



**SPPPA**  
Social Pedagogy  
Professional Association

# Inequality as a Social Pedagogical Question

A Critique and a Call To Action!





**SPPA**  
Social Pedagogy  
Professional Association

# Inequality As A Social Pedagogical Question

In tackling social exclusion, Rynänen and Nivala (2019, pg. 3) argue we need understand 'social problems in societies as forms of inequality.'

The article highlights the work of the sociologist Göran Therborn.

- Inequality is socially constructed, it isn't fixed and can be challenge and changed.
- Inequality can also be seen in three different ways.



**SPPA**  
Social Pedagogy  
Professional Association

# Vital Inequality

Linked to human health and well-being.

Can be seen in the health and well-being inequalities between different groups in society.

Current example- Covid 19 deaths in people of colour and ethnic communities.

Research showing in East London Asian patients 49% more likely to die 30 days after admission.

Black patients 30% more likely to die.

Non white British – 54% more likely to be admitted to ICU.

(Wan, 27/1/21, The Conversation)

# Existential Inequality

Linked to the social factors of people's lives such as race, gender, class, sexuality, disability etc.

Current research-

**Who comes into care and where? The intersection of ethnicity and deprivation** (Dr C. Webb, 2020, University of Sheffield)

- Children in poorest 10% of UK 10x's likely to be care experienced. 12x's likely to be on a CP Plan.
- Black African children have higher rates of care experience no matter level of deprivation.
- Mixed heritage children are 2x's more likely to be care experienced the higher the level of deprivation.



**SPPA**  
Social Pedagogy  
Professional Association

# Material and Resource Inequality

Relates to your ability to develop or have access to social capital.

It is more than just not having your basic needs meet.

Current example –

Food packages for children receiving Free School Meals. Inadequate food parcels with no choice given to parents on how to feed their children.

Limited ability to participate in the everyday experience of shopping.



**SPPA**  
Social Pedagogy  
Professional Association

## Paulo Freire – Dehumanising Humans

Freire's theories and ideas around the connection between inequality and oppression and how the powerful 'dehumanise' the socially excluded are important.

- 'Dehumanising' people seen 'objects',
- Feel less or no empathy or sympathy towards them.
- Little care given if they receive poor treatment, are abused or denied participation in everyday life,
- Denied the 'good life'.
- Deeply internalised sense of worthless and so have little self-esteem or positive self identity.



**SPPA**  
Social Pedagogy  
Professional Association

# How Often Do We Think About?

Ryynänen and Nivala (2019, pg. 3) argue that to understand 'social problems in societies as forms of inequality', we then need to reflect on:

- How often and if ever, do we **think** about the structural inequalities that impact on the lives of the people we work alongside?
- How often do we **ask** people how this structural inequality affects them and the effectiveness of the support we are offering to them?
- How often 'Do we recognise that we might be **dealing** with deep rooted social inequalities'?

**How often do we??**

# A Social Pedagogical Approach

- Use collaborative practice - work alongside – respect and understand differences.
- Use of Lifeworld Orientation to understand ‘lived experience’ and impact of inequality.
- The use of relationships to build capacity and self-efficacy so people who are ‘objects’ can become empowered to take on and change structural inequalities.
- Think about the way we communicate- use horizontal and dialogical communication, be aware of the power of language and the position of power in our relationships with each other.
- Use the Common Third to engage in activities that help develop equal relationships and be willing to give up power and control and learn alongside somebody.
- Be human and show your flaws – The 3P’s
- Use your social position to help amplify people who are being ‘dehumanised’ and seen as ‘objects’ and help them to be heard.