

AN INTRODUCTION TO MENA PEOPLE IN CULTURAL PSYCHIATRY: A CURRICULUM BY MEMBERS OF THE ADVOCACY COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN ARAB, MIDDLE EASTERN, AND NORTH AFRICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (AMENA-PSY)

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Background:

Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) people, a designation which broadly includes those with ethnic heritage from the region, are a group that deserves more dedicated research and clinical attention within cultural psychiatry. MENA individuals have largely been subsumed within the U.S. White/Caucasian racial category, rendering their experience mostly invisible within research and clinical settings. As members of the Advocacy Committee for AMENA-Psy, we are dedicated to addressing this disparity through curriculum and trainings on the topic.

Aims/Objectives/Issues of Focus:

Our curriculum is designed to fill a gap in cultural psychiatry training as it relates to experiences of MENA people. Our presentation includes three sections relating broadly to the sociocultural history of MENA people and its consequences for a "MENA Psychology," the unique position and psychological impact of MENA individuals under U.S. racial formation, and the political context of MENA identity and complexities around advocating for inclusion of MENA psychology within academic and professional contexts.

Methods/Proposition:

Through media articles, scholarly research, and clinical examples, we anticipate a rich discussion of this topic. Key questions include:

1. How does our curriculum improve participants' understanding of the issues central to MENA psychology?
2. How can we expand the inclusion of MENA psychology in academic, research and clinical contexts?
3. How can we tailor our curriculum for specific professional settings?

Results/Potential Outcomes:

We seek participants' insights into the experience of serving and researching this population, and suggestions for sharpening our presentation and illuminating material, especially as it pertains to tailoring our curriculum to different professional audiences.

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Key Questions

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Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Identify MENA Psychology as worthy of inclusion in cultural psychiatry training programs that prioritize social justice.
2. Recognize the complexities of MENA Psychology and discover how this understanding contributes toward building a more equitable society.