

W12: Culture and Stigma

Lecture Overview

- **Culture**
 - Culture considerations when we think about psychopathology and clinical practice
 - Syndromes, idioms, and explanations
 - Effects on psychopathology
- **Stigma**
 - Taxonomy
 - Labels, *label theory around schizophrenia in particular
 - Ways to reduce stigma

CULTURE

Culture and Psychopathology

1. What do clinicians need to be aware of in terms of culture and psychopathology? (8 points)

- **Client's ethnicity and culture**
- **Gender**
- **Sexuality** – how that plays out in the relationship with psychopathology and culture
- **Culture and age (time)** – the way that cultures think about mental illness and psychopathology changes over time, and can be a gradual process, or sometimes it happens very quickly.
- **Politics** – Client's political views
- **Globalization** – effects of globalisation / Westernisation, and how that affects our views on mental illness.
- **Migration**
 - *whether your client is migrant from another country, or 2nd or 3rd generation Australian,
 - *are they indigenous, aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Australians? How they view mental illness? What sort of treatment might be acceptable and suitable for them? Which community or family members would you want to bring into session to consult? These are important considerations.
- **Social context**
 - *Western medical psychiatric perspective – clinicians need to be mindful of that and how that affects the way they interpret what's going on.

2. What happens when assessment fails to take into account sociocultural factors?

- When assessment fails to take into account sociocultural factors, it **risks misdiagnosis** and the perpetuation of **clinical stereotypes** based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or sexual orientation (among other factors).
- Numerous studies documenting elevated rates of misdiagnosis of schizophrenia among African Americans
 - *Might end up misdiagnosing psychopathology, assigning a label to something that culturally, is not pathological, or assigning a label to a presentation that is actually something else.
 - *Misinterpretation of cultural norms, in terms of cognitive, behaviour, emotional presentation, that leads to misdiagnosis of Schizophrenia.
 - *And very different treatment once the diagnosis of Sz has been made, how readily restraint has been used historically, in terms of how physical or chemical restraint is used during hospitalisation, lots of other Tx variables as well. Very important to remember culture.

3. Discuss the cultural considerations that a clinician should take into account. (4 points)

- **Cultural identity of individual**
 - *Where the person is from, where his/her family is from, their social and cultural identity.
- **Cultural explanations of the individual's illness**
 - *How the culture that they come from might explain the types of illness or the types of