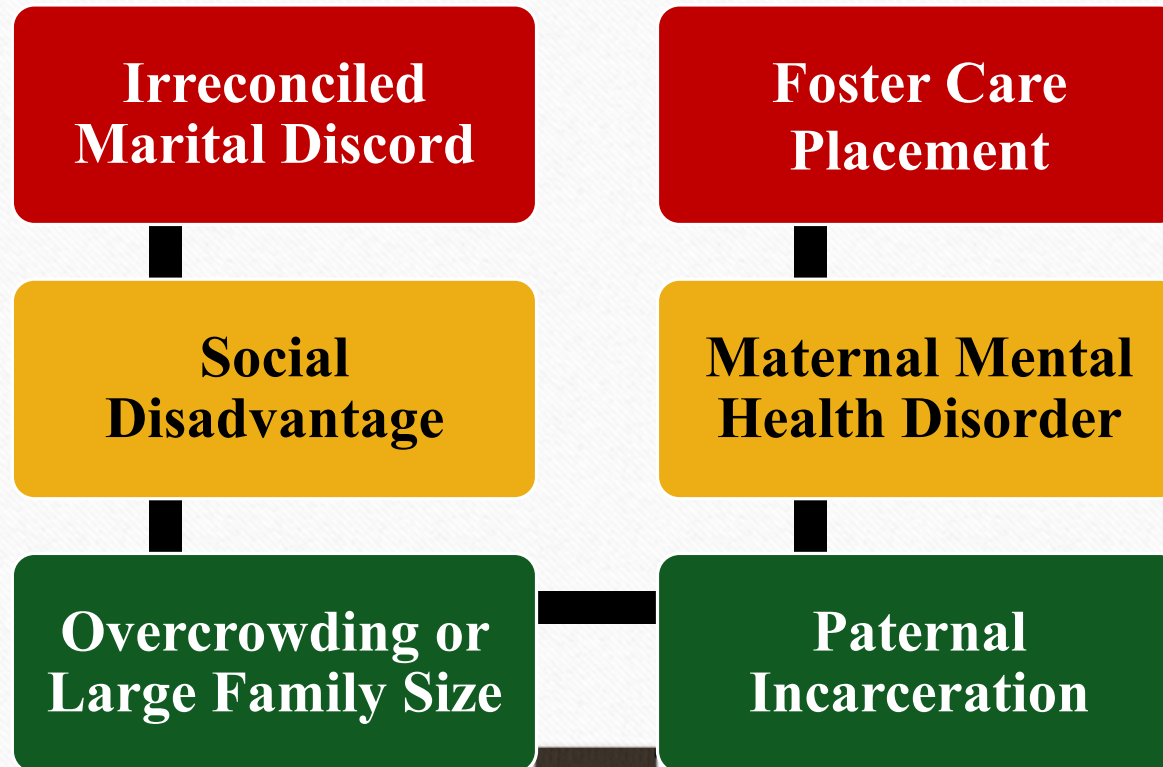
Mental Health Barriers for Community & Society

Violence

Racism

Prejudgment

Discrimination

Community Disorganization

Inadequate Schools
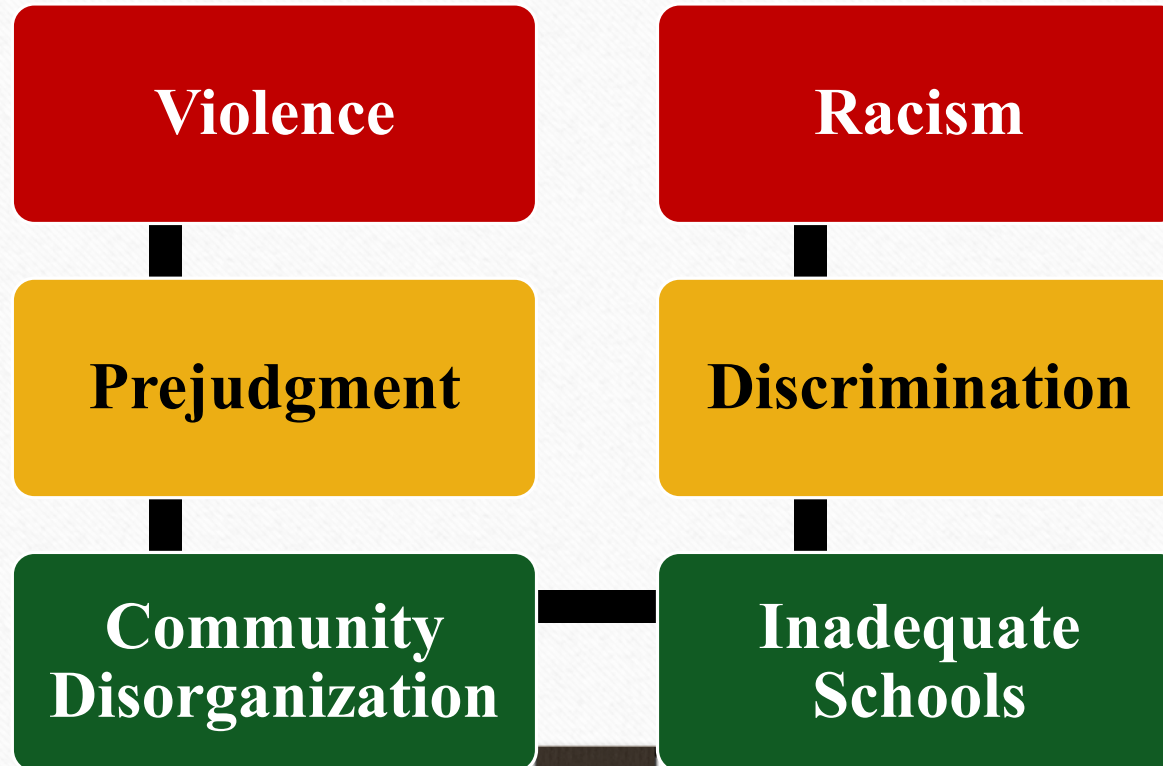
The Relationship Between Culture & Mental Health

✓ Culture is an intergenerational grouping of learned behaviors and beliefs for a specific social group.

✓ Moreover, culture influences each generation's lifestyle, values, and belief systems.

The Relationship Between Culture & Mental Health

- Culture influences the clients' reporting of psychological and physiological symptoms.

- For instance, Asian Americans have a higher propensity to disclose physical versus mental and emotional symptoms.

The Relationship Between Culture & Mental Health

✓ Clients' sociocultural backgrounds impact their experiences and manifestations of mental health disorders.

✓ Likewise, culture defines the client's expression of psychological and/or physiological symptoms, coping mechanisms, and interventions.

The Relationship Between Culture & Mental Health

Cultural Do's

✓ Mental health professionals must strive to acquire an in-depth understanding of the client's culture.

✓ Demographical information (i.e., age, income, health status, and socioeconomic status) can increase the clinician's self-awareness and cultural competency.

Cultural Don'ts

✓ Generalizing a client's heritage, customs, traditions, and cultural beliefs may intensify the risks for stereotyping.

✓ Grouping all racial, ethnic, and cultural subgroups together can increase the likelihood of bias, prejudice, racism, and discrimination.

The Relationship Between Culture & Mental Health

✓ Considerably, culture contributes to the perception and rationale for the client's presenting concerns and interpretation of mental health symptoms.

✓ For example, the client may view their mental health symptoms as real or intangible, physiological condition potentially warranting identification or examination.

✓ Perceivably, culture can motivate or demotivate a client's desire to seek professional mental health treatment, family and friend support, and community outreach.

The Relationship Between Culture & Mental Health

✓ Culture influences clients' cognitions and emotions, emotional and self-regulation, and self-care practices.

✓ Ethnic minority groups are less inclined to seek mental health treatment.

✓ In moments of adversity, African Americans are more compelled to employ their own coping techniques.

✓ During trials and tribulations, African Americans are more prone to embrace their faith and spiritual practices along with support from family and friends, traditional healers, members of the clergy, and pastoral counselors.

The Relationship Between Culture & Mental Health

Mental health professionals and legislators are charged with developing evidence-based, transcultural training, for culturally diverse populations, encompassing the "**Twelve Domains of Culture**."

The Twelve Domains of Culture

- ✓ Locale and Topography
- ✓ Communication and Active Listening
- ✓ Family Roles & Systems
- ✓ Labor Force Issues
- ✓ Biocultural Ecology
- ✓ Aversive & Challenging Behaviors
- ✓ Diet, Nutrition, & Wellness
- ✓ Pregnancy and Childbearing Practices
- ✓ Death Rituals and Homegoing Celebrations
- ✓ Spirituality Practices & Beliefs
- ✓ Healthcare Practices
- ✓ Healthcare Professionals

Cultural Competency & Mental Healthcare Equity

Cultural competency positively influences mental healthcare equity and supports access to Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) seeking behavioral, mental health, and substance abuse services. Furthermore, cultural competency enhances therapeutic rapport and client – therapist relationships. Finally, culturally competent therapy encourages both members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA+) and BIPOC communities to pursue professional mental healthcare.

Conclusion

In conclusion, cultural awareness, cultural competency, and mental healthcare equity promotes the following:

- ✓ Initiation and Engagement
- ✓ Implementation and Participation
- ✓ Coordination of Services and Continuity of Care
- ✓ Treatment Planning and Discharge Planning

Fountain House Resource

Why is Cultural Competence Important in Mental Health Care?

Click Icon.