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Adolescents and Trauma

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Adolescents and Trauma

It is now common to see street youths who are homeless across major cities in the United States. Their prevalence is hard to determine, but investigators gauge that about 1 to 1.6 million adolescents experience homelessness. It is common for homeless adolescents to have considerable mental health problems, such as anxiety disorder, trauma, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), substance abuse disorder and suicidal ideation. Being homeless is traumatic and almost half of the homeless adolescent population have either faced victimization and/or have experienced this homelessness. Frequently, adolescents face traumatic experiences before they leave home and also get retraumatized as they arrive on the streets again (Williams et al., 2019). They normally face difficulty in trying to recover from both old and new traumatic occurrences while trying to get through the harsh street setup.

Several experiences of homelessness can cause trauma. The most common is pregnancy. Not knowing how difficult it is to be a parent, most street youths may want to create an ideal family and, in the process, end up not knowing how to provide for the family. This constitutes the highest number of traumatic experience homeless. Others include being dependent on other street adolescents, depression and PTSD, poor decision-making and impulsivity. Therefore, creating a way of life while homeless becomes task full and stressful. The adolescents being children, do not have the capacity of handling issues such as stress the way adults do and this would result in PTSD (Zhang et al., 2020).

Adolescents who have faced trauma may result in doing drugs or even engaging in criminal activities, thus, they become a societal problem. Therefore, this is a social problem. One of the most serious and social troubles is adolescent homelessness. Regularly it causes

interwoven systemic and individual issues. The main cause of homelessness in families is the rising gaps between housing that are affordable and their income. Also, the shelter system in place can only accommodate a small number of the rising population of homeless adolescents in need (Milburn et al., 2020). Others may be forced to live in vehicles they own, storage units, garages and places that are not fit to sleep in. On the other hand, adolescents who are pregnant or have kids are forced to move from one place to another staying temporarily with their friends or family for the short or long term. Studies show that even a short term of being homeless has the ability of mental trauma, child neglect and depression.

There are different risk factors involved when it comes to experiencing homelessness in the United States of America, with the main one affecting different racial groups. Hispanics or Blacks are the most ordinary race to become homeless, followed by unmarried and parenting and the LGBTQ community. For adolescents, the main risk factors include substance use, school problems, youth's sexual orientation, family conflicts, pregnancy and family dynamics.

In January 2015, New York City in one night recorded approximately 2500 homeless youths who were unaccompanied and were between the age of 18 and 24. They included youths in drop-in centers, church beds, shelters among others. Out of these individuals, 52% were between the ages of 20-24 years, 44% ranging from 18-20 years and 4% were under 18 years. Additionally, 35% were male, 38% were females, 1% trans-female and 2%trans-male (Fernandes-Alcantara, 2019).

Supportive services in place that help adolescents being homeless include, Suicide Prevention Resources Center (SPRC), Treatment for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness, ¹ Cooperative Agreements to Benefit Homeless Individuals (CABHI), Grants for the Benefit of

Homeless Individual (GBHI) and Project for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness

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