



Diversity and Aging in the Social Environment

Sherry M. Cummings, Colleen Galambos

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Today, nearly one of every eight Americans is 65 or older, and by 2030, over 20% of the population will be in this age group. Are you prepared to work with this vastly diverse—and rapidly growing—population?

This single source is designed to help social service professionals provide effective services to America's vastly diverse and rapidly growing elderly population. *Diversity and Aging in the Social Environment* explores the impact of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and geographic location on elders' strengths, challenges, needs, and resources to provide you with a more complete understanding of the issues elders face.

In order to be more responsive to older adults, social workers and other human service professionals need to enhance their knowledge of the aging population and the factors that impact the way seniors interact with society, organizations, community resources, neighborhoods, support networks, kinship groups, family, and friends. *Diversity and Aging in the Social Environment* examines differences in race, ethnicity, geographical location, sexual orientation, religion, and health status to help current and future human service professionals provide culturally competent services to the diverse range of elderly people they serve. In addition, it addresses the wide disparity that exists for older Americans in terms of income and assets, number of chronic conditions, functional and cognitive impairment, housing arrangements, and access to health care.

This book provides a context for the examination of diversity issues among older adults by describing and discussing several theoretical perspectives on aging that highlight important aspects of diversity. Next, you'll find thoughtful examinations of:

- issues and challenges faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender elders—and the strengths they bring into later life
- the impact of gender, race, and sexual orientation on prevalence rates, risk factors, methods of disease contraction, and mortality rates among older adults with HIV/AIDS—along with a discussion of the psychosocial issues they face
- diverse characteristics of custodial grandparents—and the influence of the caregivers' gender, race, age, and geographic location on methods of care and available caregiver support
- differences in caregiver characteristics, service utilization, caregiver strain, and coping mechanisms among several racial/ethnic groups of adults who care for elderly, disabled, and ill persons
- cultural/religious factors that influence interactions between health care personnel and Japanese-American elders
- the relationship between acculturation and depressive symptoms among Mexican-American couples
- life challenges facing Jewish and African-American elders—with a look at each group's coping mechanisms
- differences in religious/spiritual coping skills among Native American, African-American, and white elders
- psychological well-being and religiosity among a diverse group of rural elders

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