



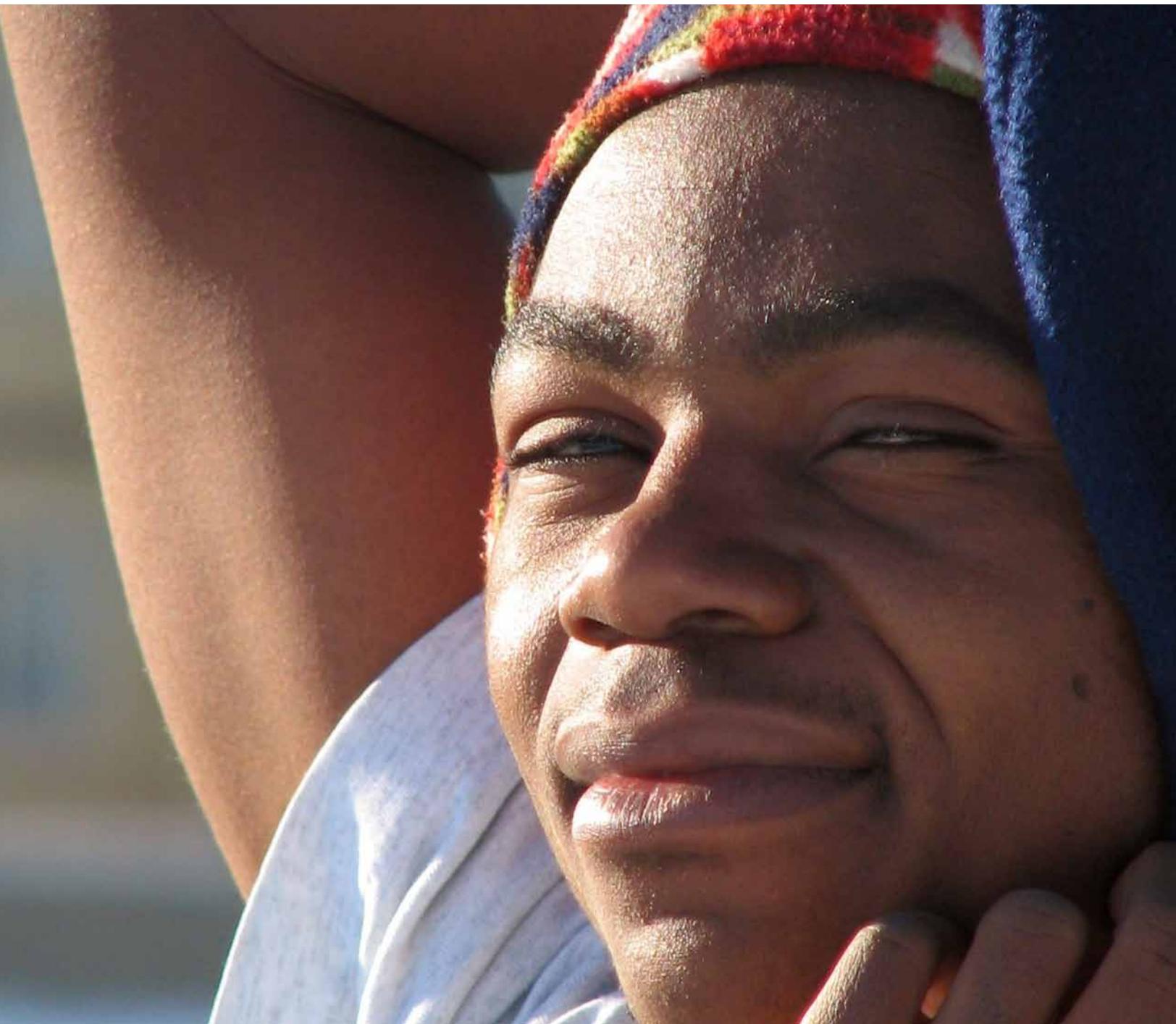
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
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PATH Projects for Assistance in
Transition from Homelessness

Technical Assistance Resource Page

Youth Resources



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Additional SAMHSA Resources

For more information about SAMHSA resources and programs, contact the SAMHSA Health Information Network at 1-877.SAMHSA.7 (1-877.726.4727).



Technical Assistance Resource Page:

Youth



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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www.samhsa.gov





Introduction

Homelessness affects people of all ages in all parts of the United States. From “rough sleepers” living on the streets, to families living in cars or in shelters, to tenuously housed individuals who survive by “couch surfing”—it is clear that there is no single homogenous group of people experiencing homelessness. Often overlooked in discussions of homelessness are issues affecting youth and young adults.

Youth who are homeless are a distinct group compared to the larger population of adults experiencing homelessness. Youth experiencing homelessness include runaways, street youth, foster care system “aged out” youth, youth exiting the juvenile justice system and youth who are thrown out of their homes for a number of different reasons (Farrow et al., 1992). This broad definition of youth experiencing homelessness involves an age range of roughly 12-25 years of age (Toro, Dworsky, & Fowler, 2007). To date, much of the literature has focused on unaccompanied (without a parent or guardian) youth and young adults “not more than 21 years of age” (Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, 2004).

Youth who are homeless face many challenges and developmental complications—from issues of identity and identity formation (Erikson, 1968) to difficulty developing interpersonal relationships, a sense of purpose, and a vision for their future. In addition, compared to their housed counterparts, youth who are homeless exhibit much higher rates of mental illness, substance use and misuse, suicidal ideation, and high risk behaviors (Ennett et al. 1999; Kamieniecki 2001; Molnar et al. 1998).



All too often, youth experiencing homelessness lack clear direction and suffer from the absence of constructive adult supervision and relationships. Their lives are complicated by a disproportionate level of transitional and unstable housing experiences—from shelters to the couches and floors of friends and family. Many youth experiencing homelessness are too old for social and supportive services targeted toward “children,” but too young to assimilate successfully into adult programs. For example, youth who are homeless are low utilizers of soup kitchens or outreach services (Toro & Goldstein, 2000), indicating a possible avoidance of programs serving primarily adults.

This resource document has been designed as a tool to help clinicians, service providers, and advocates navigate the complex world of youth and young adult populations experiencing homelessness. It is our hope that the material presented will improve service delivery and advocacy toward ending youth homelessness. This document reviews key issues related to youth homelessness and suggests approaches to address these issues. Subjects include:

- Family Conflict and Early Childhood Mistreatment
- Mental Health and Behavioral Disorders
- Homelessness Among Youth
- Transitioning from Foster Care
- High-Risk Behaviors and Victimization
- Homelessness Among Sexual and Gender Minority Youth
- Health Care Issues
- Housing Instability
- Academic and Employment Challenges
- Legal Rights and Protections



Web Sites

Direct Link:
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/section/issues/youth>

National Alliance to End Homelessness Youth Page

This webpage provides background information on youth who are homeless as well as access to fact sheets, policy statements, and information on legislative issues.

Direct Link:
<http://www.1800runaway.org>

National Runaway Switchboard (NRS)

The NRS is a national communication system for runaway and youth who are homeless. The organization's mission is to keep these youth safe and off the streets. Educational materials, a curriculum to help keep kids off of the streets, and statistics from their hotline are available on the web site.

Direct Link:
<http://www.nn4youth.org>

National Network for Youth (NN4Y)

NN4Y believes in the following principles: valuing youth, empowering youth, strengthening families, promoting healthy alternatives, supporting diversity, encouraging community-based services, networking, and facilitation youth/adult partnerships. Their web site has health information, fact sheets, and suggestions for how to get involved.

Direct Link:
<http://www.nrcys.ou.edu>

National Resource Center for Youth Services

This organization offers training and technical assistance for programs that serve youth. Training materials and guides for youth care workers are available on the web site.



Other Resources

Direct Link:
<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/youth.html>

National Coalition for the Homeless. (2008). *Homeless youth NCH fact sheet #13*. Washington, DC: Author.

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32711>

This fact sheet reviews causes, consequences, and program and policy issues regarding youth homelessness.

Direct Link:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/docs/youth_homelessness.pdf

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2007). *Promising strategies to ending youth homelessness: Report to congress*. Washington, DC: Author.

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=45830>

This report outlines strategies for ending youth homelessness, and addresses theoretical perspectives, interventions to prevent youth homelessness, interventions to ameliorate homelessness, and implications for policy and program development.

Direct Link:
<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/homelessness/symposium07/toro>

Toro, P. A., Dworsky, A., & Fowler, P. J. (2007). *Homeless youth in the United States: Recent research findings and interventions*. In D. Dennis, G. Locke, & J. Khadduri (Eds.), *Toward Understanding Homelessness: The 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research*. Washington, DC: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33047>

Youth are the age group most at risk for experiencing homelessness, yet little research has been conducted with this population. The authors review characteristics of youth who experience homelessness, recent research findings, and intervention strategies.

Direct Link:
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1043&context=sociologyfacpub>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=19174>

Ennett S.T., Bailey, S.L., Federman, E.B. (1999). Social network characteristics associated with risky behaviors among runaway and homeless youth. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 40(1), 63–78.

This study explores youth who are runaways or homeless and their risk-taking behaviors. The authors consider the impact of social networks on these behaviors.

Direct Link:
<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/bsc/anp/2001/00000035/00000003/art00013>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=46576>

Kamieniecki, G.W. (2001). Prevalence of psychological distress and psychiatric disorders among homeless youth in Australia: A comparative review. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 35(3), 352–358. (fee)

This literature review explores the psychological distress and psychiatric disorders of youth who are homeless and housed in Australia.

Direct Link:
http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6V7N-3VM1WK6-D&_user=10&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&view=c&_acct=C000050221&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_user_id=10&md5=09431b60ae3021bef76bb74db092533e

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=35968>

Molnar, B.E., Shade, S.B., Kral, A.H., Booth, R.E., & Watters, J.K. (1998). Suicidal behavior and sexual/physical abuse among street youth. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 22, 213–222.

This study explores the relationships between home life and suicide attempts among youth who are homeless and runaways located on the streets and in shelters in Denver, CO; New York City; and San Francisco, CA.

Family Conflict and Early Childhood Mistreatment

Youth experiencing homelessness consistently report familial conflict and violence as the primary reason for their housing instability (Whitbeck et al., 2002). Poor parental relationships, sexual and physical violence, teen pregnancy, issues related to sexual orientation, and substance use are common causes of family instability and breakdown (Robertson & Toro, 1999; Whitbeck & Hoyt, 1999).

Of the reported 750,000 to 2.8 million youth who experience homelessness every year (Green et al., 2003), 51 percent describe physical abuse prior to leaving home (Cauce, Paradise, Ginzler, Embry, Morgan, Lohr, & Theofelis, 2000). The cycle of violence and abuse often leads youth to distrust adults and professional agencies and to believe that safety can come only through leaving home and living on their own.

Because youth may not trust adults, it is important to ensure that service providers build rapport and are sensitive to their specific needs. Care coordination that works in a continuum of “harm minimization” and culturally competent advocacy is critical to meet the complex needs of youth experiencing homelessness.



Web Sites

Direct Link:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb>

Children’s Bureau, Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

The Children’s Bureau provides information, resources, and links about family assistance (welfare), child support, childcare, Head Start, child welfare, and other programs relating to children and families.

Direct Link:
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/index.cfm>

Child Welfare Information Gateway

Child Welfare Information Gateway acts as an extensive resource for information to help protect children and educate and strengthen families.



Other Resources

Direct Link:
<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a787464153>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=35679>

Whitbeck, L. B., Hoyt, D. R., & Ackley, K. A. (1997). Abusive family backgrounds and later victimization among runaway and homeless adolescents. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 7, 375-392. (fee)

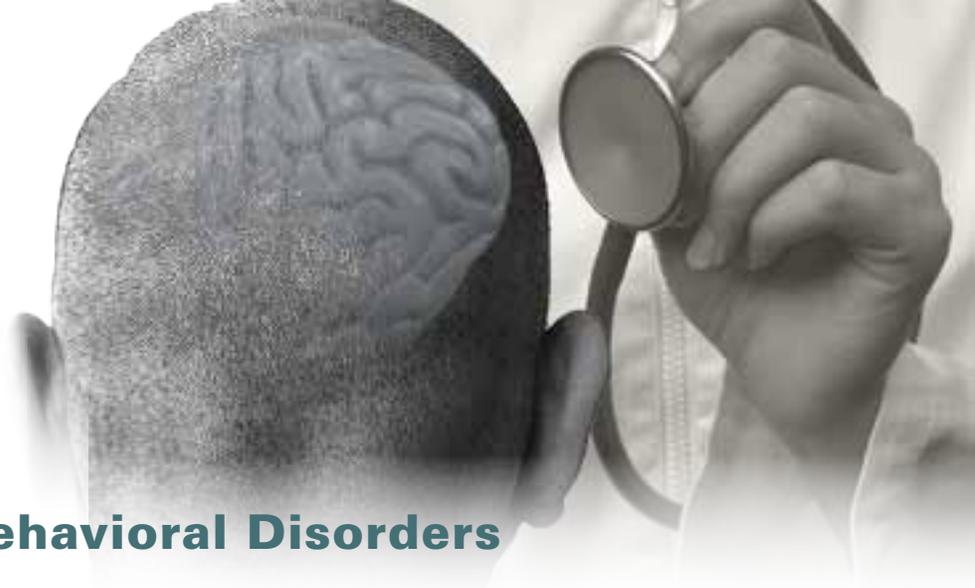
This study of adolescents who are runaways or experiencing homelessness explores the effects of physical and sexual abuse within family of origin on participation in deviant subsistence strategies and levels of victimization while on the streets.

Direct Link:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/fys/design_opt/reports/incidence/incidence.pdf

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=45988>

Green, J., Sanchez, R., Harris, J., Cignetti, C., Atkins, D. & Wheless, S. (2003). *Incidence and Prevalence of Homeless and Runaway Youth (Final Report Under Contract No. HHS-282-98-0022, Task Order No. 17 from the Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation and the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families)*. Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute.

This study explores ways to estimate the incidence and prevalence of youth who are runaways, throwaways, and homeless.



Mental Health and Behavioral Disorders

A growing body of research links the experience of homelessness for youth with a disproportionate risk for a wide variety of mental health problems. The trauma of life on the streets, along with the background dysfunction that predates youth who experience homelessness, are contributing factors that lead to greater levels of stress, anxiety and behavioral problems.

Youth experience traumatic stress when they are exposed to disruptive and violent events, and are unable to cope with the aftermath of their experiences (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2007). Traumatic events linked to a life of youth homelessness include physical or sexual assault, experiencing or witnessing violence or victimization, or sudden loss of a parent or guardian. Studies indicate that mental health and behavioral disorders are also strongly linked back to the family of origin, and may be strong contributors to family conflict and homelessness (Toro, Dworsky, & Fowler, 2007).

Studies show that behavioral problems like conduct disorder or oppositional defiant disorder may be even more prevalent for youth who experience homelessness than mental health and psychiatric disorders (Whitbeck, Hoyt & Bao, 2000). Dealing

with traumatic events and daily life on the streets or in shelters can have a strong negative impact on the mental health of young people. The constant struggle to get basic needs met and the day-to-day challenges of living with housing instability may be causally linked to depressive symptoms. Studies have consistently demonstrated a higher prevalence of depression in youth who experience homelessness than among housed peers or the general adolescent population (Toro & Goldstein, 2000).

Many questions still remain regarding the impact of substance abuse, victimization and trauma on the mental health of young people experiencing homelessness. Further research is needed to explore the connections between life on the streets and its detrimental impact on cognitive, emotional and mental functioning and well-being.

Web Sites

Direct Link:
<http://www.nctsn.org>

National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)

NCTSN is a collaboration of academic and community-based service centers. The goal is to increase awareness and access to services for children who have experienced trauma. The NCTSN web site provides an in-depth overview of trauma and contains resources geared towards different audiences.

Direct Link:
<http://www.promoteprevent.org>

National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention

The Center provides technical assistance and training to schools and communities about the importance of mental health promotion and violence prevention. The web site includes evaluation and cultural competence toolkits.

Direct Link:
<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/SuicidePrevention>

National Strategy for Suicide Prevention

This SAMHSA web site contains resources and facts regarding suicide prevention.

Other Resources

Direct Link:
<http://bazelon.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=B06EN2VmTWM%3D&tabid=247>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=45832>

Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law. (2004). *Facts on transitional services for youth with mental illnesses*. Washington, DC: Author.

This document provides facts on mental health services for youth transitioning to adulthood. Information regarding prevalence, unmet needs, effective services, barriers, and recommendations are provided.

Direct Link:
http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/culture_and_trauma_brief_v2n1_HomelessYouth.pdf

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32678>

National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (2007). *Culture and trauma brief: Trauma among homeless youth. Culture and Trauma Brief, 2(1)*.

This brief explores trauma among youth who experience homelessness and variation in needs and experiences.

Direct Link:
<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/oup/btcint/2006/00000006/00000003/art00206>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33051>

Thompson, S. J., McManus, H., & Voss, T. (2006). *Posttraumatic stress disorder and substance abuse among youth who are homeless: Treatment issues and implications. Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention, 6(3), 206-217. (fee)*

This article addresses the co-occurrence of post-traumatic stress and substance use disorders among youth who experience homelessness. It discusses two treatment methods tailored to the needs of youth living on the street.



Direct Link:
<http://www.jstor.org/pss/1132391>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=24651>

**Whitbeck L.B., Hoyt D.R., Bao W.N. (2000).
Depressive symptoms and co-occurring
depressive symptoms, substance abuse,
and conduct problems among runaway and
homeless adolescents. *Child Development*,
71(3), 721-32. (fee)**

This study explores the mental health (depressive symptoms and co-occurring depressions), conduct problems and substance abuse patterns of adolescents who are runaways or experiencing homelessness.



Youth Transitioning from Foster Care and Homelessness

One pathway into homelessness is “aging out” of foster and custodial care environments. Estimates range between 21 and 53 percent of all youth who experience homelessness report having been placed in a foster care or institutional care setting (Toro & Goldstein, 2000).

When youth “age out” of foster care (18 or 21 years of age, depending on state laws), they are generally expected to have the skills and financial wherewithal to live independently and support themselves in an autonomous “adult” lifestyle. This expectation is often far from reality. Studies have demonstrated that more than a quarter of youth who have experience with homelessness and state programs report spending their first night out of state care in a shelter or on the streets (Toro, Dworsky, & Fowler, 2007).

Twenty-five percent of youth who age out of foster care experience homelessness (Cook, Fleischman, & Grimes, 1991) and researchers consistently identify links between involvement in foster care and adult homelessness (Ammerman et al., 2004; Farber, 2005). A metropolitan Detroit area study identified an alarming trend among young people who aged out of the foster care system over a two-year period. Of the youth surveyed, 17 percent experienced literal homelessness during the follow-up period of the research. This is in contrast to a comparative population of U.S. adults who have a five-year prevalence of literal homelessness at just 2 percent (Tompsett et al., 2006). This “literal” homelessness status as described by the researchers was associated

with much higher rates of high-risk behaviors, psychological distress, and substance abuse—when compared to continuously housed youth.

In addition, the data suggests that individuals who have foster care history and experience homelessness tend to become homeless at an earlier age when compared to those never engaged in foster care. Various explanations may account for this pattern: foster care often does not address the problems that caused youth to be removed from their homes; youth transitioning out of foster care often lack life skills to make it on their own; and youth who age out of foster care often lack social support to guide them through difficult times (Roman & Wolfe, 1995).

Providers working with youth experiencing homelessness must understand the role that foster care plays in life skills development and housing stability. Programs should consider tailoring their work to meet the unique challenges faced by youth who experience homelessness and who have “aged out” of the foster care system by collaborating with state and local foster care programs and agencies.



Web Sites

Direct Link: **National Foster Care Coalition**
<http://www.nationalfostercare.org> This is a collaboration of organizations and individuals working towards improving the lives of children and adolescents in foster care by building stronger communities.

Direct Link: **Foster Care Central**
<http://www.fostercarecentral.org> Foster Care Central is a social network for foster agencies and parents, social workers, and volunteers concerned with improving the well being of adopted and foster care involved children.



Other Resources

Direct Link:
http://www.naehcy.org/dl/mv_afcp.pdf

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=45837>

Julianelle, P. (2008). *The McKinney-Vento Act and children and youth awaiting foster care placement*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

This report explores eight jurisdictions and how they have implemented the McKinney-Vento Act for youth. Strategies for building and maintaining effective collaborations are presented.

Direct Link:
<http://www.joe.org/joe/2008august/iw3.php>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=45835>

Baugh, E.L. (2008). A population at risk: Youth “aging out” of the foster care system and implications for extension. *Journal of Extension, 46*(4).

This article examines risk factors found in youth aging out of foster care, as well as suggestions for an extension program to meet the needs of this population.

Direct Link:
http://homewardva.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/best-conf/2007/Nixon_Dobbins_foster_care_homeless_youth.pdf

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33052>

Casey Family Programs National Center for Resource Family Support. (2001). *Foster care and homeless youth*. Washington, DC: Author.

This resource provides a brief overview of youth who are homeless or throwaways who experienced foster care and an extensive reference list for further review.



High-Risk Behaviors and Victimization

Youth on the streets may engage in high-risk behaviors for various reasons, trading sex for protection and food (also known as survival sex), or engaging in illegal activities to obtain money, food or shelter (Van Leeuwen et al., 2005). Because youth who experience homelessness lack financial resources, they may engage in risky or illegal activities to survive.

These “survival activities” put youth who are homeless at much higher risks for criminalization and repeated incarcerations. The cycle of incarceration and repeated victimization seems to be strongly linked to under diagnosed and poorly managed psychiatric disorders. One study of 1,800 arrested and detained youth found that nearly two thirds of the males surveyed and three-quarters of the females interviewed met diagnostic criteria for

one or more psychiatric disorders (Teplin et al., 2002). Additionally, for many youth who experience homelessness, drugs and alcohol are mechanisms to help cope with the stress of living on the streets.

Comprehensive services for youth experiencing homelessness must include mental health services, substance abuse treatment, and social supports that can help reduce high-risk behaviors.



Web Sites

Direct Link: <http://teens.drugabuse.gov> **National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) for Teens**

NIDA for Teens provides information for adolescents ages 11 through 15 about the science behind drug abuse. The site includes brain games, facts, and real stories.

Direct Link: <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org> **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)**

OJJDP supports states and local communities in developing and implementing effective programs for adolescents in the juvenile justice system. Their web site hosts a variety of topics, statistics, and publications.



Other Resources

Direct Link:
<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/ric/Publications/e12051223.pdf>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32680>

Dedel, K. (2006). *Juvenile runaways: Problem specific guide series no. 37.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

This paper outlines the issue of juvenile runaways and how to respond locally.

Direct Link:
<http://www.ajph.org/cgi/reprint/89/9/1406>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=21896>

Greene, J.M., Ennett, S.T., & Ringwalt, C.L. (1999). Prevalence and correlates of survival sex among runaway and homeless youth. *American Journal of Public Health, 89*(9), 1406-1409.

This study examines the prevalence of survival sex among youth who are homeless and runaways through interviews with youth living in shelters and on the streets.

Direct Link:
<http://www.springerlink.com/content/p22514311u131q41>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=46578>

Van Leeuwen, J., Mendelson, B., Hopfer, C., Kelly, S., Green, J., & Petersen, J. (2005). Substance use and corresponding risk factors among homeless and runaway youth in Denver, Colorado. *Journal of Community Health, 29*(3), 217-229. (fee)

This study discusses a one-day survey conducted in Denver, Colorado that measured rates of substance use and HIV risk behaviors among youth who experience homelessness.

Homelessness Among Sexual and Gender Minority Youth

Youth who identify as sexual and gender minorities (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning—or LGBTQ) comprise an estimated 10 percent of the general youth population (Dempsey, 2004). Among youth who experience homelessness, however, studies have estimated sexual and gender minority prevalence as high as 35 percent (Kruks, 1991; Tenner et al., 1998; Whitbeck et al., 2004).

The research may show high numbers, but equally important for service providers to understand are the social isolation and persecution LGBTQ youth face in navigating their way through the experience of homelessness.

Data from the National Alliance to End Homelessness (Incidence and Vulnerability of LGBTQ Homeless Youth, 2008) identified the following concerns for sexual and gender minority youth who experience homelessness:

25 percent of LGB identified youth who experience homelessness report family rejection as the primary cause of their homelessness.

LGB identified youth who experience homelessness are also more likely to attempt suicide (62 percent) than their heterosexual peers who are homeless (29 percent).

LGB identified youth who experience homelessness are more likely than heterosexual identified youth who experience homelessness to engage in the sex trade to meet their basic needs.

LGBTQ identified youth who experience homelessness are disproportionately people of color, particularly African American and American Indian, and are more likely to be from poor or working-class families.

Perhaps the first step for agencies providing services to youth experiencing homelessness is to understand the complexity of sexual and gender minority youth. The National Center for Cultural Competence defines “LGBTQ” as follows (Poirier, Francis, Fisher, et al, 2008):

Lesbian: Females who are emotionally and sexually attracted to, and may partner with, females only.

Gay: Males who are emotionally and sexually attracted to, and may partner with, males only. “Gay” is also an overarching term used to refer to a broad array of sexual orientation identities other than heterosexual.

Bisexual: Individuals who are emotionally and sexually attracted to, and may partner with, someone of the same gender or the opposite gender.

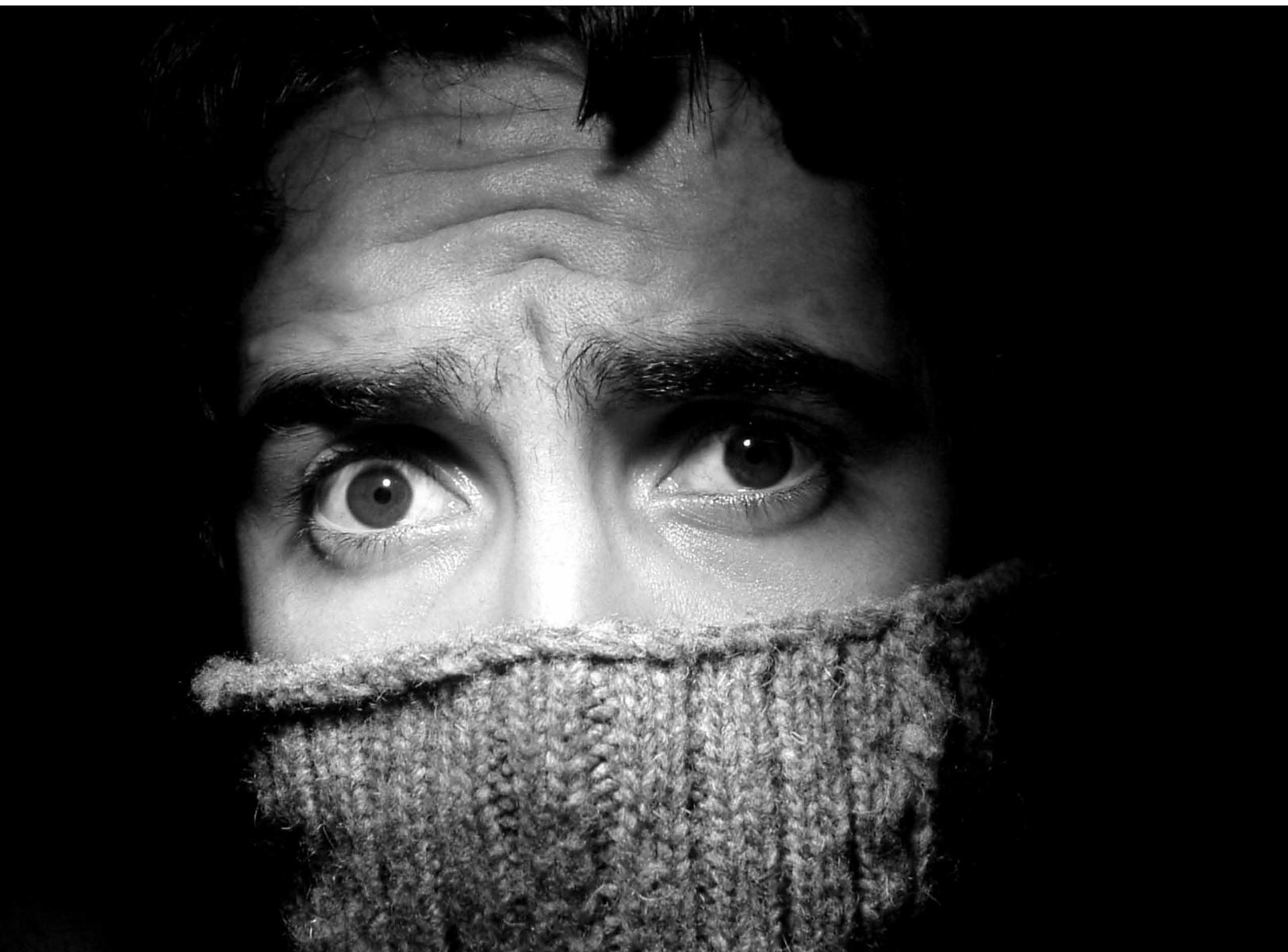


Transgender: Individuals who express a gender identity different from their birth-assigned gender.

Questioning: Individuals who are uncertain about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

LGBTQ youth often leave home as a result of their sexual or gender orientation, or are forced out because of a poor understanding of the youth's sexuality on the part of family members. One third of LGBTQ youth who experience homelessness describe having experienced violent physical assault when they "came out" (Thompson, Safyer, & Pollio, 2001). LGBTQ youth who experience homelessness also report experiencing sexual violence at a rate 7.4 times higher than that of their heterosexual peer group (Cochran et al., 2002). In addition, LGBTQ youth who are homeless have twice the rates of sexual abuse and sexual victimization when compared to heterosexual peers who experience homelessness (Rew et al.,

2005). Even more alarming is the degree of sexual exploitation and violence faced by transgender youth who experience homelessness. Transgender youth who are homeless often describe a chronic history of early family separation and social isolation. This family disruption often leads to early homelessness and unemployment – forcing transgender youth into sex work and very high-risk behaviors (Crossroads, National Youth Advocacy Coalition).



Web Sites

Direct Link: <http://www.glsen.org> **Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)**

GLSEN works in educational settings for acceptance and respect for all sexual orientations and gender identities.

Direct Link: <http://www.thetaskforce.org> **National Gay and Lesbian Task Force**
The Task Force's mission is to raise awareness through grassroots efforts.

Direct Link: <http://www.nclrights.org> **National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR)**
NCLR is a non-profit, public interest law firm whose mission is to advance the civil and human rights of people who identify as sexual or gender minorities.

Direct Link: <http://www.pflag.org> **Parents, Families, & Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG)**
PFLAG supports tolerance, safety, health, and diversity within the LGBT community and aims to educate the community at large.



Other Resources

Direct Link:
<http://www11.georgetown.edu/research/gucchd/nccc/documents/lgbtqi2s.pdf>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33054>

Poirier, J. M., Francis, K. B., Fisher, S. K., Williams-Washington, K., Goode, T. D., & Jackson, V. H. (2008). *Practice brief 1: Providing services and supports for youth who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersex, or two-spirit*. Washington, DC: National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development.

This brief outlines the needs of and systems level approaches for assisting and supporting youth who identify as LGBTQI2-S.

Direct Link:
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2141/>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=46579>

National Alliance to End Homelessness (2008). *Incidence and Vulnerability of LGBTQ Homeless Youth*. Washington, DC: Authors.

This report addresses the incidence of homelessness and homelessness risks among youth who identify as LGBTQ.

Direct Link:
<http://www.nyacyouth.org/docs/uploads/Recommended-Best-Practices-for-LGBT-Homeless-Youth-040909.pdf>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=37791>

National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), Lambda Legal, the National Network for Youth, & the National Center for Lesbian Rights. (2009). *National recommended best practices for serving LGBT homeless youth*. Washington, DC: Authors.

This policy brief provides information about homelessness among youth who identify as LBGT and makes recommendations for serving this population. Additional resources are available on the NAEH web site's youth page.

Direct Link:
<http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/reports/TransitioningOurShelters.pdf>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=22601>

Mottet, L. & Ohle, J. M. (2003). *Transitioning our shelters: A guide to making homeless shelters safe for transgender people.* Washington, DC: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute, National Coalition for the Homeless.

This guide examines the importance of making shelters accepting and safe for people who are transgendered. It discusses legal and health issues and policy initiatives.

Direct Link:
http://www.thetaskforce.org/reports_and_research/homeless_youth

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=32663>

Ray, N. (2006). *Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth: An epidemic of homelessness.* Washington, DC: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute and National Coalition for the Homeless.

This report discusses the prevalence of homelessness among youth who identify as LGBT and profiles several organizations that work specifically with this population.

Direct Link:
<http://psycnet.apa.org/?fa=main.doiLanding&uid=1994-29239-001>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=46580>

Dempsey, C. (1994). *Health and Social Issues of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Adolescents. Families in Society, 75(3), 160-167. (fee)*

This study examines social and health issues facing adolescents who identify as LGB.



Direct Link:
<http://www.ajph.org/cgi/reprint/92/5/773>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=19539>

Cochran, B., Stewart, B., Ginzler, J. & Cauce, A. (2002). Challenges faced by homeless sexual minorities: Comparison of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender homeless adolescents with their heterosexual counterparts. *American Journal of Public Health, 92*(5), 773-777.

This study compares the physical and mental health of youth who identify as LGBT and experience homelessness with youth who identify as heterosexual and experience homelessness.

Direct Link:
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11769208>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=24444>

Rew, L., Tayler-Seehafer, M. & Fitzgerald, M. (2001). Sexual abuse, alcohol and other drug use, and suicidal behaviors in homeless adolescents. *Issues in Contemporary Pediatric Nursing, 24*, 225-240. (fee)

This study compares the rates of sexual abuse, alcohol abuse, drug use, and suicidal behaviors in male and female youth of different ethnicities experiencing homelessness.

Direct Link:
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15673425>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33001>

Rew, L., Whittaker, T., Taylor-Seehafer, M. & Smith, L. 2005. Sexual health risks and protective resources in gay, lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual homeless youth. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing, 10*(1), 11-20. (fee)

This study compares the sexual health risks and protective resources of gay, lesbian, and bisexual (GLB) adolescents who are homeless with heterosexual adolescents. The authors address contrasts between these GLB and heterosexual youth, as well as differences within the GLB group.



Health Care Issues

Youth who are homeless experience alarmingly disproportionate levels of physical and psychological health problems due to housing instability and high-risk behaviors (Feldman & Middleman, 2003). The lack of early intervention, preventive care, and health insurance make them more susceptible than their housed peers to a multitude of illnesses poor health outcomes. High-risk behaviors also place them at greater risk for complications from simple infections and other health concerns.

Many studies have demonstrated that youth who are homeless engage in higher risk sexual behaviors including multiple partners, survival sex and sex work/prostitution. Research shows that 40 percent of youth who are homeless report having had a sexually transmitted infection (Sherman, 1992). Only 8 percent of their housed peers report “ever having a sexually transmitted infection.” Equally disturbing are the high rates of injection drug use, with study rates varying from 15.1 percent to as high as 33.8 percent among youth who are homeless (Greene et al., 1997). Additionally, 81 percent of street youth reported smoking tobacco in the last 30-days, compared to 47 percent in a housed matched peer group (Kipke et al., 1997). Finally, youth who are homeless are 5 times more likely to have been beaten and at much higher risk to experience a violent threat against their lives (Ensign & Satelli, 1998).

Collectively and individually, these behaviors put youth who are homeless at much higher risks for dermatological, gastrointestinal, and respiratory tract

infections, and communicable diseases like HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. In addition, youth who are homeless are all too often unable to get the treatment and medication they need, and face rapid decompensation from treatable conditions.

The culture and social practices of youth who experience homelessness can act as barriers to seeking health care services. Other barriers are associated with systems of care, including lack of transportation to access services, lack of appropriate facilities for youth who are homeless to receive services, and lack of personal knowledge and advocacy for engaging care. Studies have demonstrated that some youth who are homeless find it difficult to trust doctors and medical providers for fear that they will be judged or that police and social services will become involved (Farrow, et al., 1992). Removing the barriers for these youth to access care is a complex formula of engaging trust, modifying points of entry into care engagement, and training providers and staff in the cultural competencies of youth who are homeless and underserved.



Developing and maintaining low barrier services is essential for adolescents who are homeless. This “variable approach model” recognizes that youth are at different stages of readiness for change, and concentrates engagement and service delivery on relationship building. The model acknowledges that small steps are necessary to move youth toward healthier living decisions and self-care models. A “variable approach model” is optimal in the long run as it builds on lasting, trusting relationships between the provider, the program and the youth.



Web Sites

Direct Link to Health Care for the Homeless Council:
<http://www.nhchc.org>

Direct Link to Healing Kids:
<http://www.nhchc.org/healingkidsnewsletters.html>

Direct Link to page on Children and Youth:
<http://www.nhchc.org/pediatrics.html>

Direct Link:
<http://www.outsidein.org>

National Health Care for the Homeless Council

The National Health Care for the Homeless Council has many resources on youth, including an online newsletter called “Healing Kids,” and a page with resources on youth and health care.

Outside In, Portland Oregon

Outside In provides an array of innovative services to youth experiencing homelessness. They have several services designed to reach the large number of youth who are homeless and not receiving health care. Along with traditional medical services for youth who are homeless, they use peer outreach workers and provide alternative health services such as acupuncture and tattoo removal.



Other Resources

Direct Link:
<http://policy.ucsf.edu/pubpdfs/HomelessBrief.pdf>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=45840>

Halley, M. & English, A. (2008). *Health care for homeless youth: Policy options for improving access*. Chapel Hill, NC: Center for Adolescent Health & the Law.

This brief provides an overview of financial barriers, consent, and confidentiality barriers youth face in health care. It also includes policy recommendations for youth and health care.

Direct Link:
<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?tool=pubmed&pubmedid=15230923>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33373>

Ensign, J. (2004). *Quality of health care: The views of homeless youth. Health Services Research, 39*(4, Pt. 1), 695–708.

This report describes a study intended to develop process and outcome measures for quality of health care for youth who are homeless. Areas that were identified as important to youth were the cultural and interpersonal aspects of quality of care; health care sites that were separate from those for adults who are homeless; and a choice of allopathic and/or complementary medicine.

Direct Link:
<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1403674>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=46581>

Sherman, D.J. (1992). *The neglected health care needs of street youth. Public Health Rep. 107*, 433–440.

This study compares street youth and adolescents in the general population on the following factors: overall health status, sex-related medical problems, mental health, and substance abuse.

Direct Link:
<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1380799>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=36488>

Greene, J.M. Ennett S.T., & Ringwalt, C.L. (1997). Substance use among runaway and homeless youth in three national samples. *American Journal of Public Health, 87*(2), 229–235.

This study explores the substance abuse of youth who have experienced running away and homelessness between the ages of 12 and 21, and compares these findings with the prevalence of substance abuse in the general youth population.

Direct Link:
<http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/152/1/20>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=46582>

Ensign, J. & Santelli, J. (1998). Health status and service use: Comparison of adolescents at a school-based health clinic with homeless adolescents. *Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine, 152*(1), 20–24.

This study compares shelter-based adolescents and housed adolescents in a large U.S. city on the following factors: health status, risk-taking behaviors, and access-to-care.

Direct Link:
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?db=pubmed&uid=9220564&cmd=showdetailview&indexed=google>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=35352>

Kipke, M.D., Montgomery, S.B., Simon, R.R., & Iverson, E.F. (1997). Substance abuse disorders among runaway and homeless youth. *Substance Use and Misuse, 32*, 965–982. (fee)

This study explores the connection between the length of time a youth experiences homelessness and the probability of an abuse disorder.



Housing Instability

Regardless of how they became homeless, youth are burdened by a lack of access to stable, affordable housing. The families of youth who have experienced homelessness are often victims of residential instability; with far more reported moves than their housed peers (Cause et al., 2000; Toro & Goldstein, 2000). Without a clear pattern of housing stability in their lives, youth who are homeless may have difficulty breaking the cycle of repeated housing instability.

In addition, youth experiencing homelessness often lack the financial resources to afford housing, and may also lack the support of parents or guardians who may be needed for co-signing contracts or offering practical advice about budgeting.

Housing is a legal issue for underage youth who are not permitted to sign contractual documents without a parent or guardian. This may prevent youth who are homeless with limited finances from securing stable housing options. A pattern

of poor financial modeling from their families and a lack of responsible credit history, makes it very difficult for youth who are homeless to leverage a new experience or gain suitable housing options. A key strategy toward helping break the cycle of homelessness among youth is the development of effective models to educate and mentor youth and young adults in patterns of housing stability.



Web Sites

Direct Link to HUD:
<http://www.hud.gov>

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD is an agency of the Federal government whose mission is to support community development and increase the availability of affordable housing.

Direct Link:
<http://www2.ncfy.com/locate/index.htm>

Administration of Children and Families: Locate a Family and Youth Services Bureau Program

This web site can be used to locate programs that receive funding from the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

Other Resources

Direct Link:

<http://www.csh.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageID=3332#elig>

PATH Record:

<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=45952>

Corporation for Supportive Housing. (n.d.). *Guide to financing supportive housing: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Transitional Living Program for Older Homeless Youth (TLP)*. Washington, DC: Author.

This web-based guide describes the Transitional Youth Program for Older Homeless Youth, a program that provides shelter, skills training, and support services for youth who are homeless between the ages of 16-21.

Direct Link:

http://www.endhomelessness.org/files/2217_file_Youth_Homelessness_Prevention_and_Rehousing.pdf

PATH Record:

<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=45842>

National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2009). *New funding for homeless youth services and housing*. Washington, DC: Author.

This brief examines new funding for programs in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that address homelessness among youth, steps for local organizations that serve youth who are homeless, ideas and model programs, and other Federal appropriations benefiting youth who are homeless.

Direct Link:

http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all?content=10.1207/s15374424jccp2703_7

PATH Record:

<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=34015>

McCaskill, P. A., Toro, P. A., & Wolfe, S. M. (1998). *Homeless and matched housed adolescents: A comparative study of psychopathology*. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 27*, 306-319.

This study compares adolescents who are homeless and housed adolescents (ages 12-17) on risk and resilience factors, including disruptive behavior, alcohol abuse, drug abuse, and incidence of affective and psychotic disorders.

Academic and Employment Challenges

Academic achievement is often viewed as a critical pathway out of poverty and economic instability. For many youth and young adults, school and academic experiences are compulsory and reflect the social and economic norms of their families of origin. For youth experiencing homelessness, the lack of academic role models in their lives makes it difficult to appreciate the importance of educational attainment.

With a lack of housing stability and a disproportionate degree of learning disabilities (Barwick & Siegel, 1996), youth experiencing homelessness repeatedly report difficulty with academic challenges and structured learning programs. Research indicates that between 25 and 35 percent of youth who are homeless report repeating an academic grade (Clark & Robertson, 1996), and many report a cyclical history of suspension or expulsion from school environments (Toro & Goldstein, 2000). Breaking the cycle of poor academic performance, school-based behavioral concerns and poor scholastic development must involve a broad approach to care coordination with an emphasis on keeping youth who are homeless in learning environments.

Much of the national work on youth rights to date relates to education. Youth who experience homelessness have the right to choose their school. If they live in a shelter, they can still attend the school in the district of their prior address or residence. Youth have the right to request fee waivers for items such as books, uniforms, and extracurricular activity involvement. They also have the right to free lunch

programs and transportation adjustments that allow for longitudinal stability in learning experiences.

Similar to educational challenges, employment is not easy for youth experiencing homelessness. Lack of job skills and employment histories, along with poor academic records, present significant challenges for youth who are homeless seeking “living wage” job opportunities. Those who find work are often only qualified for entry-level, low-paying positions that may be seasonal or temporary. These transient jobs often do not provide health insurance, employment stability or enough money to afford quality housing. Even with these jobs, young people can remain trapped in a life of poverty and be at great risk for homelessness in adulthood.

Programs working with youth who are homeless can develop community partnerships and collaborations to address the complex employment and educational needs. Through comprehensive care delivery and advocacy, the barriers that ensnare youth in poverty and homelessness can be overcome.



Education Resources

Web Sites

Direct Link:
<http://www.naehcy.org>

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)

NAEHCY acts as an advocate for children and youth who experience homelessness and ensures that they have equal opportunities to education.

Direct Link:
<http://www.serve.org/nche>

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)

NCHE provides information and resources to help communities address the educational needs of children and youth who are homeless.

Direct Link:
<http://www.ed.gov>

U.S. Department of Education

Direct Link to Section on Homelessness:
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/legislation.html>

The U.S. Department of Education's main goal is to promote and support students' achievement in academic settings. The web site provides useful information and links for students, parents, teachers, and administrators. There is even a section specific to the rules and legislation regarding homelessness.

Other Resources

Direct Link:
<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/homeless.pdf>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=45846>

U.S. Department of Education. (2009). *Guidance on McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Youth Program funds made available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.* Washington, DC: Author.

This resource provides information on activities that the McKinney-Vento Children and Youth Act funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Direct Link:
<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/education.html>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=22701>

National Coalition for the Homeless. (2008). *Education of homeless children and youth NCH fact sheet #10.* Washington, DC: Author.

This fact sheet provides an extensive overview of barriers and issues faced by youth who experience homelessness in public school. A list of resources for further exploration is also provided.

Direct Link:
[http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/Basic%20McKinney%20Booklet%20\(2007\)1.pdf](http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/Basic%20McKinney%20Booklet%20(2007)1.pdf)

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33063>

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. (2007). *Educating homeless children and youth: The guide to their rights.* Washington, DC: Author.

This booklet explains that even with the enactment of McKinney-Vento, there is a lot that needs to be done to assist youth who experience homelessness within the school system. It answers questions about resources, enrollment, special services, privacy, and disputes.

Direct Link:
http://eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=EJ534650&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=EJ534650

PATH Record:
<http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=35264>

Barwick, M. A., & Siegel, L. S. (1996). *Learning difficulties in adolescent clients of a shelter for runaway and homeless street youths. Journal of Research on Adolescence, 6, 649-670. (fee)*

This study examined prevalence of arithmetic and reading difficulties in adolescents at a homeless/runaway shelter.



Employment Resources

Web Sites

Direct Link: **Youth Employment Systems (YES)**
<http://www.yesweb.org> YES is a global initiative working to alleviate the high levels of youth unemployment through building youth leadership skills and partnering with organizations to find ways to utilize the skills youth have to offer.

Direct Link: **U.S. Department of Labor: Youth & Labor**
<http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/youthlabor> This page of the U.S. Department of Labor site outlines the rules and regulations for employing youth.

Legal Rights and Protections

The complex array of legal rights and protections related to un-emancipated youth can be overwhelming. Laws and statutes differ by state and jurisdiction. For many youth experiencing homelessness, their low academic achievement and lack of previous experience with personal advocacy make it very difficult for them to navigate their way through the complex structures of the law.

It is important for youth who experience homelessness to understand what rights they are entitled to and how to go about ensuring and protecting these rights. They also need to know where they can turn for assistance and advocacy when they feel they've been treated unfairly. Youth rights and laws are an important framework to

protect the autonomy and prevent the chronic cycle of adult homelessness that many homeless youth are extraordinary vulnerable to. Homeless youth programs can seek assistance from protective services, legal aid, and other local resources for issues related to youth homelessness and the law.

Web Sites

Direct Link:
<http://www.nlchp.org>

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (NLCHP)

NLCHP is a national legal advocacy organization that works toward ending and preventing homelessness. Lawyers work as advocates in courtrooms and writing legislation.

Direct Link:
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/outofhome/independent/examples.cfm>

Child Welfare Information Gateway: Outcomes for Emancipated Youth

This web site has links to reports on the outcomes of emancipation for different populations of youth.

Direct Link:
<http://www.ylc.org>

Youth Law Center

The Youth Law Center focuses exclusively on protecting the rights of children who are in the foster care and juvenile justice systems. Topic areas include education, medical and mental health, legal support, and transition services.

Other Resources

Direct Link:
<http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/SSI%20Rights%20Children%20and%20Youth2.pdf>

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=22202>

Direct Link:
http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/youthposter_eng_color.pdf

PATH Record:
<http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/Resource/View.aspx?id=33062>

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. (2003). *SSI: The rights of homeless children and youth*. Washington, DC: Author.

This fact sheet provides information on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and eligibility for youth who experience homelessness. It explains how to apply and the stipulations for receiving this benefit.

National Center for Homeless Education. (n.d.). *Information for school-aged youth*. Greensboro, NC: National Center for Homeless Education.

This flyer provides facts about the rights and protections of youth who experience homelessness.



WHAT IS PATH?

The PATH program—or Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness—was authorized by the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments Act of 1990. PATH funds community-based outreach, mental health and substance use services, case management, and limited housing services for people experiencing serious mental illnesses—including those with co-occurring substance use disorders—who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of becoming homeless.

PATH funds stimulate State & local contributions

PATH funds are worth more than their face value because they are matched with state and local resources. For every \$3 in Federal funds, State or local agencies must put forward \$1 in cash or in-kind services. At a minimum, a \$52 million Federal allocation would result in a \$17 million match. In some States PATH funds and the State and local match are the only resources specifically for serving people experiencing homelessness and mental illnesses.

PATH providers deliver innovative services

PATH providers work with service delivery systems and embrace practices that work. These include:

- Partnering with housing first and permanent supportive housing programs
- Providing flexible consumer-directed and recovery-oriented services to meet consumers where they are in their recovery
- Employing consumers or providing consumer-run programs
- Partnering with health care providers, including Health Care for the Homeless to integrate mental health and medical services
- Assertively improving access to employment
- Improving access to benefits, especially through SSI/SSDI Outreach, Advocacy, and Recovery (SOAR)
- Using technology such as PDAs, electronic records, and HMIS



PATH providers are strong community partners

PATH providers and State PATH Contacts are involved in local and regional planning efforts to end homelessness, including Continuums of Care, 10-Year Plans to End Homelessness, and other planning efforts. PATH providers and State PATH Contacts work to ensure that services are coordinated and available to people experiencing homelessness.

For more information about PATH, please visit <http://pathprogram.samhsa.gov/>



Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

SAMHSA

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