

Cabassa, Leopold J. *Addressing Health Inequities in People with Serious Mental Illness: A Call to Action*. Oxford University Press, 2023. iii+137 pages. Hardcover, \$41.99.

Each year, thousands of people in the United States suffering from serious mental illness (SMI) die from preventable and treatable medical conditions. Leopold Cabassa offers a compelling view on how this public health crisis has been ignored and, until recently, rarely addressed. In *Addressing Health Inequities in People with Serious Mental Illness: A Call to Action*, Cabassa highlights the stigma and discrimination in primary care settings individuals with SMI are subjected to when seeking treatment. Due to the lack of experience primary care providers have working with this population, there are serious shortfalls in addressing and managing these individuals' complex medical and mental health needs. Cabassa highlights various case studies and first-person accounts on how the inequities of the healthcare system have deeply impacted their overall quality of life. According to Cabassa, the leading cause of death within this community is a premature high mortality rate.

Cabassa discusses several important points in his book including delays in diagnosis, barriers to preventive efforts, complications due to the intermingling of psychiatric and cancer medications, and limited access to sufficient care. Additionally, factors such as damaging behaviors, side effects of psychiatric treatments, and inadequate quality of medical care are discussed. Cabassa also includes studies that focus on Latino/a patients, coping skills, and how reciprocal relationships between physical and mental illnesses impact their everyday lives.

Cabassa also argues that the medical and mental conditions are not separate entities. The conditions impacted each other in complex and often negative ways, resulting in reinforcing cycles of unhealthy behaviors that were difficult to break. The author further notes that preventing and treating substance use disorders in people suffering with serious mental illness are critical to improving the overall quality of life of this population. Due to the lack of safe

environments, many people with SMI were limited in engaging in physical activity. Cabassa discusses various initiatives created to assist people with SMI with overall wellness and physical health. These programs were designed to promote availability, coordination, delivery, and integration of primary care services in community-based behavioral health organizations. Along with the limited access to adequate care and improvement for quality of life, studies have found unfair differences between populations regarding accessing, quality, and the outcomes of health care.

Cabassa delves into unhealthy lifestyle behaviors in unhealthy environments and the cardiometabolic side effects of antipsychotic medications. With these inequities in health care, these factors also contribute to the poor physical health outcomes and shortened life expectancy of people with SMI. Cabassa discusses additional interventions that are common approaches to improving the health of people with SMI. The appeal of most of these interventions are behavioral techniques that focuses on goal setting, self-monitoring, and problem solving.

Addressing Health Inequities in People with Serious Mental Illness is structured into eight chapters. Cabassa includes case studies with comprehensive interviews and research that includes recommendations on correcting these issues. The latter chapters of the book focus on next steps and actions to be taken by those who are currently working to address the areas of concern.

Individuals who are currently in the medical profession and the social science profession should read this book due to the content nature and the high correlation between health concerns and systemic inequalities. Individuals who are actively pursuing a career in the medical or the social science field should read this book because it provides a unique view of challenges presented to providers as well as their clients. Often, many individuals enter their chosen

profession with a level of naivete that grossly impacts the level of support they provide to their clients. Cabassa covers an excellent perspective of the importance of addressing health inequalities of people suffering with serious mental illness. His arguments counter the level of naivete often not addressed in graduate school or during an individual's first year in their chosen profession. This is an important read as the reader is presented with an eye-opening account of the importance of health education and inequities. Cabassa's book, *Addressing Health Inequities to People with Serious Mental Illness* is an important read for how it highlights serious problems with health inequities for people suffering with serious mental illness.

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