Introduction:

The International Association of Forensic Nurses (IAFN) is uniquely positioned to advocate for social justice. Forensic nurses provide patient-centered and trauma-informed care to all individuals, families, and communities, seeking to mitigate suffering and promote healing.

Definition:

Social justice is the concept of ensuring that the inherent rights of all people are respected, regardless of characteristics or vulnerabilities.

In contrast, social injustices and inequities occur based on specific characteristics or vulnerabilities. These may include, but are not limited to, a person’s race, ethnicity, economic status, citizenship, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, spirituality, disability, health status, and historical and structural oppressions—as well as the inequitable impacts of climate change and efforts that prohibit one from achieving their rightful status in society.

The Intersection of Forensic Nursing and Social Justice:

In their practices, forensic nurses apply the principles of equity, access, participation, and human rights, all of which are essential for effective health promotion. The forensic nurse is well poised to identify and act upon inequities, empowered by the knowledge of social justice theories and principles. By understanding the concept of social justice—and seeking to extinguish social injustices—the forensic nurse is skilled in providing compassionate care to individuals affected by trauma, violence, and abuse, including all who have been victimized and those who have perpetrated. Forensic nurses seek to improve health equity by providing high-quality care to marginalized communities and strive to ameliorate injustices experienced by individuals, families, and communities. Navigating both the healthcare and criminal justice systems, forensic nurses ensure that dignity and respect extends to all.