



Silencing the Self Across Cultures: Depression and Gender in the Social World

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Winner of the 2011 Ursula Gielen Global Psychology Book Award This international volume offers new perspectives on social and psychological aspects of the complex dynamic of depression. The twenty-one contributors from thirteen countries - Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Haiti, India, Israel, Nepal, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Scotland, and the United States - represent contexts with very different histories, political and economic structures, and gender role disparities. Authors rely on Silencing the Self theory, which details the negative psychological effects when individuals silence themselves in close relationships and the importance of the social context in precipitating depression. Specific patterns of thought about how to achieve closeness in relationships (self-silencing schema) are known to predict depression. This book breaks new ground by demonstrating that the linkage of depressive symptoms with self-silencing occurs across a range of cultures. We offer a new view of gender differences in depression situated in the formation and consequences of self-silencing, including differing motivational aims, norms of masculinity and femininity, and the broader social context of gender inequality. The book offers evidence regarding why womens depression is more wide-spread than mens and why the treatment of depression lies in understanding that a persons individual psychology is inextricably related to the social world and close relationships. Authors examine not only gender differences in depression but also related aspects of mental and physical illness, including treatments specific to women. Several chapters describe the transformative possibilities of community-driven movements for disadvantaged women that support healing through a recovery of voice, and describe the need for systemic and structural changes to counter violations of human rights as a means of reducing womens risk of depression. Bringing the work of these researchers together in one collection furthers international dialogue about critical social factors that affect the rising rates of depression around the globe.

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