Social Class And Mental Health

This literature review will aim to investigate how Social class inequality can have an effect on mental health. In society today Mental health plays a major role and studies have shown that it has more than one factor and can fall into many different categories, which can influence a person's behaviour drastically. It is said that social class and poverty have a profound impact in who mental health effects, as a family household with little or no income are more likely to suffer with mental health issues, anxiety, substance abuse, physical abuse, and suicide attempts. Studies have shown that children who fall under the poverty line and who are coming from poor family backgrounds are affected in a major way. This has effects on their education, behavioural skills, social interaction, and their diet, as they are not getting the nutrients that are needed to maintain a healthy body and mind. This has a negative impact on their cognitive skills and physical health from a young age. Crime rates are high amongst those that are coming from poor or low-income families and homelessness is more predominant in the UK within the poorer community.

Social class

According to an article 'In bridging the gaps', The world health organization 1995 stated that extreme poverty is "the world's most ruthless killer and the main cause of suffering" (WHO 1995). Poverty in the UK can lead to stress for people with poor health, low income, and a less than average educational skill set. Lower-income families do not have any control over the financial problems that they may face, E.g. bills, shopping, debts, holidays, school fees, big purchases, or just an everyday spend. This can start to affect a person or a family household mentally, where they are inclined to think about their financial struggle and try to think of ways to make things work with little or no income. This can often and more likely to result in members of the lower-class population turning to substance abuse as the lack of financial stability is unbearable and try to find a way to forget their problems through drug use, whereas another set of the lower-class population may turn to alcohol, crime, prostitution, or suicide affecting each person differently, mentally and physically. According to 'Mental health statistics: poverty', high-income countries have proved that there is a strong chance of mental health issues for those who are at a socio-economic disadvantage. This report shows that mental health problems are two to three times more likely to affect children and adults in Great Britain residing in households who are within the low 20% income margin. 'Britain thinks' researches and reports public views. Based on the data collected on "people who see themselves as working-class are almost all living hand-to-mouth", shows that 61% of the middle class say that they have savings that are equivalent to or greater than their monthly salary whereas only 33% of the public could relate to this. According to this data collection, the public is well aware that there is poverty in the UK, but it isn't a top priority.

Social inequality

In this article on Poverty and social inequality, the gulf between the poor and rich of the world is widening (Smith et al, 1990). Society will have the working-class families in full-time jobs, however, on a minimum wage who are paying for childcare fees, full rent, council tax and regular household bills and who are finding it difficult to make ends meet. There are many jobs

that do not offer enough promotional opportunities, sick pay, bonuses, or pay increases that would make a difference to wages. Here it states that Wilkinson (1997) believed that the income inequality produces psychosocial stress, which leads to deteriorating health and higher mortality over time. This could be that Job opportunities may become less available for those lower-income families who have a lack of education and are not able to meet specific job requirements, leading them to be on a minimum waged job or unemployed. Written in an article in the Guardian by (Dean Burnett 2016), the report by Lord Richard Layard suggests that addressing an individual's illness before their financial or social class is more effective, though many would argue that the two are linked. This article states that there were disagreements with this suggestion and many who work in the mental health sector were infuriated by this. According to this, Lord Richard Layard's report has not linked poverty and mental health in unison but has singled out the two major factors as separate issues, and has also suggested that an individual's social life and mental state has a much larger effect on their happiness than their financial status.

Social class and personality disorders

According to this Journal, The interaction between impulsivity and neighbourhood on criminal activities indicates that the effects of impulsivity are stronger in poorer neighbourhoods than in better-off ones (Lyam et al, 2000). Based on crime rates around the UK, statistics show that it is relatively high with a large percentage of it consisting of drug dealings. In 'The United Kingdom country drug report for 2019' it gives an overview of drug use, the supply of drugs and drug-related health issues. This report shows that drug-law offences for 2019 were 106,862 and with cannabis being the number one seller. For many, that may have grown up in a low income or a poor family background believe that the fastest way to get a substantial amount of money is to sell drugs, with this ultimately leading them to have a different mentally from those in society who were raised in an upper-class family. They will now see this as a way of life and being their only option, and the only solution to their family's hardship. This lifestyle can often lead to Gang crime, Burglary, theft, and imprisonment.

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