

Social Equity
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
JUNE 5 - 7, 2013 - NC STATE UNIVERSITY, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA



Health

Social Myths and Public Policy: How Social Myths Impact Legislation, Health Outcomes and Community Well-being

Thursday 9:30 am; Panel 3

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Abstract: Sub-topics will include social myths about victims in disasters, myths about rape victims (the just-world hypothesis critique), myths about social welfare programs, and how these myths contribute to lack of cohesion between political parties, policy makers, and other stakeholders. Areas in health myths include: masculinity and health, homosexuality and sex education, beauty and health, and other controversial topics (such as the idea that breastfeeding is anti-feminist). The main goal of this presentation is to explore how social myths are "started" and disseminated, whether there is any positive value to social myths, and deciding "what is the role of a community psychologist when evaluating social myths?" This topic is inspired by Representative Todd Akin's comment on legitimate rape. How do these social myths "spread" and what is their potential harm? What role do social myths play in agenda setting and group mobilization? Can social myths shape public policy? What changes need to be made in addressing social myths for public health concerns?