

ADDICTIONS

Siera Mattix

Many homeless people are regular everyday people like you and me, but there are the exceptions like: the mentally ill, substance addicted, and/or addicted to things such as gambling. No matter what the addiction is, we should be helping people with these kinds of problems before they get to the point of homelessness. If a change like this can occur we can prevent a great number of people from being put on the streets by providing things such as permanent housing for people to move out of poverty (PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA). Not being able to pay the rent is only one of the mere problems homeless run into (Rhoades).

In helping the 66% of homeless with alcohol, drug abuse, and/or mental illness (Homelessness) thousands of dollars, time, and heartache could and/or can still be saved. I believe this idea will work to reduce poverty and homelessness, and other soaring and increasing problems in the U.S. We have to start somewhere.

If possible I would like to create discussion along the topic of preventing homelessness in its early beginnings. I would like to share some research on alcoholism (about one in every twelve adults are alcohol dependent (Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism)), the primary reasons for homelessness, and possible preventions of homelessness. I would also like to know what other's think of this idea, and how they would go about it. If people with serious addictions were forced into special programs, do you think this would help? Yes, No? Would you suggest help for people who show early signs of mental illness? Subject the current homeless to the same?

I have learned on a personal basis through experience that if someone is helped before jail or even before they are just about to lose everything they can turn their life around. It takes giving them a chance and structure, but I believe it could surely save some people's lives from ruin.

Kruiz Siewing

The homelessness issue is very evident to our country today. It has become even more evident to us now researching and studying the issue in this class. The part of homelessness I would like to address and focus on more is the mentally ill and drug/alcohol addicted homeless people in the nation today. A statistic shown by the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients (NSHAPC) estimated that 66 percent of the homeless cases in America are related to alcohol/drugs and mental illnesses and about 20 percent of the nation's homeless population, have some kind of mental illness (Homelessness). This is a staggering statistic and right now our government is doing some things to help these ill/addicted persons. However I feel it is not enough. The main question I would like to refer to is what do we do with the individuals who do not want to receive the necessary treatment to get back to a healthy and successful lifestyle? Should we force them into treatment against their will for their own good or just leave them alone and watch them diminish? This is a big issue that I feel should be considered attentively. As required by law however, we have to respect the homeless peoples' choice to decide for themselves. Or in other words we cannot make them do something they don't want to do. On the other hand should someone else decide to forcefully put these people into treatment because of their addictions/illnesses? My take on this matter is if the person's health or well-being is in harm substantially or if they are a possible harm to society in some way they should be taken in for help no matter what they say.

Kira West

For the town hall meeting, I chose addictions and homelessness. I have learned that most people think the homeless population is primarily composed of alcoholics and drug addicts, however upon further research, you discover that they are not. Only 37% of homeless people have a substance abuse problem and only 9.6% of

homeless people with families have a substance abuse problem (Hadland). However, researchers believe that substance abuse in homelessness is growing. Most people who are homeless use alcohol and drugs as a medication or “crutch” for their mental disorders. Many homeless people turn to alcohol and drugs after they are on the streets because they feel they have no way out. Homeless people don’t always get the treatment they need. Most of the homeless people do not have the resources necessary to get clean from their addictions and only about 27% are actually able to get treatment (Addiction, Mental Health, and Homelessness). Obstacles that most homeless people face is lack of health insurance; lack of documentation; waiting lists at hospitals; scheduling appointment difficulties; lack of transportation; ineffective treatment methods; lack of support and insensitive staff. Homeless people have issues these issues to face and also the amount of money for their treatment is an issue. In order to get homeless people treatment, someone has to pay for it. The expense of treatment is not cheap and sometimes doctors do not want to help the person. Do you think that the substance abuse problem is the reason people are homeless or is it simply hiding a deeper social or mental disorder? Is there help for homeless people that have substance problems? Does our society have an ethical responsibility to help these people get treatment? These are some ideas I would like to discuss in the Town Hall Meeting!

Gwendolyn Dodge

After reading The Soloist, I was far more aware of the issues of homelessness. The age groups for most homeless people vary drastically from little kids to old veterans. In Montana alone, there are about 231 homeless people under the age of eighteen and only about seventy-five are with families. (2007 Montana Homeless Survey) This number is insane. when surveyed, The main cause of their homelessness was found to be drugs or alcohol. Drugs and Alcohol are corrupting America’s youth.

Its not only the homeless youth that the drugs and alcohol affect, but it affects the homeless throughout all age groups. Numerous different aged homeless people who sit out on the corner asking for money for “food” take what money that they manage to acquire to buy drugs or alcohol.

Questions on possible ways to help the situation:

- How can drugs and alcohol be made harder to get for minors?
 - Should the punishment for people who buy alcohol for minors be harsher?
- Is it because they are illegal that some want to try them in the first place?

By trying these illegal things, does it give them some higher “standing” with their peers?

Tyler Nancarrow

Addiction has devastated the lives of many and will continue to do so. Many addicts lose the ability to function in society, causing them to lose everything and live on the streets. One drug that has caused lots of grief is heroin. Heroin is one of the most devastating drugs on this planet. In the past decade the use of heroin has dramatically increased. Ninety percent of the world’s opium is produced in Afghanistan. The Taliban were once the drug enforcers of the Middle East, making sure that opium crops were non-existent due to Islamic beliefs. When the United States army shut down most of the Taliban regime the production of opium dramatically increased. Now the Taliban protect opium farmers because they see the drug as a way to kill off the west since a majority of the opium is shipped off to the US. This global outbreak of overly produced heroin has devastated the lives of many and will continue to do so. Heroin is so addictive that many users instantly get hooked. For many addicts the need to get high becomes the most important aspect of their life. Many users lose their families, jobs, and houses. Users often become homeless. There is a massive number of homeless who are addicts to heroin. The questions that interest me are ones that deal with the quality of life. What is it about our culture that produces such a large number of people who feel like they need to get high? Is it the pressure our media portrays on our society? Or is it that so many people these days suffer from depression? The power to

stop heroin addiction does not lie in our hands but in the government's. If we are able to successfully stop the illegal trafficking of opium we will see less homeless living on the streets.

Jason Marsh

Addiction affects the lives of millions of Americans every day. More specifically it affects the homeless in many ways that cause them to lose their ability to function in today's competitive society. In this essay, controversial issues regarding addiction among the homeless will be discussed in multiple ways. Addiction is a very common stereotype that is often labeled on the heads of the homeless. This essay will be written for the sole purpose of identifying common addictive problems that the homeless suffer from every day. There are many underlying factors of addiction among the homeless. These underlying factors will be discussed very specifically in order for one to form a better idea on how addiction affects so many homeless.

Credible estimates of the prevalence of alcohol and drug abuse suggest that alcohol abuse affects 30% to 40% and drug abuse 10% to 15% of homeless persons (McCarty). This statistic symbolizes the dramatic affects addiction has on the homeless. Statistics will be the base for support in this paper because it will help form a better understanding of the severe homeless problem. This problem needs to be further examined and this will be done by forming new questions that apply appropriately. Such questions might include: why has homelessness become such a huge problem? After forming multiple questions based on addictions correlation with homelessness, it will be necessary to apply statistics with the questions in order to form an understanding that is more educated and exact.

Kristen Marcure

The alcohol and drug addicts among homeless are hardly getting better because of our economic status as a country. As many as twenty-three million Americans are dependent on alcohol and/or drugs, yet less than one-third receive treatment and a minority of those treated achieves permanent recovery following a single episode of treatment (Erickson 1). However, before going to treatment, an addict is a stand-alone but when they enter treatment they have a chance for a new beginning. They are viewed by a recovery orientation, through a framework of varying levels of affiliation with support and services. These followed treatment with either tight affiliation or loose affiliation (Erickson 2). Tight affiliation is when an addict first comes into the program; it is where they begin. And loose affiliation is the end of the addict's program.

The objective for most people is for them to move toward the less intense end of the spectrum. This spectrum is the progression of addicts and steps to overcome being an addict. New people in recovery determine with a counselor where to enter at in the spectrum. When treatment is connected to the types of affiliations indicated on the spectrum, longer-term outcomes improve. Although various forms of group recovery housing is provided for recovering homeless addicts but most housing lacks medical, psychological, social and educational services needed for recovery capital (twelve step framework). There are some expectations of treatment; Victory Programs is the largest provider of residential alcoholism and drug addiction treatment in Massachusetts. The Victory Programs have fifteen facilities that include a wellness center, a shelter for young women with children, an urban farm, aquaculture business, residential housing, and the original brownstone in South Boston neighborhood (de Miranda 3). These standards have been incorporated into all the aspects of therapy and operations. "Clients needs are the mother of invention" (de Miranda 4). Without someone helping addicts, they will not get better.

Jera Clark

Addiction can tear the happiest family apart, ruin your aspirations, and mold a person into something they could have never dreamed. But what happens to those who decide to seek out help for themselves? Well in some cases that person becomes a risk, an uninsurable person stuck in a spiraling hole. How can this be when people are so adamant on helping those with their addiction problems?

Well to answer that question, insurance companies have decided in many cases not to help those in their biggest times of need. Some companies will go as far as to find a way to drop the addict (National Coalition for the Homeless). So what does this mean for those who are dropped? Basically those people are evaluated vigorously, then usually claimed to be uninsurable due to their previous acts. Addicts are seen as a high risk for insurance companies. However, please note an astounding fact to remember while considering these issues is that 37.1% of the homeless struggle with substance abuse. (National Coalition for the homeless).

Addicts need help long after the rehab begins. This means years of therapy or counseling perhaps for the entire family. (Rosenberg) When the insurance companies refuse to help provide the funds; free counseling should be provided. This place would be provided by volunteers who want to touch someone's life, and the counseling would be held by professionals. Granted this is only an idea which can be further explored, it may save lives from the grasps of addiction.

Dustin Rauschendorfer

Drug use and the homeless have gone hand in hand for years. However, drug use and the homeless has been misunderstood in some aspects. Many think that if you are homeless you're an alcoholic or a drug addict, which could not be any farther from the truth. Another stereotype is that homelessness causes increased drug use. The subject of drug use and the homeless as been a touchy, misunderstood problem for many years now. One popular thought, is that drug use causes homelessness and increases after the individual has become homeless. According to *Psychiatric News* this may not be the case. They had found that substance abuse may not increase after people become homeless, it may actually decrease. When they completed a survey 78% of the homeless responded, of the 78% only 30% had increased their substance abuse (Arehart-Treichel). Experts that had conducted the survey were surprised that increased drug use would be so low.

Another issue with drug use is the young homeless population. Of 431 homeless youth questioned in LA 71% had reported an alcohol or drug use problem (Wyman). With the majority of homeless youths with a disorder causes increased crime, and suicide rates. Homeless youth rates have increased for past years and so will drug use. But there are things to consider, like what were the causes of for the youth to runaway? Was there substance abuse problem that had haunted the teen before they were homeless? Also to take into special consideration were the homeless are getting the funds to pay for drugs.

There are many misconceptions that have labeled the homeless in a negative way. And the misconception about drug use is one of them. Only by education, and further studies will experts in the field can fight the problem on a level playing field. Does drug use cause homelessness? Or does drug use put an individual deeper into financial, and mental restraints that is almost impossible to pull out of? Drug use plagues the homeless in way almost impossible to comprehend but only time will tell if further education and prevention methods are the way to combat drug use and homelessness.