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APPROACHING
OUTREACH FROM A
SOCIAL JUSTICE
PERSPECTIVE
Goals of Presentation

- Understand why it is necessary to apply a social justice framework to outreach on college campuses
- Determine how to apply a social justice framework to a college outreach program
- Determine how to apply a social justice framework to individual outreach workshops
What is social justice?

Definition: Full and equal participation of all groups of a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs and provides physical and psychological safety to all members (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 1997)
What does social justice in outreach involve?

- Understanding the social influences (systems) that contribute to mental health concerns
- Communicating that you understand these systems and how they affect students both individually and as a group
- Taking the approach of working to change the system from the inside-out in order to promote mental health
Why is it important to apply a social justice framework to an outreach program?
Discrimination and disparities in access to resources are major contributors to mental illness.

Students bring their histories of discrimination and disparities with them to campus.

Discrimination and disparities exist on college campuses.
And...

- Addressing discrimination and disparities allows students to see that you understand where they are coming from.
- Addressing discrimination and disparities allows you to have a positive impact on student mental health.
Traditional Outreach on College Campuses

Based on remedial medical model

Implies problem is with the individual student

Ignores dysfunctional systems

Leads to status quo

Perpetuates social injustice
Social Justice Outreach on College Campuses

Focuses on dysfunctional systems

Encourages awareness/change of dysfunctional systems

Leads to social change

Has impact on wider range of students (i.e., improved mental health)
How do you apply social justice to an outreach program?
Know your student demographics!

- Allows you to understand the concerns that students might be experiencing
- Allows you to tailor outreach approach and workshops to these concerns
UC Merced Demographics, 2011-2012 Academic Year

- 51% Male, 49% Female
- 60% First Generation College Students
- Majority Low SES Background
Based on this information...

What might be some concerns of UC Merced students?
Concerns of UC Merced Students

- Stress related to first-generation status
- Trauma related to history of discrimination, poverty, and lack of resources
- High level of intellectualization
- High degree of somatization of emotional symptoms
Know your campus culture

- Allows you to determine what inequalities/disparities exist on your campus, as well as how these impact student mental health
- Allows you to avoid making assumptions about what students need
- Helps you plan/be intentional around outreach development
Culture of UC Merced

High stigma regarding mental health concerns
+
Low understanding of importance of self-care
+
Concern regarding privacy
=
Difficulty accessing services
How do you get to know your campus culture?

Knowing the presenting concerns at the counseling center is a good start, but it is not enough!
Also...

- Participate in campus activities outside the counseling center
- Understand community concerns
- Engage in continuing education around the issues that are prevalent on your campus
- Collaborate with other departments
Socioecological Model

- Framework for understanding the multiple effects and interrelatedness of factors that contribute to a variety of issues (Hawley, 1950; Bronfenbrenner, 1979)
Socioecological Model

- Intrapersonal: Individual factors
- Interpersonal: Influence of significant others
- Institutional: Rules, norms, and expectations of the university
- Communal: Setting in which university exists
- Global: Social/cultural norms, social policy, laws, government policy, etc.
Sleep: A Socioecological Perspective

- **Intrapersonal**
  - Genetics
  - Physical/mental health
  - Substance use
  - Procrastination

- **Interpersonal**
  - Roommates
  - Friends
  - Work
  - Family responsibilities
  - Late-night activities
Sleep: A Socioecological Perspective

- Institutional
  - Dorm overcrowding
  - Late-night classes
  - Instructor expectations
  - Student beliefs/norms
  - Transportation

- Communal
  - Noise
  - Air quality
  - Heat
  - Safety
Sleep: A Socioecological Perspective

- **Global**
  - Social/cultural norms
  - Social policy
  - Laws
  - Government policy
How do you apply a social justice framework to individual outreach workshops?
A Socioecological Approach to Sleep Management

- **Intrapersonal**
  - Establish good sleep hygiene
  - Engage in time/stress management
  - Exercise
  - Maintain healthy diet

- **Interpersonal**
  - Manage conflicts with roommates
  - Discuss importance of good sleep habits with family and friends
  - Manage work stress
A Socioecological Approach to Sleep Management

- Institutional
  - Challenge university norms
  - Petition for adequate class time/space
  - Petition against overcrowding

- Communal
  - Petition to have noise ordinances in place/enforced
  - Establish neighborhood watch programs
  - Discuss importance of good air quality
A Socioecological Approach to Sleep Management

- **Global**
  - Work to end social inequality
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