

Psychosocial Factors Affecting Post-TBI Mental Health

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Disclosures

- SLACK, Inc.



Psychosocial Factors: SDoH lens

- Psychosocial factors
 - Individual
 - Micro level
- Social Determinants of Health
 - Systems Approach
 - Macro level
- Most commonly examined SDoH
 - Health Care Access and quality
 - Social and community
 - Race/ethnicity

Social Determinants of Health



Social Determinants of Health
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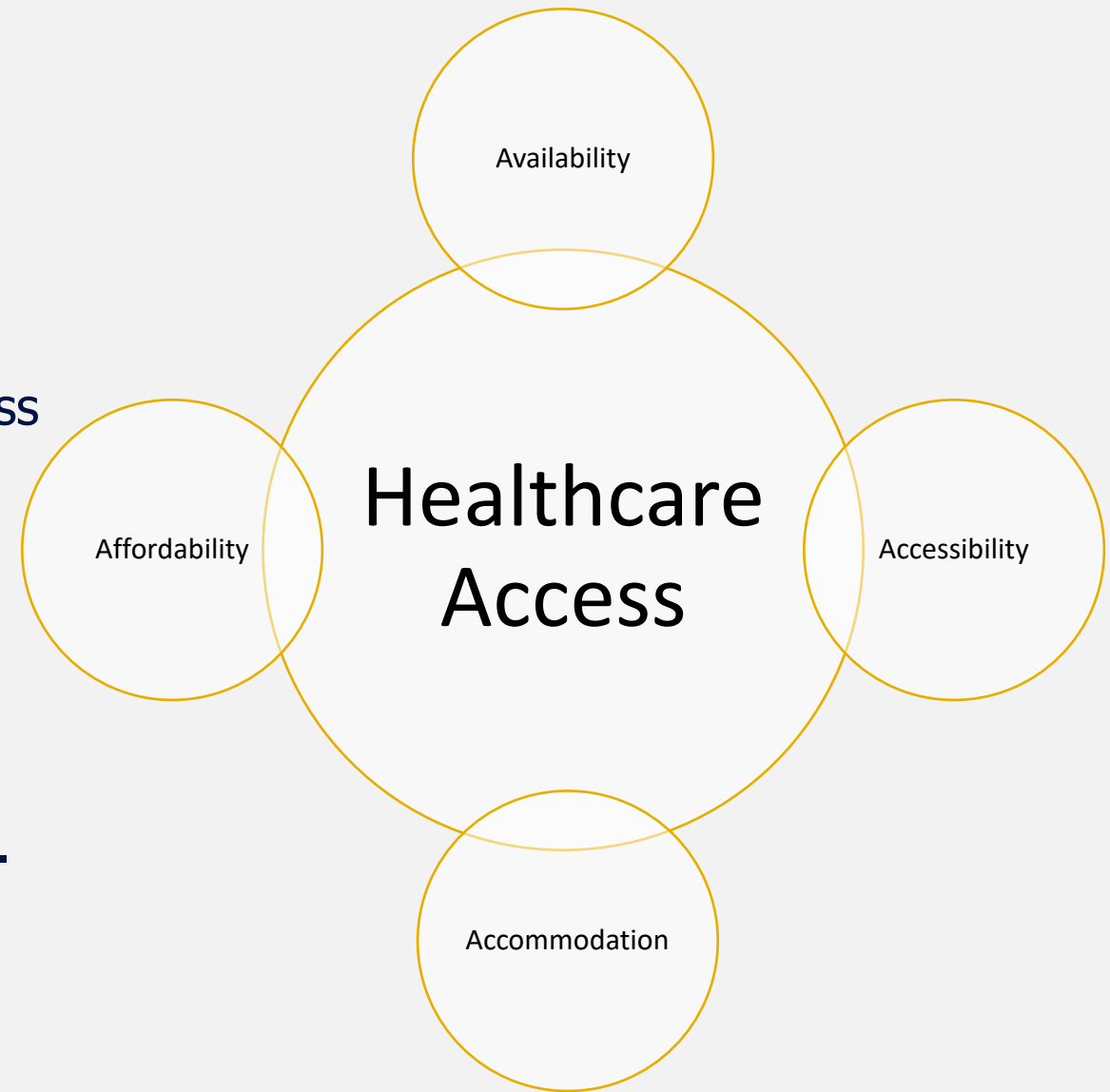
 Healthy People 2030



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Healthcare Access

- Evaluation and management
 - Environmental access (Yue, 2020)
 - Rural settings were more conservative in treatment and access to medical equipment such as MRI.
 - Access to ATs (Copley, 2020; Yue, 2020)
 - Minorities have less access to ATs and are less likely to visit ER compared to whites.
 - Reduced rural AT availability compared with urban (38 vs. 88%).
- Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs)

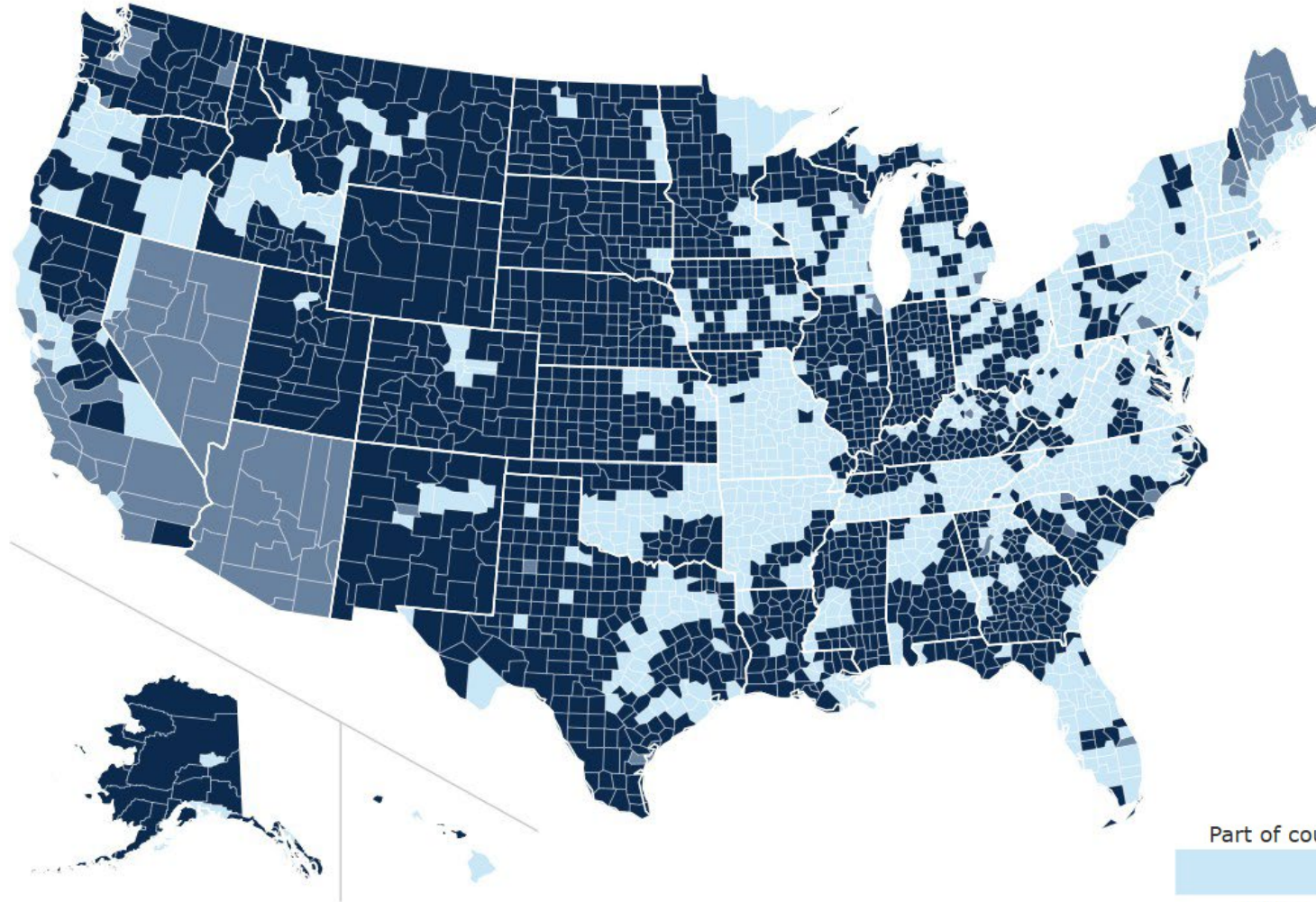


Health Professional Shortage Areas: Mental Health, Geographic, by County, January 2026

Nonmetro

Metro

All



Part of county that is geographic shortage area.



None

Part

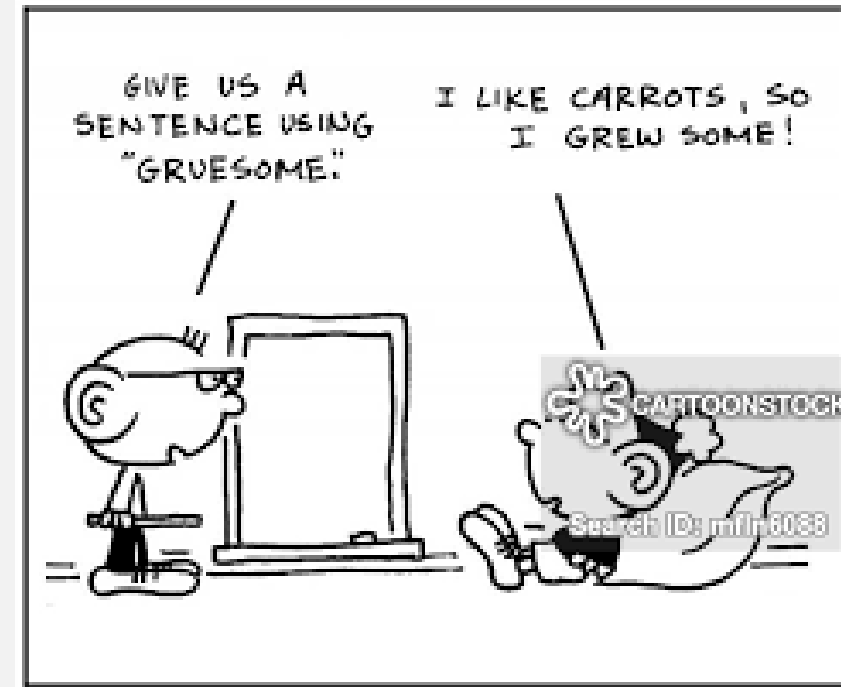
Whole



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Education Access and Quality

- Health literacy (Seldon, 2000)
 - Knowledge
 - Cultural mistrust
 - Stigma



*Psychological Strategies in Youth
Concussion Education (PSYChEd)*



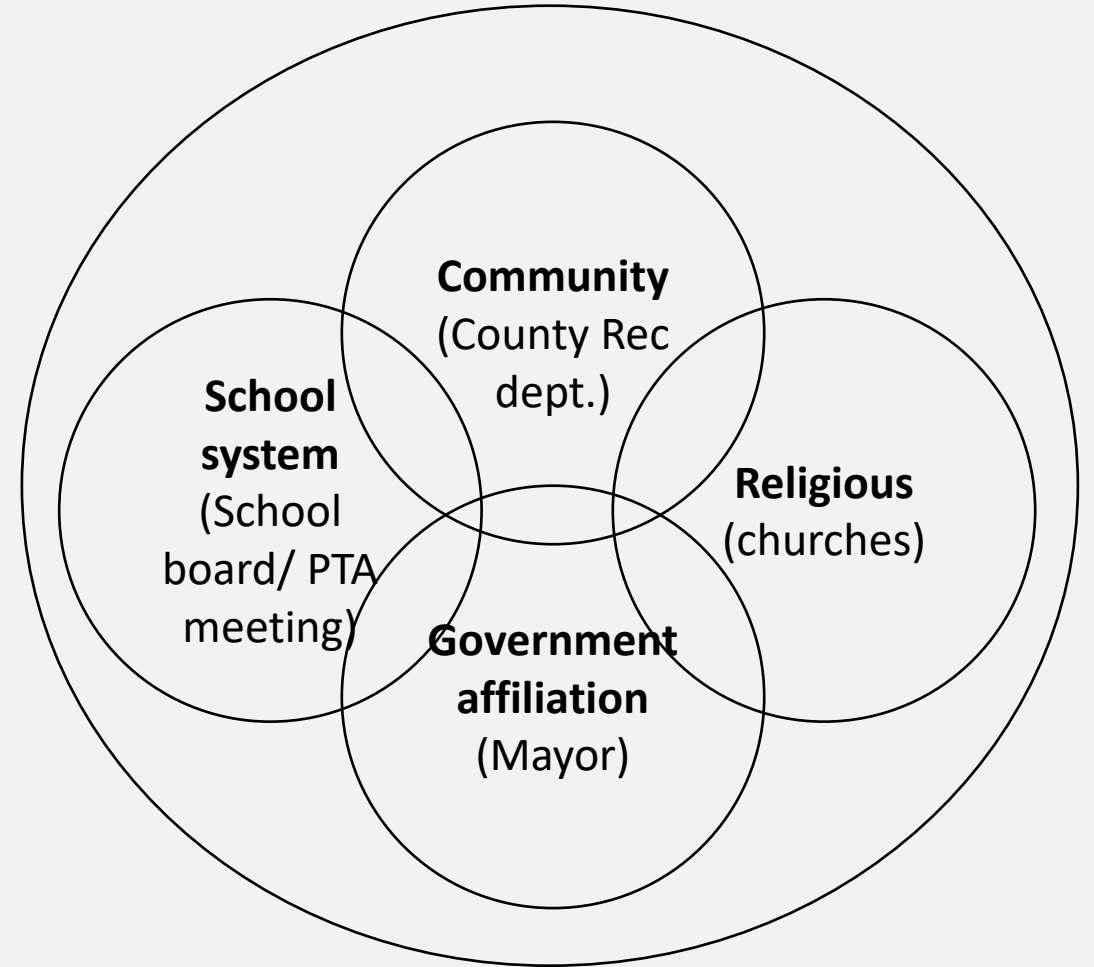
PSYChEd

- Mixed-methods study examining the presence of psychological symptoms across socioeconomic status (SES) and barriers to reporting.
- Athletes reported:
 - Moderate levels of fear and anxiety
 - Social isolation, a lack of knowledge and experience with concussions
- General lack of knowledge:
 - Psychological symptoms
 - Mental health resources available during concussion recovery.



Social and Community Context

- Who is their social support?
- What is their community?



*The psychological impact of
sport-related concussion across
socioeconomic status in
adolescent patients*



Interview Questions

1. Introduction - sport participation?
2. What do you love most about your sport(s)?
3. What injuries did you sustain in sport and how much time did you miss from participation?
4. How did you feel when you were unable to participate due to the concussion? Emotions?
5. How did you deal with missing practice(s) or game(s)?
6. How did you manage these feelings? What coping mechanisms did you use?



Results

2. What do you love most about your sport(s)?

High SES	Low SES
Boys – Independence Girls – Stress management	Ability to be aggressive Brotherhood & family environment

- “I can literally kill someone and not get in trouble for it.”
- “Those were my brothers; I could hang out with them and play.”
- “...more of an individual sport... you can do a lot of things on your own... you can go off on your own”



Results

4. How did you feel when you were unable to practice due to a concussion? Emotions?

- “The hardest part was it being the beginning of the year and wanting to show the coaches.”
- “Boredom led to loneliness and being lonely was bad.”



Results

6. How did you manage these feelings? What coping mechanisms did you use?

High SES	Low SES
Sleep Mental health professionals Boys - Poor coping Girls - Peers, left brain activities	Peers Music Video games

- “I took the injury bad, got angry and careless with life. I was salty, but I kept going until something good happened.”
- “My mom and I had a spa weekend.”



Results

9. Explain frustrations during your recovery from concussion? What aggravated you? What triggered feelings of stress for you?

High SES	Low SES
Academics Limitations Headaches Visual Disturbances	Academics Limitations Headaches

- “Telling me I couldn’t do something.”



Discussion

- Participants were at least six months post-injury, but many were still experiencing concussion symptoms (even though they were cleared to return to play)
- The participants want to get better. Factors associated with poor outcomes:
 - Boredom
 - Poor communication between educators and healthcare providers in regards to restrictions and reintegration
 - Compliance requires diligence from everyone to ensure student success
 - Poor parental “over” involvement





Fatigue
Sadness
Irritability



Strategies for Managing TBI Recovery

- Understand barriers related to SDoH and how they may impact reporting, care management, and recovery.
- Collaborate with schools, coaches, and workplaces to reduce environmental stressors and provide resources.
- Include training to understand how environment shapes recovery to combat MHPSAs.



Take home points

- Mental Health outcomes following TBI/concussion are shaped not only by the injury, but by the social and environmental realities of the patient.
 - Concerns with stigma
 - Community support
 - Access to care and resources
- Adapt existing population-level mental health services and resources.



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Questions?

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