Crisis of homeless youth

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According to Project Home.org (2019)in 2017, there were 553,742 homeless indivduals recorded in the United States. Homelessness is an epidemic that affects, as previously mentioned, a siginicant amount of people not just in the United States but in many other countries. Homeless can be defined as an individual that lacks a regular nighttime residence. (Usich.gov) Homeless can effect multiple aspects of one’s life including their health. Understanding the fact that they cannot afford a place to stay, homeless individuals usually cannot afford health care. (Washington.edu, 2019) This can cause fatal health issues including HIV/AIDS, skin diseases, mental illness etc. Out of the 553,742 homeless individuals recorded, ten percent of those indivduals are between the ages of 18 and 24. (Project Home, 2019). This group of young people have just beagn their lives and have so much potiential and hope which is why I have such optisim towards them. There are many reasons why homeless, this age group in particular, became homeless and remain homeless. These include lack of substance misuse, mental health and domestic violence. According to the NCSL.org 29% of homeless youth report misusge of substance and 69% of homeless youth reported to have mental health issues. (2019) Domestic violence in particular is about of 90% of the reason for minors in youth shelters (nn4youth). Understaning the fact that Philadelphia is one of the biggest cities in the United States, it has a great amount of homeless and in-proverty individuals. This is the city of interest because most of my family orginate from there and this is where the help professoanl that I interviewed works. According to Why.org, 25.5% of individuals living in Philadelphia are in proverty while 1,083 homeless individuals were recorded in the year of 2018. (2019). This shows that homelessness is not just an issue in Philadelphia, not just in the United States but all over the world. There are different ways communites try to help the ones growing through this epidemic and prevent it.

# The Interview

For this assignment, I interviewed a young lady name Lillian Penn. Ms. Penn is a social worker in Philadelhpia, PA that works with young adults from ages 17 to 22. She works with an agency called Turning Point for Children which advocates for young adults. I was curious to why she chose that age group and her response was because she wanted to try a new group for advocacy. She worked with many other groups before that one. Ms. Penn explains how she enjoys working with the age group that she works with. She believed this particular group is in diarer need for support. She explained how a lot of adults that she works with got kicked out of their parents house and cannot provide for themselves thus becoming homeless. In addition, a lot of the adults she works with are with young adults that never had a family and need support. These are just some of the many examples of struggle that these young people have to face and need help.

Each year, Philadelphia homeless outreach organizations engaged over 6,000 individuals living on the street, in cars, abandoned buildings, train/bus stations, and other places not meant for human habitation. (Project home, 2019). One of these organizations include Turning Point for Children. Other than day-to-day social work, Ms.Penn’s and the whole facility goal for advocacy is to get young adults ,set for the real world. They call this goal or organization is called YSET. They help prepare young adults in areas like getting an interview, getting a credit card, building up credit etc. The organization, for example, would be teaching a young adult how to dress for an interview, how to talk to the employer, and how what to do following the interview. Ms. Penn was not sure how the plan YSET started because it was formed before she got there.

Specifically, Ms. Penn meets with young adults every week and figure out ways to help set them for life. She mentioned how high-profile clients, like suicidal, homeless etc., meet with her twice a week. She also creates treatment plans that is clinically driven for these patients that help with the issues. I asked Ms. Penn if she would change anything if she wanted based on past experience. She answered no, explaing that each experience she went through helped her become the great help professional she is today. The advice she gave me was to not be judgemental in this field. She explained working with different clients, you hear a lot of stories and you cannot be judgemental of them or the situation. Another piece of advice she gave was to not judge new cliens based on pas clients. She ebolarated saying each client was different and unique. This is will help me be understanding and ulitmatelty a great help professional one day. After the interview was over, I explained how appercaiative I was to have the opportunity to interview Ms. Penn. She explained how she loves to help young black adults especially females that are getting their education trying to succeed.

## Reflection

Though I am not ogrinally a human service major, this interview project gave me a new prespective on things. In all that is included in Ms. Penn’s job, from advocacing for young adults to providing them with resources to help prepare for the world. Since I like working with the younger generation, I belive this is something I would be interested for a career path. I learned a few things while interviewing Ms. Penn. She taught me to not judge clients based on passed clients. Being that this a part pf advice she gave me, it added a new perspective. Prior to the interview, I thought a helping professional had to connect past experiences with clients with future ones to get a better understanding on what to prepare for or how the client will react. But she explained how each experience is new and each client is unique. To be prepared based on facts but not judge the future clients. This is a mindset that is helpful not just in the human service field but in the real world.

After doing this project, I also learned a great amount of information about homeless individuals. I stated statstics, records and reasonings why homessless individuales become homeless. This also gave me a new persetive on homeless individuals. Understanding the fact that 90% of youth left their homes because of domestic violence, means it is hard for them to go back home thus causing them to become homeless. It is hard to be in a situation like that, to not feel safe in your own home needing to make some where else that is safe your home. I could not imagine going through something as traumatic as that thus causing me to have sympathy, especially towards the younger generation in which I am in. I also learned that many of homeless young adults have mental helath issues. This is an aspect that one can not control. In some cases making them incapale of making good decision whe put in difficult paostions like violence or money issues. I grew up blessed with no issues that are as serious as these. This interview made me truly understand that blessing and privilege to be able to say that. It also gives me a heart to want to help those that are growing through the situations mentioned. I can also merge this new interest and my orginally interest which would be advocating for young addiction patients. I want to work with patients that have behavioral addictions and after this interview, I want to make sure I rech out to the young adults that have behavioral addictions. I want to mak sure the younger generations know that behavioral addcitions indlcuding gambling and sex additions are normal and common things. I want to epahsaize the fact that they are not goin through their sitatuins alone and there is always help out there.

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