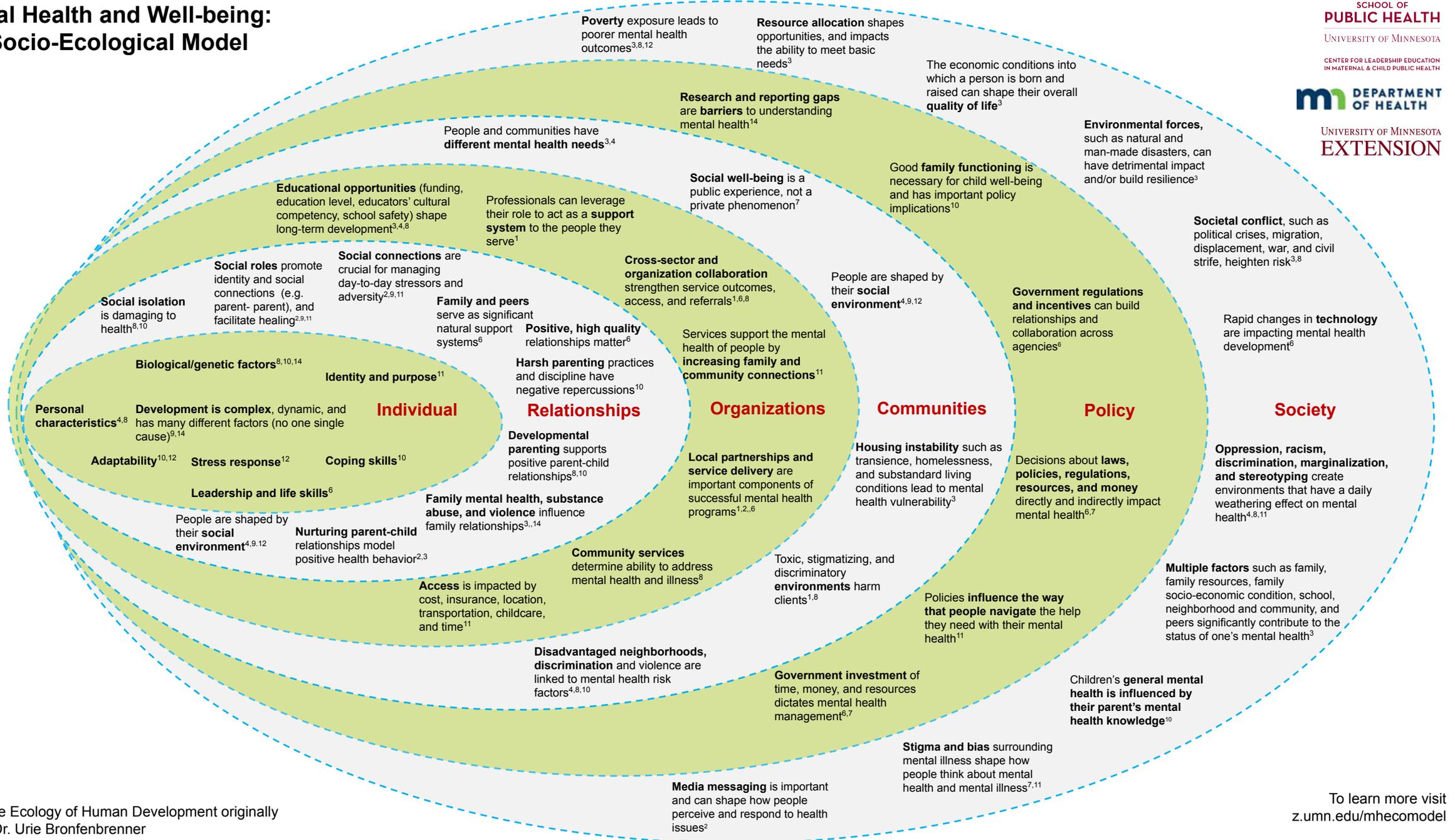


Mental Health and Well-being: A Socio-Ecological Model



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This socio-ecological model was created as a way to visually illustrate individual, family, organization, community, and societal factors that influence individual mental health and well-being. It reflects what we know from the research about how people's mental health is affected both positively and negatively at all levels. *Research alone will not capture experiences of mental health and well-being but offers us a foundational framework.*

The World Health Organization describes health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This well-being model describes mental health for everyone, as a whole person concept that spans the lifetime.

A positive, strengths-based approach shifts from illness to wellness (i.e. flourishing). *This conceptualization of mental health includes everyone, reflects the whole person, and spans the lifecourse.* The factors identified in this model are based on research that incorporates mental health, well-being, and the ecological model.

The "socio-ecological model" was developed as a way to recognize that individuals affect and are affected by a complex range of social influences and nested environmental interactions.

The socio-ecological model of mental well-being recognizes that factors can cross between multiple levels (see dotted lines on model). They can also impact people differently, based on cumulative and intersectional experience.

This framework remains a work in progress.

To learn more, watch the video "Mental Health: Yours, Mine and Ours" at z.umn.edu/CYFCMV.

The 6 levels of influence:

- **Individual:** everything people are born with and how they influence and are influenced by the world around them
Examples: age, personality, skills, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, education/knowledge, economic status, geographic location
- **Relationships:** formal and informal social supports
Examples: family, friends, neighbors, teachers, co-workers, service providers
- **Organizations:** the relationship between public, private, and non-profit organizations
Examples: schools, workplaces, agencies, businesses, healthcare, childcare, faith groups
- **Communities:** the broad social setting in which relationships occur
Examples: neighborhoods, cultural groups
- **Policy:** laws and policies that regulate and support health behaviors
Examples: workplace, local, state, federal, international
- **Society:** broad societal factors
Examples: culture, beliefs, values, norms, customs, practices

For a full list of references, visit z.umn.edu/mhecomodel.

Partnerships

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