

Empowering Women of Color

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Women of color constitute a large proportion of most social work caseloads, and this is a comprehensive textbook that addresses the unique needs of this population. Recognizing that women of color come from many disparate backgrounds, the book includes chapters by guest authors on particular communities, including African-American women, Native American women, Latinas, Asian-Pacific women, and lesbians and bisexual women of color. Because all women of color experience both racism and sexism, their restricted economic opportunities and feelings of disempowerment can have a negative impact on their health and mental well-being. Social workers must help their clients deal with both the concrete problems in their lives and the debilitating psychological effects of powerlessness. Lorraine M. Gutierrez and Edith A. Lewis describe both general concepts and specific techniques of the empowerment approach and show how social workers - using client education, participatory practice processes, and a strong focus on client and community strengths - can help women of color increase their own influence over the circumstances of their lives. Replete with narrative case studies illustrating the application of empowering methods at different phases and levels of practice, "Empowering Women of Color" serves as both blueprint and toolbox for one of social work's most pressing tasks: enriching the lives of women of color.

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目录:

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