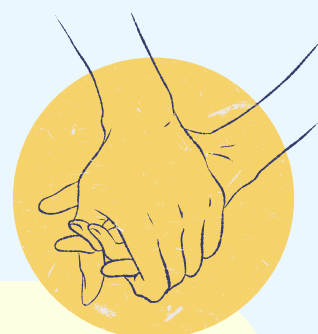


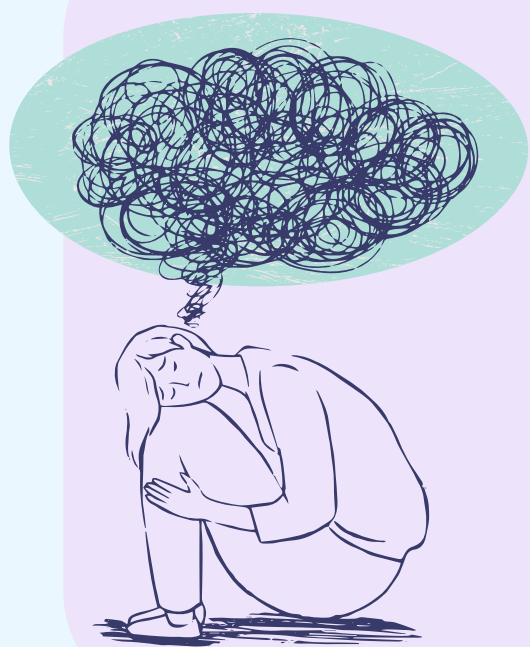


Intersectional Invisibility, Understanding and Mental Health



Key Idea

- Some people are **not seen** to 'typify' **categories** of people with mental disorder
- These people may then be **excluded from group-level projects** and feel 'invisible'
- This has direct and indirect **impacts on self-understanding**



Intersectional invisibility

Intersectional invisibility: when an individual occupies **multiple group identities**, of which one or more of them is a marginalised identity

Through the **combination** of these identities someone is perceived as **an atypical member** of a social category, and therefore invisible with respect to the **social structures** of prejudice and privilege (Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach 2008)

Invisibility in mental health

Some individuals might **not typify the group 'people with mental disorder'**

- E.g. the super-rich, "too privileged to be ill"

Some people might **not typify other groups because of their mental disorder**

- E.g. men with mental disorder not seen as 'men' due to harmful stereotypes that "real men don't cry"

Some people may just **not typify disorder categories**

- E.g. men with BPD or eating disorders



Mental disorder group vs series

Someone may **belong to multiple 'series'** (e.g. being a man and having an eating disorder)

They may also **want to participate in group activities** (e.g. raising awareness about eating disorders)

But they may feel that they **are not fully able to participate in the group** to the structural conditions of their other series (e.g. patriarchal norms)

Someone thus feels **invisible with respect to the group** despite being part of the series

How does someone become invisible?

Invisibility is felt **when certain social structures** that apply to others with the same identity **don't apply to you**. Sartre's (1978) distinction between 'group' and 'series' can make sense of this.

Series: a passive assemblage of people who have come together because they share a similar, pre-existing social or material situation

- E.g. people waiting for a bus, or 'women' (Young 1994)

Group: an active assemblage of people undertaking a common goal

- E.g. people protesting poor bus service

A **series can morph into a group** and vice versa, depending on how (if at all) individuals respond to their shared conditions



Consequences

Individuals with complex identities may be **excluded from participating in mental health projects**

Recruiting intersectional participants in studies may also be tricky (who do we recruit and how will their identity affect their participation?)

All this can perpetuate **hermeneutic injustices** (Fricker 2007) towards individuals with intersectional identities

