A Public Health Perspective on Mental Health Challenges

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Asthma: The Patient's Environment



Climate & Extreme Heat

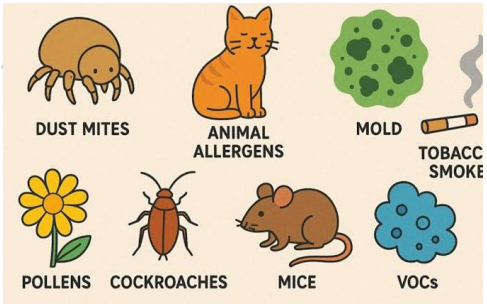




Outdoor Air Quality



Coverage & Medicaid



Indoor Triggers



Type 2 Diabetes: The Patient's Environment



Lack of Walkability





Food Swamp



Food Desert

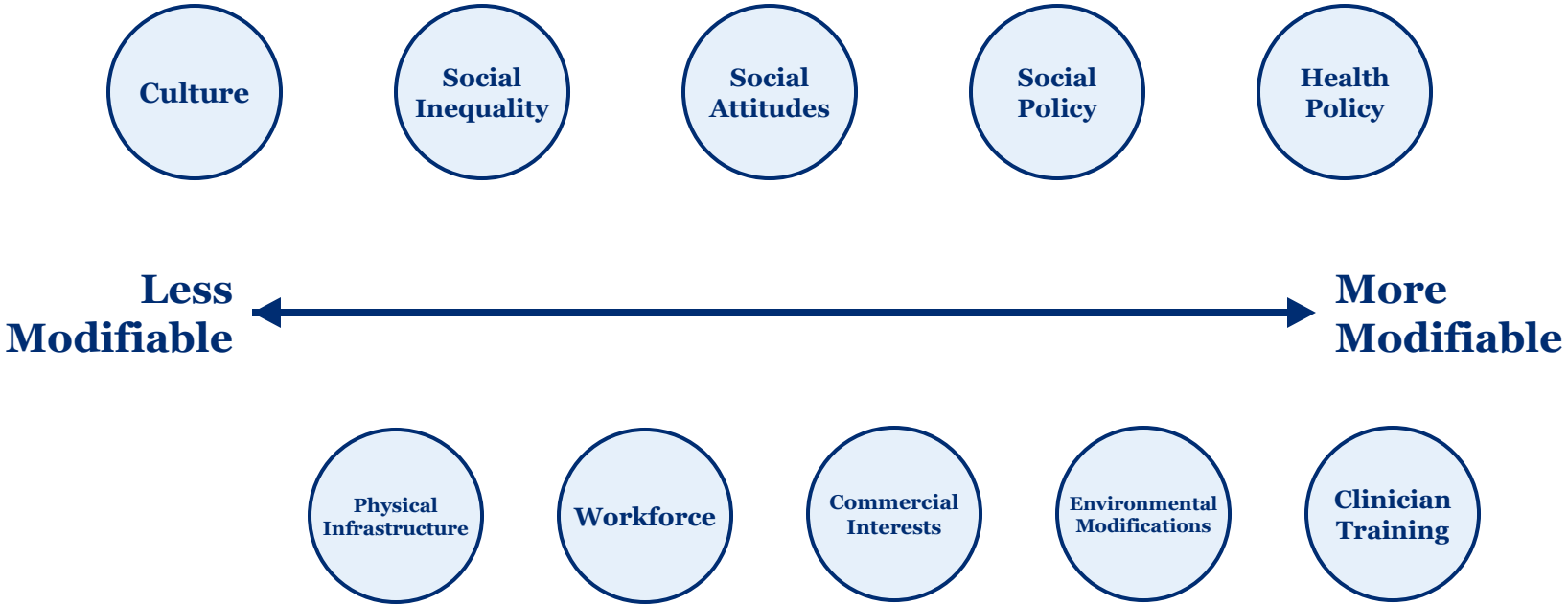


Medication Costs

The Public Health Perspective

- Zoom out beyond 1:1 clinical medicine
- Appreciate the environment around the patient, and how the environment contributes to the illness or impedes its successful treatment
- Consider ways to intervene at the population or policy level to help hundreds, thousands or millions of people at a time

Examples of Environmental Factors

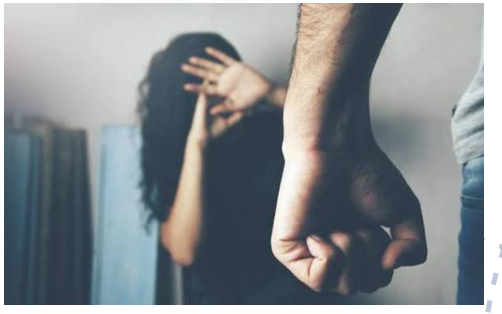


For Each Element

- Assessment: What is the role?
- Policy Development: How can we intervene?
- Assurance: Did our intervention work?



Opioid Use Disorder: The Patient's Environment



Trauma





The Drug Supply



Access to Care



Stigma

Changing the Environment: Opioid use Disorder

Environmental Modifications

Social Attitudes

Health Policy

Social Policy

The drug supply: pursuing effective supply side efforts, adding drug testing programs linked to harm reduction

Stigma: changing language, promoting care-seeking

Access to care: reducing regulations on methadone, requiring practitioners (including psychiatrists) to Rx buprenorphine

Trauma and IPV: adding more resources for prevention programs nad to support survivors especially housing



Severe Mental Illness: The Patient's Environment



Housing Crisis



AOT
Assisted Outpatient Treatment

Legal Tools to Expand Access



Access to Care



Criminalization

Changing the Environment: Chronic Mental Illness

Housing & homelessness: addressing shortage of supportive housing

Social Policy

Health Policy

Access to care: promoting a robust treatment and recovery system

Assisted Outpatient Treatment: establishing legal pathways to support community treatment success

Health Policy

Criminalization: change attitudes and policies that are encouraging arrest of unhoused individuals

Social Attitudes

Social Policy



Teen Anxiety: The Patient's Environment



Social Media







Basic Social Needs



Workforce



Attitudes on Treatment

Changing the Environment: Teen Anxiety

Social Policy

Social Media: changing policy via litigation

Workforce: investing in full range of mental health professionals

Health Policy

Basic Social Needs: reformatting programs for adolescents

Social Policy

Attitudes on Treatment: speaking up for effectiveness of appropriate pharmacotherapy

Social Attitudes

Concluding Thoughts

- Clinician's responsibility in patient in front of them – still some work to do there for addressing key challenges like addiction
- To make a difference for the broader problem, consider the environment
- Many ways to get involved in these different perspectives