One-paragraph description for session: What’s Economic Inequality Got to Do with It? Everything! Strategies for Teaching Economic Inequality in Clinics

Our current economic system and the vast inequality it begets affects us all, including our students and clients. Concentrated wealth and income inequality undermine our democracy. "On one hand, the growing disparity between rich and poor ensures that very few have the resources and time to engage in the democratic process in a meaningful way. On the other, the concentration of power in the hands of a few financial elites erodes public trust in our democratic institutions." Without economic democracy, there cannot be meaningful political democracy. Thus, we believe it is imperative for clinics to explicitly address our economic system. This session will explore how to teach about the economy and economic inequality in a clinical setting. It will examine ways to talk about how our economic system affects our clients’ lives and our work, and how, by applying a structural lens to economic inequality, we might change our legal strategies. The session will highlight the deep tensions that can arise in explicitly discussing these issues in seminar and in supervision. Participants will explore how to identify economic inequality and guide critical conversations about it. They will learn how to craft teaching modules that unpack the economy and economic inequality. The panelists will provide exercises to use in seminar and a list of possible readings.