

What are some of the causes of Homelessness?

Elijah Gonzalez

2021 S2 Blk 2 Capstone

Ms. Boutilier

April 9, 2021

Everyone faces challenges and cope with it differently but many times some people can be forced to be in a situation that is out of their control and find themselves in the world not having the basic necessity due to many reasons. As people go for a walk, ride a bicycle or go for a drive people see many things on their path that can make them question why or how? Some come across people on a daily basis that can either make a difference in their lives or make them see life in a different way and wonder why is this person going through this. Why is that person in the corner holding a sign asking for money? Why is that person laying on the sidewalk in the middle of the winter? Why is that person looking through the garbage? Why is that person working so hard but doesn't have a home to go to? So many questions that people want answers to and would like to find a way to help these people in need. What is causing homelessness? What is the root of this problem? How can society make a change? As of 2020, more than half of million people go homeless on a daily basis.

First, what is homelessness? The definition of homelessness is when a person lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and if they sleep in a shelter designated for temporary living accommodations or in places not designated for human habitation. The people you see in the streets are not the only ones that are considered homeless but families, children, elderly, and youth that don't have the resources to reside somewhere temporarily. People don't choose to live this way. "Therefore, it is known that homelessness is the biggest social problem which the whole world faces in the twenty-first century" (Alowaimer, 2018, p.1). Unfortunately, the cost of housing is extremely high and the low paying jobs lead to many people not getting paid enough to support themselves or their families. Poverty plays a big role in homelessness which leads to people in a tough situation making decisions based on what they need the most.

Unable to pay for housing, utilities and food, people end up in the streets searching for a shelter for the night or weeks until they can get some assistance to help with their necessities. “In 2005, 13.3% of the U.S. population, or 38,231,521 million people, lived in poverty. Both the poverty rate and the number of poor people have increased in recent years, up from 12.5% or 1.1 million in 2003 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005). 36% of persons living in poverty are children; in fact, the 2004 poverty rate of 17.6% for children under 18 years old is significantly higher than the poverty rate for any other age group” (June 2007). There has been an increase in homelessness in the past couple of years that are lacking support from resources. Sometimes the causes of homelessness can be a mixture of different situations that changes the person’s life so drastically that changes their path unexpectedly.

Second, health is another major issue people experiencing homelessness face. Not only are they not able to afford medical insurance but they are experiencing so many health and behavioral concerns such as, severe illnesses, injury, malnutrition, depression, alcoholism, substance abuse and so much more. How can they get the proper medical attention they need to take care of these concerns? They need help and feel like they have no way out when the resources are either limited or not available. What can they do? How can they find hope in the midst of all of this? Between 20 to 25% of the homeless population are suffering from some type of mental illness that interferes with their ability to manage their daily life and prevents them from having stable relationships with others. “ Among the most vulnerable and underprivileged groups in society are the homeless people who suffering from drugs, alcohol and mental disorders” (Alowaimer, 2018, p.2). Also, being in this state of mind can lead people to neglect

themselves if they do not take the proper steps to get treated which causes them to fall into this cycle which is difficult to come out of.

Lastly, domestic violence is another cause of homelessness. Women and their children are forced to run away from their homes and leave everything behind to survive. Not only women go through this but even men have been in these situations that causes them to run for their life. Why can't it be easy to just end the relationship and have them go their way? "Battered women who live in poverty are often forced to choose between abusive relationships and homelessness." (June 2007) What happens if there's not a shelter available with beds for these victims? How can they be provided support and safety? At the moment, battered women are not thinking what if I don't have nowhere to go but instead I need to leave now or I can end up in the hospital or even dead. More than 90% of women have experienced some type of abuse whether physically or mentally which forces them to go to the streets to find an escape.

To conclude, it is important for people to educate themselves and understand the different causes of homelessness. How can people help each other through this crisis? How can society work together to provide resources and the basic necessity for the homeless? Homeless people are seen as irresponsible and just a slacker that don't want to deal with the responsibility of keeping a job and paying the rent but it goes beyond that. Many people that fall into homelessness were forced in some way to fall into this situation that many people face and because of the barriers it has been difficult to break the cycle. Despite all the challenges they are facing, by reaching out and providing support, and finding a way to make a difference in a person's life can be the beginning of making a change

Reference

Homelessness and health

Turnbull, Muckle, & Masters

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2025621/>

Alowaimer, O. (2018). Causes, effects and issues of homeless people.

Journal of Socialomics, 07(03). doi:10.4172/2167-0358.1000223

Domestic violence. (2020, January 27). Retrieved March 12, 2021, from

<https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/what-causes-homelessness/domestic-violence/>