Teaching notes for:
Stress Exposure and Depression in Disadvantaged Women: The Protective Effects of Optimism and Perceived Control

Notes by Matthew Toth

Slides 1-2:
This presentation ought to be appropriate for classes in Adult Health and Mental Health, Women’s Issues, Social Work Practice, and Discrimination and Inequality.

Slides 3-4:
Review Slides. What might explain greater depression severity among low income African Americans than low income whites?

Slides 5-8:
Review Slides. What might be some aspects of discrimination that contribute to chronic stress? To what extent might income level affect levels of discrimination one may experience?

Slides 9-15:
Review Slides

Slide 16:
Review Slide. Refer back to discussion on chronic stress and discrimination.

Slide 17-18:
Review slides. Discuss table. Draw attention to the negative correlation between optimism, control, and depression.

Slides 19-21:
Review slides. Discuss table. Notice the positive relationship between # of Chronic stressors and depression severity. Discuss how the # of chronic stressors and optimism has a negative relationship with depression severity, and how this might show optimism as having a buffering effect on stress and depression severity.

Slides 22-23:
Review slides. Discuss table

Slides 24-25:
Review slides. Discuss table. Notice the difference in relationship between # of Chronic stressors and # of Chronic stressors in interaction with perceived control. Chronic stressors are typically perceived to be uncontrollable (i.e. discrimination). What might explain the moderating effect of perceived control over chronic stress and depression severity?
Slides 26-27:
Review slides. Discuss table. Perceived control over stressors impact depression outcomes for disadvantaged women in Pittsburgh, PA. Are these results generalizable across the country in terms of perceived control over stressful events? How might the influence of ‘perceived control’ on depression vary across ethnicities?

Slides 28-30:
Review slides. Discuss results.

Group Activity:
Get into groups of 3-5. Discuss findings. Introduce 3 to 5 scenarios involving a client similar to the ones studied here, who is of a disadvantaged population and at risk for depression. Think about how the findings from this study could inform social work practice within these scenarios. Come up with intervention strategies, based on what we’ve learned about optimism and perceived control, that might address the specific needs of the client system in each scenario. Return to large group. Report findings and discuss.

Slides 31-32:
Review slides. Discuss implications for practice, drawing upon the input from the smaller groups.

Slides 33-37:
Display references.