

THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER PROOFING GOVERNMENT POLICY TO TACKLE GENDER MENTAL HEALTH INEQUALITY

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Introduction: The ongoing global economic recession has impacted most severely on the more vulnerable sections of society. The policy of economic austerity being pursued by the British government - 2011-2012 saw the first decline in spending on mental health in 10 years - has placed further strain on the underprivileged.

Objectives: This paper will examine the impact of the recession and British government policy on gender mental health inequality and recommend corrective action as appropriate.

Aims: Examine impact of recession and British government policy on

- a) negative social determinants of mental health of women
- b) how they contribute to mental health inequity and
- c) what measures might be adopted to tackle these negative social determinants.

Methods:

- 1/ Analyse arguments on impact of social determinants on mental health inequities.
- 2/ Review available hardcopy and internet literature on recession and government policies as they pertain to women and mental health inequalities.
- 3/ Determine optimal approach on behalf of government to prevent gender mental health inequalities.

Results: Current British government policies risk adversely impacting upon the social determinants of mental health of women in Britain, with negative consequences in terms of gender mental health equity. This is particularly true for women in economically disadvantaged circumstances.

Conclusions: Urgent action is required to address this situation by

- a) reversing policies that negatively impact upon women and risk provoking mental health inequalities and
- b) introducing gender-proofed policies that will not negatively impact upon the social determinants of mental health of women in Britain.