Discriminatory Zoning's Effect on Mental Health in African-American Communities In Massachusetts

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What is a Health Disparity?

A health disparity is when a part of the population of a given area is more susceptible to certain types of health risks and healthcare inequities than the general population.
What is Zoning?

What is Redlining?
What is Zoning?

Zoning - The government regulation of the built environment around us and how it's used.

What is Redlining?

Redlining - A discriminative practice that puts services (financial and otherwise) out of reach for residents of specific areas mainly based on race or ethnicity.
Why is this a disparity?

- African Americans are disproportionately affected
- Class and Gender Intersectionality
- Food Deserts
- Heat Islands
- “Suicide was the third leading cause of death among African Americans 10 to 24 years old”
Brief History of Redlining

- President Franklin Roosevelt
- The New Deal
- National Housing Act -
- Lower mortgage and interest rate
- Home Owners Loan Corporation residential security maps
- "Redlined areas" mainly consisted of foreigners, "negroes" and low-class white people.
Redlining

- Redlined areas were labeled as **hazardous** and most likely to default on their mortgages
- Interest rates higher
- Property value drops, crime increase
- Public services become unreliable
- The consistent presence of African Americans
How does this affect us today?
Mental Health

- Poor mental health can be caused by poor environmental quality.

- Poor environmental quality may also affect the quality of life negatively through increased stress and poor sleep.

- Historical redlining has been shown to influence the social environment.
Common Mental Illnesses in Black Neighborhoods

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Schizophrenia
- Bipolar Disorder
Prevalent Risk Factors in Black Communities

- Chronic Stress
- Racial Trauma
- Poverty
- Poor Nutrition
- Family History of Mental Illness
Statistics

Mental Illness Reports

Recieves Treatment

African Americans  White Americans

21% 23.9%

39% 52%

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Policy Changes

- Adding more supermarkets in predominantly black neighborhoods
- Making home mortgage loans more accessible to people of color
- Making mental health treatments accessible to people of all color
Summary

Redlining
Discriminatory zoning - lack of essential services

Low Income
Low property value and more crime

No Mental Health Care
Services are out of reach due to the lack of community investment

Mental Illness
Environmental stress and anxiety combined with historical predisposition
Call to Action

- Education
- Reach out to your local government
- Placemaking
  - Mass Development's Common Wealth
  Places Program
- Lend a listening ear
Adams, A., Perry, J., & Young, S. (2020, February 1). Improving the process of zoning in a community mental health team. BMJ Open Quality. https://bmjopenquality.bmj.com/content/9/1/e000659


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Questions?
Thank You!