Public Mental Health and Social Exclusion

tackling the processes of social exclusion

Peter Cockersell

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Social determinants of health

- Inequality
- Housing
- Sanitation
- Education
- Social stability
- Access to healthcare

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The individual in the social

"Although the risks and contradictions of life go on being as socially produced as ever,

the duty and necessity of coping with them has been delegated to our individual selves."

Zygmunt Bauman 2007

Adversity and resilience

Mental health is a fundamental element of the resilience, health assets, capabilities and positive adaptation that enable people both to cope with adversity and to reach their full potential and humanity. Mental health is also the key to understanding the impact of inequalities on health and other outcomes.

Lynne Friedli

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‘No health without mental health’

General Population

- 1 - 4% schizophrenia
- 5 – 13% personality disorder
- 11% anxiety disorders and depression
- 1.3% have attempted suicide

Homeless People

- 16 – 30% schizophrenia
- 50 – 70% personality disorder
- 50 – 80% anxiety disorders and depression
- 42% have attempted suicide

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Resilience

"Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources in the minds, brains, and bodies of children, in their families and relationships, and in their communities."

Ann Masten

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Women and homelessness

- 66% have a mental health problem
- 55% a substance dependency
- >50% physical health problems
- >50% experienced violence or abuse from family/partner
- 41% have been involved in prostitution
- 79% of those who are mothers have had their children taken into care

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Children and homelessness

- 47% experience of neglect/emotional abuse
- 34% early loss of parents through abandonment, separation or divorce
- 31% early loss of parents through death (including murder and suicide)
- 27% sexual abuse
- High levels of parental alcoholism, drug use, and domestic violence

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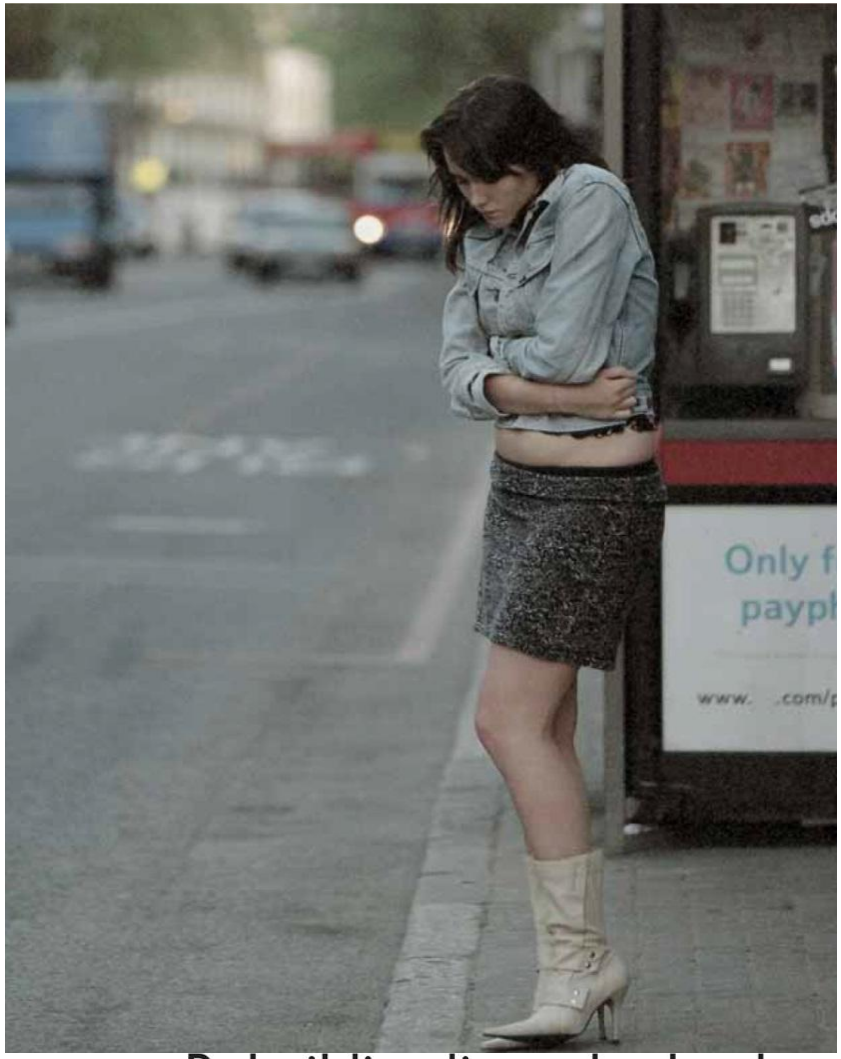
Homelessness and loss

- Childhood
- Home
- Parent(s)/significant people
- Opportunities
- Health
- Self-esteem, self confidence
- Dignity



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Social networks

- Many had few and limited contact with family members
- 28% consider themselves to have no close friends
- More than half spent most of their time alone
- Only 25% thought this unacceptable

Bonner & Luscombe, 2008. The seeds of exclusion. (N=438)

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Social networks and survival

"Across 148 studies (308,849 participants), the random effects weighted average effect size was OR = 1.50 (95% CI 1.42 to 1.59), indicating a 50% increased likelihood of survival for participants with stronger social relationships."

Holt-Lunsted et al

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Social networks and mortality

"In terms of the magnitude of the association, [the] *adjusted relative risk of total mortality...is comparable to the effect of cigarette smoking on total mortality reported in some studies."*

Kawachi et al

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Mortality and homelessness

Average age of death in the UK for single homeless people is

47 for men

43 for women

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Premature Mortality in Homeless Populations; O'Connell, J.J., December (2005).
Homelessness Kills; Bethan Thomas 2012

Processes of social exclusion

The baby's instinct is to seek protection from primary caregivers – the attachment figures

John Bowlby

If the primary caregiver is abusive or neglectful, the baby develops an insecure attachment pattern

John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth

Damaged attachment relationships damage the neurological development of the brain and mind

Allan Schore

Damaged developmental processes and complex trauma underpin most mental disorders

Van der Kolk

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Processes of social exclusion

Complex trauma is actually compound trauma – repeated negative and hostile experiences over time

Many clients respond to us and our institutions with responses based on their insecure (anxious, ambivalent or disorganised) attachment patterns

Many social care institutions – voluntary or statutory – reproduce the dynamics of abuse and neglect

Both of these are usually unconscious

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Processes of social exclusion

Perinatal violence/stress/bereavement

Violent loss of a parent, no comforting

Abused by a relative or step parent

Truanting, excluded from school

Behavioural disorders, labelled as ‘wrong’

In and out of foster care, ‘unmanageable’

Abused in care, nobody to tell

Drugs and alcohol, violence, control

Young Offenders’ Institute, bullied

Prison, homelessness and/or psychiatric disorders

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Processes of social exclusion

"We exclude people because we cannot bear their suffering"

Sister Ellen

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Processes of social exclusion

We feel…

Hopeless

Frustrated

Unheard

Powerless

Persecuted

Angry

Stressed out

Countertransference

Harold Searles

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Processes of exclusion and inclusion

Every action produces an equal and opposite reaction

Isaac Newton

The capacity to mentalise, and to regulate our affect, are co-produced and grow within relationships

Allan Schore, Dan Siegel

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Fair Society Healthy Lives

1. **Give every child the best start in life**

Sir Michael Marmot

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Public health action

- Parenting classes and support
- Free childcare
- Improved institutional care
- Empowering communities
- Promoting social activities
- Safe, free open spaces for play

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Changing the pattern

People are damaged by damaging relationships and traumatic experiences

People recover through healing relationships and positive experiences

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Building relationships

"Everybody needs to be the sparkle in someone else's eye."

Michael Balint

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National Mental Health Development Unit, Mental Health Good Guide Practice (2010)

Recovery and relationships

"I didn't believe in myself, but it seems that other people believed in me; through their belief I could begin to do things."

St Mungo's client

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Recovery

- Re-parenting/significant people
- Home
- Control
- Opportunities
- Health
- Dignity
- Self-esteem, self confidence

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Recovery: social integration

‘Psychologically informed environments’

Keats et al

Recovery Colleges

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The Escape Plan

Groundswell

Volunteering, Apprenticeships, Work, Education

Fun

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Social integration and health

Neglectful and abusive primary relationships compounded by life histories of trauma underpin deep social exclusion

Positive, boundaried, caring relationships repair damaged attachment patterns and damaged minds: institutional responses often compound exclusion

Multiple networks of mutually valued social relationships add up to social integration

Social integration and parenting support would do more for public health than anything else

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