CAROLYN WEISZ
'Stigmatized Identities, Psychological Distress, and Physical Health among Individuals Experiencing Homelessness'
Mental Health Symposium April 21st 2018

[2018/04/21 16:59] LV (lorivonne.lustre): Hello everyone. Today's presentation is being transcribed so those without audio or who require text only can participate in real time.
A little explanation about this service.
Voice-to-text transcriptionists provide a translation of the key ideas discussed, NOT a word for word transcription.
Voice-to-text services provide an in-the-moment snapshot of ideas and concepts, so that those who are unable to hear or to understand the audio program are able to participate in real-time.
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Transcription is provided by Virtual Ability, Inc.
The transcriptionists are:
LoriVonne Lustre
Carolyn Carillon
The speakers will be identified by initials as they speak.
The following initials in the transcription record will identify the speakers:
CW: Carolyn Weisz

[2018/04/21 17:00] millay Freschi: Hello and welcome to the final speaker for Virtual Ability's 2018 Mental Health Symposium.
My name is millay Freschi and I am a PhD Candidate at the University of Maine.
I am researching the effect of the avatar in social activism.
I've been a resident of SL for almost 11 years and have run the Four Bridges Project in SL since 2008.

It's my pleasure to introduce you all to Dr. Carolyn Weisz.
Dr. Weisz is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Puget Sound where she serves on the advisory committee for the University's African American Studies Program and on the Leadership Team of the Race & Pedagogy Institute.
Her research interests include topics related to social psychology.
Most recently, she has worked with interdisciplinary and community-based teams exploring the intersections of racism and homelessness.
Dr. Weisz is a Senior Fellow of the Tacoma-Pierce County American Leadership Forum, serves on the board for the Fair Housing Center of Washington, and volunteers with the Diversion Program at the Pierce County Juvenile Court.

The title of her talk is
Stigmatized Identities, Psychological Distress, and Physical Health among Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

Dr. Weisz will be sharing her research on the multiple stigmatized identities that affect the homeless and how the complexity of these stigmatized identities perpetuates mental health issues and sustains homelessness.

Audience, please hold your questions until she opens the floor for interaction. Welcome, Dr. Weisz. The floor is yours.

[2018/04/21 17:02] LV (lorivonne.lustre): <<transcription begins>>

[2018/04/21 17:03] LV (lorivonne.lustre): CW: Hello everyone. thank you for the introduction and the invitation to be here
I have watched several of the sessions and know you have learned about stigma
I will be talking about stigma and homelessness
I chose the images on the title slide carefully, 2 are symbols of stigma for homelessness
The other two are beautiful and colourful. one is a painting that hangs in my home by an artist who was homeless at one time
The other is a bed -- a symbol of hope for individuals and communities
I will talk about homelessness in the US, the stigma attached to this, and my research in this area
Finally we will look at ways that we can help

Slide 2
Homeless Numbers in the US? From HUD Annual Homeless Assessment Reports (AHAR)
More than ½ million people on one night (HUD, 2017)
35% unsheltered, 33% families, 21% children, 60% male
~1.5 million people seeking shelter in a year (HUD, 2016)
64.8% alone, 22.3% children, 62.9% male
Every year in January there is a point in time count. We can also look at how many people access shelters
Homelessness may be visible and invisible
People living in tent shelters or under overpasses

Slide 3
Homelessness and Disability
From HUD annual AHAR reports
Adults with disabilities were about four times more likely to be experiencing sheltered homelessness than were adults without disabilities.
Between 2007 and 2016, the proportion of sheltered individuals experiencing homelessness with disabilities increased from 40.4 percent to 47.3 percent.
The disability rate among adults in families with children experiencing sheltered homelessness (21.9%) is 2.6 times higher than among all adults in families with children in the U.S. (8.4%).
I do not have breakdowns for types of disabilities
Much of my work has looked at homelessness and race intersection. Although African Americans comprise 13% of the US population and 26% of those living in poverty, they account for more than 40% of the homeless population. We have seen this since the count started in 2007 and continues to today. Something more than poverty is going on here. The only other ethnic/racial group that comes close to that seen with African Americans is with Native Americans.

Washington State (OSPI, 2016)
10 per 100 Black students
9 per 100 Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian
8 per 100 American Indian/Alaska Native
5 per 100 Hispanic students
3 per 100 White students
Note: 1 out of 10 Black children is homeless
These are big numbers!

This slide shows images of the systems that contribute to homelessness. Systemic racism persists for people of colour. We need to address the root causes.

A personal characteristic or social identity that causes a person to be devalued by the larger society. – Erving Goffman (1973)
Having a stigmatized identity is linked to negative outcomes. People who are homeless may also have identities that contribute to stigma. Even if they do not, people may assume this to be true. We know less about the complex effects of having multiple negative identities.

Homelessness – An extreme form of stigma
Low in Perceived Warmth and Competence (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002)
The stereotypes about homelessness are extreme. People perceive others along 2 dimensions: Warmth and Competence. Fiske et al found that some groups are low in both factors or high in both, and some may be low in one and high in another. Homeless people are stereotyped as low in both areas: warmth and competence. This in turn leads to an emotional response. Those who are low in both have the emotional response of contempt.

“Dehumanizing the Lowest of the Low: Neuroimaging Responses to Extreme Out-Groups” (Harris & Fiske, 2006)
They found that when people were either high in one of the areas or both, then certain areas of the brain light up.
When looking at individuals who are homeless, the areas of the brain connected with throwing up
Pride (Middle-class Americans/US Olympic athletes)
Envy (Rich people/Business professionals)
Pity (Elderly people/Disabled people)
This slide looks at a study that I did with a colleague
The participants were asked how people would respond true or false

Slide 10
% “True” Responses to Statements (N = 209)
Columns 1 v. 2 McNemar tests all significant; the frequency of true responses was higher for homeless individuals’ perceptions of the outgroups’ responses than for their own beliefs, ps < .001. Chi-square showed 4 of 5 significant differences between columns 2 and 3. The fact that non-homeless individuals did not endorse statements about negative characteristics of homeless people suggests that some form of social desirability bias or modern prejudice (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986) may be present.
For the item describing beliefs about the effects of homeless individuals on the community, homeless individuals’ beliefs about responses of the non-homeless and the non-homeless’ own responses did not differ, p > .10, and were both higher than homeless individuals own beliefs, p < .001.
These findings suggest that homeless individuals believe that they are viewed quite negatively by those who do not share their homeless status. Moreover, the research used a method called cyberball

Stigma – The Target’s Perspective
Cyberball – The Psychic Pain of Ostracism and Social Exclusion
(Williams & Sommer, 1997; Williams & Jarvis, 2006)
Participants are told they are playing catch - virtually - with people in another room
However, there are no others. The game of catch is rigged
The participant is initially included and then excluded
One of their studies had people play the game in an MFRI machine -- areas of the brain that experienced pain light up
Imagine what this must feel like for a homeless person

Slide 12
Different Ways of Conceptualizing Racism
Systemic Racism - a system of advantage based on race
Institutionalized Racism -
-Redlining
-Hiring procedures/educational requirements
-Racial profiling and police brutality
Implicit/Modern Racism – unconscious, unintentional prejudice that surfaces in subtle ways
This area is well researched
A lot of interpersonal racism is implicit. The person may not even be aware of this

Slide 13
Restrictive Covenants
Narrowmoor Racially Restrictive Covenant – 1944
No part or parcel of land or improvement thereon shall be rented or released to or used or occupied, in whole or in part, by any person of African or Asiatic descent, nor by any person not of the white or Caucasian race, other than domestic servants domiciled with an owner or tenant and living in their home.
This covenant was from Tacoma, Washington
1944
Home ownership was not an option for a large population of the US

Slide 14 - Redlining
This is a practice of banks and financial institutions
This image comes from Mapping Inequalities
There are areas called hazardous – redlined
Redlining devalued properties where black people lived and inflated values where white people lived

Slide 15
Example of modern / unintentional racism
Shooter bias studies
Whether people playing a video game will actually shoot someone -- shoot those who are holding a weapon and don't shoot those who are holding something else (coke or cell phone)
The game goes fast and you are penalized for not going at speed
Participants were faster to shoot a black person than a white person; and slower to don't shoot a black person than a white person
This increases as the speed goes up
The automatic or unconscious bias is found in the housing market today

Slide 16
HOUSING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST RACIAL AND ETHNIC MINORITIES
Minority homeseekers told about and shown fewer units
Minority homeseekers were told less information that would make their move easier
Now to my research

Slide 17
Research on Stigma, Homelessness, and Race
Can concerns about negative perceptions and treatment due to homelessness and race affect health and well-being?
Anticipated Stigma:
- Concern about negative treatment in the future
- Self-reports about previous negative treatment
Each of these is important in their own right. I combine them
I look at stigma related to homelessness and stigma related to race

Slide 18
Methods
Procedure
One-on-one surveys at Project Homeless Connect, with attempts to recruit equal numbers of White and Black volunteers.

Participants
95 Women – 77 usable surveys
18-61 years
Homeless 1 month – 40 years, 55% homeless 2 years or more
39 White, 17 Black, 15 Native American, 5 Hispanic/Latino, and 1 Pacific Islander
77% report mental illness, 48% report addiction
77 Men – 65 usable surveys
18-70 years
Homeless 1 month – 30 years, 61% homeless 2 years or more
21 White, 29 Black, 11 Native American, and 4 mixed or other
46% report mental illness, 48% report addiction

We found very few gender difference so we combined these
We recruited participants to be equal men / women / race etc. so not representative of the community

Slide 19
Stigma Measures (adapted from Quinn & Chaudoir, 2009)
Homelessness Stigma
I worry about being treated badly because I am homeless.
I worry about how people will view me because I am homeless.
I have experienced negative treatment in the last month from other people because I am homeless.
To what extent have you (ever) experienced discrimination or mistreatment due to being homeless?
Racial Stigma (same 4 items)
because I am homeless became …due to my race or ethnicity

Slide 20
Racial Stigma from Service Providers
When interacting with a service provider of a different race than myself, I think about stereotypes they may have of me.
I worry that service providers may have stereotypes about me because of my race.
Some service providers treat me badly because of my race.
Perceptions of service providers may get in the way of people accessing services

Slide 21
Stigma Measures by Race
bar chart

Slide 22
Outcome Measures
Psychological Distress
depression scale and negative mood scale
Poor Physical Health
current health symptoms, chronic health conditions,
self-rating of physical health, days sick out of last 30 days
Service Avoidance
I put off making appointments for services.
I avoid using services even if even if they may be helpful to me. 
I prefer not to seek assistance from service providers or agencies. 
(Controlling for gender, race, length homeless, chronic mental illness)
This graphic show some of the issues we found about homelessness stigma 
There is lots of data that shows multiple pathways that lead people to avoid accessing services 
Looking just at a sample of people with colour we found that the effects of racism made the stigma concerns worse 
Both homelessness and racism mattered 
When we looked at mental illness self-reports... it was correlated with all the stigma concerns of homelessness and service avoidance 

Slide 26 
Conclusions 
The stigma of homelessness may negatively impact psychological and physical health. 
Stigma related to race and/or mental illness may serve as an additional and disproportionate source of stress and as barriers to using services. 
The problem of homelessness is enormous 
What to Do? 
Support efforts to promote positive relationships and reduce stigma in communities and service organizations. 
Center the voice of individuals experiencing homelessness to inform policy, programs, and research. 
Support best practices and innovative efforts to reduce homelessness: affordable housing; centralized intake, housing first, permanent supportive housing, diversion, rapid rehousing. 
Work to end racism and promote equity in housing, education, employment, criminal justice, transportation, lending, health, and housing. 
I encourage you to look at the services that help to reduce homelessness 
This is a collaborative project 
SPARC - an initiative of the Center for Social Innovation 
image 
A research component and an action component 
It is happening in 10 communities around the country 
This is a preview of the preliminary findings 
SPARC - preliminary findings 
Preliminary Findings 
Disproportionately high rates of homelessness for Black and Native American people. 
Factors influencing homelessness for people of color include: 
-Lack of safe and affordable housing 
-Lack of economic capital and opportunity - “network impoverishment” 
-Felony history as a barrier 
-High rates of traumatic stress, mental illness, and substance abuse. 
-Multi-generational family factors (foster care, poverty, violence) 
The findings are primarily from interviews and focus groups 
This finding is especially important: -Lack of economic capital and opportunity - “network impoverishment”
Groups may be pooling their economic vulnerability
I want to end with something more hopeful
SPARC - recommendations
Recommendations
Organizational changes in hiring, professional development, and training.
Conduct research in partnership with historically marginalized groups and with a racial equity lens.
Support policies to enforce fair housing, create affordable housing, reduce evictions, and limit barriers related to criminal history and eviction history.
Reform child welfare systems and immigration policies to improve housing outcomes.
Individual action: educate yourself and others, participate in organized efforts to address homelessness and promote racial equity.
Changes in hiring that better mirror the population served. Hiring practices need to be examined
I want to end here so we have time for discussion
Thank you to all my colleagues and assistants

[2018/04/21 17:52] Gentle Heron: Thanks Carolyn. It's important to look at mental illness where it intersects with other pervasive social issues such as homelessness. This was a powerful way to end our Symposium this year.
[2018/04/21 17:52] LV (lorivonne.lustre): Questions?
[2018/04/21 17:53] Mook Wheeler: QUESTION: You said: "Adults with disabilities were about four times more likely to be experiencing sheltered homelessness than were adults without disabilities." Do you think there might be some relevance in Maslow's idea that shelter is a basic need of the person? That without the fundamental requirement that is shelter -- or a HOME, -- the person's mental and physical health inevitably suffers? Consequently also contributing to the development of self-stigma? (Maslow's upper levels of needs are disputed, but that may not apply here)
[2018/04/21 17:53] Carolyn Carillon: CW [responding to Mook]: Mook is right on At a basic level, not having a safe warm or appropriate place to sleep interferes with basic functioning & thinking in profound ways With homelessness & mental illness, it's expected that people will help themselves Even in the face of not having transportation, etc. All those things are exhausting When people aren't rested and focused, all those things become more challenging That fits with Maslow's hierarchy of needs We all know how important sleep is

Carolyn Carillon: CW [responding to Gentle]: that is a tough question
Just naming those things is important
I'll be honest & say I'm not sure how important each is compared to the others
From the SPARC findings, I can comment on some of those things
And from my own experience in Tacoma
The cost of housing compared to the wage most people get is way out of whack
In my community, there used to be a stock of very low cost housing
Mobile homes
That may not have been the greatest
Some weren't safe
But they were affordable and stable
But they were never upgraded & replaced
When that property got old, they were bought
And suburbs were built
It may have been called affordable housing but it wasn't
Not in the way mobile homes were
That's disappeared
For every listed unit that might have a rent of $800
They may exist
There may be 4 listed
And 3000 people can only afford that housing
It's way out of whack
The other things you mentioned
Are that living wages aren't living wages
People say homeless people don't want to work
But they have resumes that say they can get a job
But they can't get one that pays a living wage
Getting a job that pays a living wage is important if people want to pay for housing
That's a little bit of what I know

Jennifer Nicole Ella Rose (jennifernicoleellarose): I'd like to add to that Carolyn if I may
I have an impressive resume to some, I see it as normal. But I know I can't work because of social disabilities, which is why I am starting a career on here. I can't deal with people face to face now as I used to in the past in RL
I think people have to know if they can work RL

SunTzu (joey.aboma): Much like cars in India with the Tata Nanno for just one or two thousand dollars. They are cheap cars, but gave people mobility and social status as a car owner that they were unable to have before that. Things like owning a car, owning a home are signs of a middle class. They help define social status within society

Zombie doggie (tarquin.evermore): There are posters around town that our Housing Authority put up to help people to identify housing discrimination.

Carolyn Carillon: CW [responding to Zombie]: I'm on the board of the Fair Housing Center of Washington
Similar to other organizations around the country
That try to enforce fair housing laws
If you're feeling you're discriminated
It's important for you to contact one of these organizations
So they can intervene on your behalf with landlords
[2018/04/21 18:00] MatildaMoontree: There was a time when minimum wage
covered a rental apartment, and it only took 1/4 of your income. Now, you can't even
rent an apartment on minimum wage here.

[2018/04/21 18:01] Gentle Heron: Any other questions?
[2018/04/21 17:58] Zip Zlatkis: affordability and accessibility
Discrimination is one thing, but availability
[2018/04/21 18:01] Carolyn Carillon: CW [responding to Zip]: ah
That's a good point
Because property owners need to provide reasonable accommodation
I'm not sure where the line is between availability & accommodation
That's where fair housing organizations can be helpful
To encourage some housing providers to increase the availability of units that are
accessible
The crisis of housing accessibility is so huge
There aren't units available or affordable
People sit on wait lists for years
This disadvantages people with disabilities because they're overrepresented
[2018/04/21 18:02] Zip Zlatkis: availability, but if they rent to someone else
[2018/04/21 18:02] SunTzu (joey.aboma): The HUD program for $1 was interesting,
giving opportunity for people to fix up a home and help bring a neighborhood to
become a better part of the city
[2018/04/21 18:03] MatildaMoontree: In my city, you haven't been able to even
apply for Section 8 housing for years.

[2018/04/21 18:01] Zombie doggie (tarquin.evermore): I come across homeless
people from time to time. I stop and have a conversation. Do you think this might
help homeless people, to know that someone gives a darn, stops and just talks,
without any sort of assumptions on how they got in their situation?
[2018/04/21 18:03] Carolyn Carillon: CW [responding to Zombie]: that's a great
ting to add to the list
I showed the effects of feeling excluded
Just smiling or talking with someone can be very positive
Thank you for that
Been there done that
While I was walking to work
I saw an elderly gentleman
With an IV bag
He looked up
He was raking his yard
We locked eyes
He got a big smile
He put his hand out
From 20 feet
I shook his hand & we talked for a half hour
He has cancer
He's 75
He's been locked in his house for the winter
I was one of the few people he'd met
He was desperate to talk to someone
He'd been in the field of clinical psychology
He was a people person
He hadn't had that contact
It was wonderful for him to talk
He was interesting
The conversation was good
I feel sad that he'd been stuck in his house
I'm glad I had the conversation
And I made him smile
Thank you
[2018/04/21 18:06] Carolyn Carillon: CW: that's right
Some people don't feel comfortable or safe
Talking to people who look homeless
But there are organizations that provide places where people can get a meal
People can volunteer
People can get comfortable by volunteering
That's a great thing to do
People can expand their comfort zone by reaching out & connecting in whatever way
I appreciate your story
[2018/04/21 18:06] millay Freschi: Many shelters across the country are looking for volunteers. Picking up day old stuff from grocery stores, preparing food, etc.
Volunteering is a great way to be involved and help others get involved. It also puts a face to their issues.

[2018/04/21 18:08] Suellen Heartsong (suln.mahogany): Last year there was a challenge nationwide for crocheters to create blanket squares and our guild joined in and made hundreds of those squares and put them together into blankets, donated those to a housing situation here locally that a couple has going but it was a project just to find someone to take the blankets as a donation
Frustrating for us
[2018/04/21 18:09] SunTzu (joey.aboma): Pride often impedes that
Much like the military dropping humanitarian supplies in another country to find the people don't want the handouts
[2018/04/21 18:09] Carolyn Carillon: CW [responding to Suellen]: I've heard stories like that also
It's important to coordinate with organizations
We have a shelter in Tacoma
A kind of tent community
But if people just drop off food
It can be wasted
So the Salvation Army has started to coordinate food deliveries online
So you can sign up for a particular date
It can be tough to figure out where the need is & to target it
But all kinds of help are valuable
Thanks for sharing, this has been very informative

[2018/04/21 18:09] millay Freschi: Our police department sometimes takes
donations of outerwear, blankets, etc in the winter months
[2018/04/21 18:10] Zip Zlatkis: Looking for volunteer options for people with
physical disabilities is tuff

encounters with Homeless men did not go well. When they ask me for money, I offer
to buy them a meal, take them to a shelter, or take them to a 12 step meeting. They
almost always look sad, and walk away. *sigh*
[2018/04/21 18:11] SunTzu (joey.aboma): I think it challenges their life saying there
is something wrong with them
conversation
People's lives are complicated
It's hard as a helper to assume what needs people have
It's important to connect with an organization that may know that person's needs
better
It's tricky but the intention to help is so important
[2018/04/21 18:11] Zip Zlatkis: I have filled up a car tank of gas for many
[2018/04/21 18:12] Gloriejoy (joycie.string): we have people occasionally use our
church front door area
It works out great and they feel at home and can come in if they want
[2018/04/21 18:12] iSkye Silverweb: James, I wonder if you asked them they'd tell
you what they needed the money for? Might surprise you. Wanting to get a child's
birthday gift or a pair of socks or something like that

[2018/04/21 18:10] Gentle Heron: Audience, let's be sure Dr. Weisz knows how
much we appreciate her sharing of research with us.
[2018/04/21 18:10] Eme Capalini: Thank you!
[2018/04/21 18:10] millay Freschi: Thank you so much Dr. Weisz. Absolutely
wonderful for you to be here!
[2018/04/21 18:10] hondomac Dalgleish: Thank you!
Weisz
presentation.
[2018/04/21 18:12] Eme Capalini: Great presentation!
[2018/04/21 18:12] Carolyn Carillon: CW: I want to thank you for sticking it out &
asking such great questions & comments

[2018/04/21 18:12] Gentle Heron: I want to thank all our presenters today for
providing so much for us to think about. And of course thanks to the audience
members who asked good questions and provided helpful comments. Our presenters often let me know that they are impressed by the quality of interaction with our audience members.

I also want to thank the many people who greeted our audience guests, and the brave people who stood up in front of large audiences to welcome our speakers. Eme Capalini helped ensure that our presenters were well dressed. Orange Planer set up the conference website. The Avacon team ran the external streaming video. All 3 transcribers

And those who shouldered the burden of conference preparation these last several months, and particularly this final week and day and night before the conference, should be thanked for all their hard work. That would be iSkye Silverweb and Mook Wheeler. Thank you both for making this conference run as smoothly as it did. I hope everyone learned a lot today. Thanks for your thoughtful attendance. I hope to see you in the fall for our International Disability Rights Affirmation Conference.

[2018/04/21 18:12] Orange Planer: This has been a fascinating discussion. The entire conference has been informative and attention-getting.

[2018/04/21 18:12] iSkye Silverweb: this whole DAY has been really enlightening


[2018/04/21 18:12] Em Warrior: Thank you LV for the transcriptions


[2018/04/21 18:13] Em Warrior: as they say it takes a whole team to make a community work/run

