

NAVIGATING AUTISM

AT THE INTERSECTION OF RACE, CLASS, AND GENDER

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Intersectional forms of oppression are central to understanding autism disparities, however research to date has mainly focused on individual risk factors such as race, ethnicity or social class. These disparities exist at various domains of autism trajectories including age at diagnosis, access to therapeutic interventions, and representation in special educational services. Less known, however, are the complex milieu of social factors that operate together as told from the perspective of caregivers whose autism experiences are shaped in a structurally unequal society. Without this understanding, the goals of ending disparities evident in various domains of autism trajectories make it even more difficult to obtain. Drawing on the analytic framework of intersectionality developed by Black feminist scholars, the purpose of this seminar is to offer a multi-level qualitative analysis based on in-depth interviews with Black women who are navigating autism services for their children within the constraints of state-based health insurance and limited resources. These alternative ways of knowing have been excluded in the representations of autism disparities thus far and offer important insight to the inextricable link between autism disparities and the structural, historical, and situational contexts of people's lives as shaped by race, class, and gender.

Jennifer Singh is Associate Professor of Sociology in the School of History and Sociology at Georgia Institute of Technology. She is the author of the book *Multiple Autisms: Spectrums of Advocacy and Genomic Science*, which explores a range of perspectives from scientists, activists, parents, and people with autism surrounding the rise and implementation of autism genetics research. Her current research investigates the social and structural barriers to autism diagnosis and services that reside at the intersection of race, class, and gender.



Please contact Whitney Pirtle (wpirtle@ucmerced.edu) for more information.