

# Socioeconomic Factors in the Development of Abnormal Psychology

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## Introduction

Abnormal psychology studies unusual patterns of behavior, emotion, and thought, often linked to mental disorders. Socioeconomic factors significantly influence the development and manifestation of abnormal psychology, encompassing elements such as poverty, education, employment, social inequality, and access to healthcare. This essay explores how these factors contribute to mental health outcomes, shaping individuals' psychological well-being and risk of developing mental health disorders. Poverty is a critical socioeconomic factor impacting the development of abnormal psychology. Chronic financial instability, inadequate housing, food insecurity, and limited access to resources are significant stressors for individuals living in poverty [1]. These stressors can lead to chronic stress, anxiety, depression, and feelings of hopelessness. The constant struggle to meet basic needs creates an environment of continuous stress, negatively affecting mental health. Research consistently shows that individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have a higher risk of developing mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. The social stress model posits that the stress associated with poverty increases vulnerability to mental health disorders, highlighting the detrimental effects of economic hardship on psychological well-being. Education significantly influences the development of abnormal psychology. Education equips individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate life's challenges, make informed decisions, and access better job opportunities. Higher education levels are associated with better mental health outcomes, while lower educational attainment is linked to an increased risk of mental health disorders. Lack of education limits an individual's ability to secure stable employment, leading to financial stress and reduced access to healthcare. Moreover, lower educational attainment often correlates with limited health literacy, hindering the ability to recognize and seek treatment for mental health issues. Education also shapes individuals' perceptions of mental health and their willingness to seek help, with higher education levels correlating with greater awareness and reduced stigma. Thus, promoting education can be a powerful tool in mitigating mental health disparities [2].

## Description

Employment and job security play crucial roles in mental health and the development of abnormal psychology. Unemployment and job insecurity are major sources of stress, leading to feelings of worthlessness, anxiety, and depression. Financial strain and uncertainty caused by job loss or fear of losing a job exacerbate mental health problems. Conversely, stable employment provides financial stability, a sense of purpose, and identity, contributing positively to mental health. The nature of one's job also matters; jobs offering autonomy, support, and fair compensation are associated with better mental health outcomes. In contrast, jobs with high demands, low control, and poor working conditions can lead to chronic stress and increase

the risk of developing mental health disorders. Therefore, ensuring job security and improving workplace conditions are essential for promoting mental well-being. Social inequality and discrimination are significant contributors to the development of abnormal psychology. Marginalized groups, including racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those with disabilities, often face systemic discrimination and social exclusion. These experiences of prejudice and marginalization lead to chronic stress, low self-esteem, and feelings of powerlessness. Racial discrimination, for instance, is linked to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder among minority populations. The minority stress model suggests that chronic stress associated with discrimination and social stigma contributes to mental health disorders. Social inequality often results in unequal access to resources and opportunities, exacerbating mental health disparities. Addressing social inequality and promoting inclusivity are crucial for improving mental health outcomes in marginalized communities.

Access to healthcare is a crucial socioeconomic factor affecting the development of abnormal psychology. Individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often face barriers to accessing mental health services, including lack of insurance, high treatment costs, and limited availability of services. These results in untreated or poorly managed mental health conditions, worsening symptoms and increasing the risk of developing severe mental health disorders [3]. Access to healthcare is also influenced by geographic location, with rural and underserved areas often lacking adequate mental health services. Inability to access timely and appropriate mental health care leads to chronicity and comorbidity, further complicating the treatment and management of mental health disorders. Ensuring equitable access to healthcare is essential for addressing mental health disparities and promoting psychological well-being.

The intersection of socioeconomic factors creates cumulative disadvantages significantly impacting mental health. For example, individuals living in poverty, lacking education, and facing unstable employment are at a higher risk of developing mental health disorders. These compounded stressors create a vicious cycle where mental health issues further hinder an individual's ability to improve their socioeconomic status, leading to ongoing and worsening mental health problems. Additionally, children growing up in socioeconomically disadvantaged environments are more likely to experience adverse childhood experiences such as neglect, abuse, and exposure to violence. These experiences have long-term impacts on mental health, increasing the risk of developing mental health disorders in adulthood. Addressing these intersecting factors is crucial for breaking the cycle of disadvantage and improving mental health outcomes. Family dynamics and parenting styles also play a role in the development of abnormal psychology, often influenced by socioeconomic factors. Families facing financial stress may struggle to provide stable and supportive environments for their children, increasing the risk of mental health issues [4]. Parenting styles influenced by socioeconomic stressors can contribute to the development of abnormal psychology. For instance, authoritarian parenting, often linked to high-stress environments, is associated with higher levels of anxiety and depression in children. Supportive and nurturing parenting, on the other hand, can mitigate the negative effects of socioeconomic stressors on mental health. Therefore, supporting families and promoting positive parenting practices are essential for fostering mental well-being and preventing the development of mental health disorders. The role of community and social support networks is another crucial aspect of socioeconomic factors influencing abnormal psychology.

Strong social support networks can buffer the negative effects of socioeconomic stressors on mental health, providing emotional support, practical assistance, and a sense of belonging. Community resources such

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as mental health services, recreational facilities, and social organizations can also promote mental well-being and reduce the risk of developing mental health disorders. However, individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often have limited access to these resources, exacerbating mental health disparities. Strengthening community support systems and ensuring access to resources are vital for promoting mental health and preventing the development of abnormal psychology. Policy interventions play a significant role in addressing the socioeconomic factors contributing to abnormal psychology. Social policies aimed at reducing poverty, improving education, ensuring employment opportunities, and enhancing access to healthcare can significantly impact mental health outcomes. Policies promoting social equality and combating discrimination are also crucial for addressing mental health disparities among marginalized groups. Implementing policies that support families, promote positive parenting, and strengthen community resources can create environments conducive to mental well-being. Policymakers must recognize the interconnectedness of socioeconomic factors and mental health and adopt a holistic approach to addressing these issues [5].

## Conclusion

Socioeconomic factors such as poverty, education, employment, social inequality, and access to healthcare significantly influence the development of abnormal psychology. These factors create environments of chronic stress, limit access to resources, and exacerbate mental health disparities. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach involving policy interventions, community support, and individual empowerment. By tackling the root causes of socioeconomic disadvantage and promoting equitable access to resources, we can improve mental health outcomes and prevent the development of abnormal psychology. Socioeconomic factors are not only risk factors for mental health disorders but also opportunities for intervention and prevention, highlighting the need for a multidimensional approach to mental health care.

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## Conflict of Interest

None.

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