
Influence of Domestic Violence on The Ongoing Struggle of Homelessness

Introduction

1. Hook: According to the U.S. Conference of Mayors 2013 Status Report on Hunger & Homelessness, 16% of homeless persons are victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, approximately half of all homeless women reported that domestic violence was the primary cause of their homelessness (domesticshelters.org)
2. Relevance: Domestic violence puts women and children at a higher risk of homelessness as many are forced to flee an abusive relationship or situation. These women suffer from a lack of resources such as insufficient income and limited aid from friends, family, or community shelters. These challenges place women in vulnerable situations that lead many to return to their abuser or another abusive partner (NCJRS.gov)
3. Thesis: Domestic violence thus perpetuates the ongoing struggle of homelessness.
4. Preview: I will present multiple prominent factors as to why that is. First, I will discuss how children exposed to violence and abuse are at significantly higher risk of becoming involved in abusive relationships as adults. Secondly, I will explain how poverty and domestic violence are linked together which contribute to an ongoing cycle of homelessness.

Body

1. Childhood violence increases the risk of adult victimization.
 1. A. Violence experienced as a child contributes to several factors that increase the likelihood of homelessness.
 1. Journal of American Medical Women's Association reports that 84% of homeless women have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives (domesticshelters.org)
 2. Children associated with violence are more likely to suffer from depression, low self-esteem, experiment with drugs or alcohol, and be at higher risk of divorce or separation by the time they reach adulthood (NCJRS.gov)
 3. According to a study of 800 women experiencing homelessness in the state of Florida, it is not surprising that almost one third of women interviewed reported leaving a childhood home due to violence. These victimized children are much more likely to become involved with abusive partners as they seek shelter and safety (NCJRS.gov)
 2. B. Themes of domestic violence are often carried into adulthood.
 1. According to the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness, roughly 80% of homeless mothers with children have previously experienced domestic violence (ICPHUSA.org)
 2. Research from a 1997 study by Browne and Bassuk reports that "92% of homeless women have experienced severe physical or sexual abuse at

some point in their lives”. Furthermore, it was also indicated that “63% of those homeless women have been victims of domestic violence as adults” (WSCADV.org)

3. Unfortunately, these women often have an altered sense of what is normal and acceptable treatment in relationships. Their negative childhood experiences make them susceptible to psychological trauma and drug dependency later on in life.
 4. These women often become targets for abusive and manipulative partners, since they often have very little perception of what comprises a healthy relationship.
3. C. Women are in danger of repeating the cycle of abuse.
 1. Abusers use manipulation tactics such as gaslighting, threats, and criticism that are meant to control and isolate the victim. This, unfortunately, creates self-doubt and an altered sense of reality
 2. As victimized women often become dependent on abusive men, they rarely have the resources to flee from violence and abuse. When they do seek help from outside sources, it is common for those women to eventually return to their abusive partners upon reconciliation (NCJRS.gov)
 3. Victimized women rarely report abuse to authorities and even when they do, legal action is rarely an outcome because violence is difficult to prove as it most often takes place within the home (NCJRS.gov)
 4. D. Transition: Not only does childhood trauma create risk factors for homelessness, but it puts women at greater risk of poverty as an adult.
2. Poverty limits women’s choices and makes it harder to escape an abusive relationship.
 1. A. Women of domestic violence are in a vulnerable position.
 1. Lack of affordable housing makes it difficult for women to flee from abuse. Many choose to stay in or return to violent relationships. An ACLU Women’s Rights Project found that in 2003, in Minnesota alone, it was reported that 44% of homeless women previously stayed in abusive relationships because they had nowhere else to go (ACLU.org)
 2. They also reported that women living in rental housing experience abuse at 3 times the rate of women who own homes (ACLU.org). This statistic is further intensified if those women are living in poor neighborhoods and are economically struggling (NCJRS.gov)
 3. Women who are victims of domestic violence often have trouble gaining access to money nor do they have family or friends present who could possibly assist them. This leads us into another aspect of domestic violence where abused women are forced from housing as a result of violence.
 2. B. Landlords fail to provide a safe and secure environment.
 1. Some landlords follow a strict zero-tolerance for violence policy. Landlords can evict both parties if violence is reported, creating further damage for the victim (ACLU.org)
 2. According to research by the U.S. Department of Justice, women who experienced domestic violence recently are significantly at risk of being evicted from their buildings (ACLU.org)
 3. A survey from the fair housing group in New York City reported that in 2005, “28 percent of housing providers refused to rent to a domestic

-
- violence victim" (ACLU.org)
4. Not only does this perpetuate the cycle of abuse, but it further victimizes the woman potentially forcing her to move back in with her abuser.
3. C. Homeless centers struggle to provide support for victims.
 1. Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence reports that federal funding of homeless shelters is limited due to lack of space and resources. Immediate victims of violence are given first priority as opposed to women who have been homeless for an extended period of time (WSCADV.org)
 2. According to the same website, survivors said that housing was one of the most beneficial resources for them in terms of escaping violence.

Conclusion

1. Overall, there are many factors as to why domestic violence continues to be an increasing cause of homelessness.
2. There is a strong connection between children who have been exposed to violence that has not fully been explored by researchers yet. The emotional impact it has on developing brains leads to many unhealthy situations and behaviors when those children reach adulthood, especially if there is no intervention. As you can conclude, it is very easy, and in some cases inevitable, for a person to get stuck in a cycle of abuse throughout their lifetime.
3. Outsiders can be quick to stereotype women who are engaged in abusive relationships, but the reality is it is extremely difficult to escape from that lifestyle as there are many external factors playing a role.
4. It is important to note that domestic violence has many different forms and no community is immune to it, which highlights an even deeper message as to why it is important to not judge or make assumptions about the people you interact with, as you have no idea what personal struggles they might be facing.

Works Cited

1. 'Domestic Violence and Homelessness.' ACLU Women's Rights Project, www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/dvhomelessness032106.pdf. Accessed 20 Feb. 2020.
2. 'Homelessness and Domestic Violence.' Domestic Shelters, Theresa's Fund, 7 Jan. 2015, www.domesticshelters.org/resources/statistics/homelessness-and-domestic-violence. Accessed 20 Feb. 2020.
3. 'Housing and Sexual Violence.' National Sexual Violence Resource Center, Jan. 2010, www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/Publications_NSVRC_Reports_Housing-and-sexual-violence-overview-of-national-survey.pdf.
4. 'The Intimate Relationship between Domestic Violence and Homelessness.' Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness, 27 Oct. 2018, www.icphusa.org/blog/the-intimate-relationship-between-domestic-violence-and-homelessness-2/. Accessed 20 Feb. 2020.
5. Jasinski, Jana L., et al. The Experience of Violence in the Lives of Homeless Women. Research report no. 211976. National Criminal Justice Reference Service, www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/211976.pdf. Accessed 20 Feb. 2020.
6. Lawrence, Sharmila. Domestic Violence and Welfare Policy Research Findings That

Can Inform Policies on Marriage and Child Well-Being. Mailman School of Public Health Columbia University, Dec. 2002. National Center for Children in Poverty, www.nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_604.pdf. Accessed 20 Feb. 2020.

7. Olsen, Linda, et al. The Intersection of Domestic Violence and Homelessness. Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, June 2013. WSCADV, wscadv.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/IntersectionPaperDVHF.pdf. Accessed 20 Feb. 2020.
8. U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. When Violence Hits Home: How Economics and Neighborhood Play a Role. Washington D.C, U.S. Department of Justice, Sept. 2004. National Criminal Justice Reference Service, www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/205004.pdf. Accessed 20 Feb. 2020.

edubirdie.com