

HOW ARE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF MENTAL HEALTH ADDRESSED IN THERAPY: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Naomi Pauling
naomi.pauling@manchester.ac.uk
Trainee Counselling Psychologist
School of Environment, Education, and Development

WHAT ARE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF MENTAL HEALTH?

Social Determinants
inequality
social exclusion
socioeconomic status
educational attainment
housing
discrimination
community deprivation
...

Social, economic, and environmental factors that influence mental health, shaped by socio-political and cultural context (WHO, 2014)

HOW ARE THEY RELEVANT TO THERAPY?

Psychological distress disproportionately affects people living with adverse social determinants. Psychological distress needs to be understood at social and cultural levels as well as at an individual level (Afuape, 2011; Johnstone & Boyle, 2018).

Scan QR code for further information on reviewed studies & full reference list



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What does the existing literature tell us about how social determinants of mental health are addressed in therapy?
What are the implications for therapy practice and training?

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative systematic review
Search terms: "social determinants of mental health" and terms relating to "therapy" or "counselling"
Search for existing literature on 5 databases: PsycInfo, ASSIA, CINAHL Plus, Science Direct, and Web of Science
Quality assessment using QuADS (Harrison et al., 2021)
Thematic synthesis used to analyse eligible studies (Thomas & Harden, 2008)

SEARCH FINDINGS & DATA SELECTION

127 articles identified from database searches
5 studies met eligibility criteria and were reviewed

LIMITATIONS

- complexity of qualitative systematic review
- small review: only 1 reviewer, limited variety of contexts
- limitation of search terms: "social determinants of mental health"

CONCLUSION

This review highlights as helpful for therapists working with people living with adverse social determinants:

- Developing a collaborative therapeutic relationship
- Adapting therapy to their frame of reference and context
- Community as a helpful resource - both for people experiencing distress and to inform training and therapeutic interventions

THEMES



- **The therapeutic relationship:** creating a safe and trusting space in which clients feel heard, shared learning can take place, and a shared understanding of their distress and needs can be co-constructed.
- **Adapting to client context:** adapting evidence-based therapy to clients' frame of reference and context-specific needs, and collaborating with other sources of support to provide holistic care
- **Community as a resource:** collaborating with the community to help strengthen clients' social support and sense of belonging, and to inform the adaptation, development, and implementation of interventions, services, and training.

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