Module 4: The Macro Level

Objectives

The purpose of Module 4 is:

1) To identify components of the macro level in the framework.

2) To have participants apply the macro level of the framework to casework practice.

3) To have participants identify strengths and challenges in using the macro level of the framework in their practice.
Now that you have a sense of this overall framework of practice, we’re going to apply it to the families you work with. We’re going to:

1. Take a closer look the Macro level of the eco-system (indicate on eco-map);
2. Talk about how each of the Macro level relates to the families we work with, and;
3. Think about how a family’s information and stories at this level will help us gain greater knowledge to work more efficiently and effectively within our caseload.

As we talk about the Macro level, you’ll work with the case you brought to apply the framework to your practice. To respect confidentiality, remember to use the first name only if you share your case example during discussions.

Let’s review the macro level of the eco-system. Recall in the framework this is the outer circle, which indicates our larger social, political, historical and cultural context.

Ask: What do you think goes to this level?

Pause for response, prompt: First, there are historical events.

Ask: Can anyone think of an historical event that had a lasting effect on the STORIES of individuals and families?

- Think of a major event when you were a teen or a young adult: Woodstock? Vietnam war? Energy crisis? Gulf war?
- What impact did it have on your life?
Module 4: The Macro Level

Societal values and norms

Major events if no examples from group: Great Depression, World Wars, Civil Rights movement, Walk on the moon, Term “Yuppie” and consumer culture, Bill Cosby Show, O.J. Simpson trial (national awareness of domestic violence), war in Iraq, price of oil, the election of President Barak Obama.

State:

In addition to historical events, this level of the ecosystem includes social norms and values.

Ask:

Thinking back to our earlier discussion, can any remember what we identified that would be an example in the macro level?

Explain:

Social forces are not event-based, like historical influences. They are part of our culture and our times. These are the values and ideas that influence us all. We are sometimes aware of this influence and sometimes not; we sometimes agree with the ideas and sometimes do not.

In this macro level, something that especially affects us and the families we work with are values and ideas about diversity and tolerance. In some places around the world, diversity is not tolerated at all. Society is strictly segregated by class, by religion, or by other characteristics. Here in the U.S., we have a much more fluid social system.

However, the United States is not free from oppression based on age, race, gender, economic class and more. It’s true that much has changed for the better, however, it is also true that there is still discrimination against many groups.

[Slide: “isms”]

Trainer may insert an example of recent improvements

University at Albany
School of Social Welfare
Module 4: The Macro Level

**Define “isms” with the group, listing on flip chart.** Ageism, sexism, ableism, classism, racism, heterosexism, more. 
*Option: do this following video tape*

**State:**

We have a ways to go before we can say there are no more “isms” in our world.

We’re going to watch a tape of a 20/20 episode that highlights the presence of racism in our culture. The tape is about 15 minutes long, and presents three scenarios of how people of color experience racism in an activity we all do: shopping for clothes. As you’re watching, think of how this ism, racism, has an impact on your own life, as well as how it may affect families who experience racism.

**Play the tape & process the video**

[Slide: “isms” – Did this news report reflect…]

[Slide: Macro Level- Case example]

**Processing questions:**

- Think of the people whose stories we heard:
  1. the woman whose bag was searched and who, when asked for an apology, was threatened with arrest;
  2. the man and his son who were strip-searched.

- What did you notice that was similar about their responses to the racism they experienced? What was different?

- Did this news report reflect any of your own experiences?

- What about the impact of racism for families you work with? What impact do you think racism might have on a parent? On a couple?

These “isms” such as racism are an oppressive force on all of us, no matter who we are. “Isms” are a part of western and U.S. culture; no matter who you are and how you view things, oppression exists and you experience it directly and indirectly.
### Module 4: The Macro Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video: Racism in Retail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The important thing to realize about racism and other forms of oppression is that they have been part of the world in which we live long before we were born, long before our parents and grandparents were born. We did not create racism. However, we do have the power to decide how we want to respond to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think back to the salesclerk in the video who was peeking into the dressing room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you think about her behavior?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s good to keep in mind that the sales clerk didn’t invent her discomfort and bias towards the woman of color. She learned it as a result of how or where or with whom she grew up, and she probably learned the bias at a very young age, not from people who wished her any harm, but from people who learned things from their families, who had learned things from their families, and on and on into pre-history.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s also true that racism is not the only form of bias and oppression in this macro system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are some of the other isms? (Racism, sexism, classism, ageism, heterosexism, able-ism).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In your workbook on page 25 are some “isms” we and our families might experience. Take a minute to look through them to see if you have any to add or any questions. We’re going to use this list as we think about the impact of isms on families we work with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’re going to spend some time looking at the cases you brought of identify what “isms” may have an impact on that family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at the list of isms and identify two that you think have an impact on that case. Think of how isms might relate to that family’s story.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Module 4: The Macro Level

**Trainer note:** Ask for a volunteer to share what they identified as an ism that has an impact on the case they brought.

**Process questions:**
- How has this ism become part of the family’s story?
- How does the family manage this ism?
- What strengths do you see in how they manage the ism?
- What role might an ally such as yourself or another member of the community play in lessening the negative impact of that ism on the family?

In this module, we have learned that oppression exists in our society and affects everyone, the oppressor as well as the oppressed. Because families are affected by issues at the Macro level, workers must be aware of what issues are significant to the family, and what resources are available to ameliorate their affect.