

Why Are There So Many People Without Homes and What Can We Do About It?

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ABSTRACT

Background: There are way too many people without homes, and children are the most vulnerable to this. There are many factors that contribute to people becoming unhoused. The effects that being homeless has on people are hard to even describe or comprehend. The fortunate thing is that there are many valuable solutions to this whole problem that have been proposed.

Objective: This study is about why there are so many people without homes and what the consequences of that are. All of research has been done on this. Once that is all explained, the most important part is explained. There are many solutions that are proposed, and explained. Their effectiveness will be mentioned as well.

Design and Method: The research method was primarily the use of peer-reviewed articles, and some websites. The research that was made is qualitative and includes articles that have all been published within the past 18 years. Most have been published within the past decade. People without homes were studied to help people understand why it is so important to care about those people and how we can help them. The main research questions are: *What causes people to become unhoused? What are the impacts of people being unhoused? What are some solutions that will help people who need a home get a home?*

Results: Two percent of the world's population is homeless, and about half of those people are sheltered. Many of the causes of people ending up in these situations are preventable, and many of the consequences are terrible, even to people who are housed. Fortunately, there are many useful solutions that seem to have been very effective, so all we have to do is start putting in play, and we probably start seeing change for the better.

Conclusions: All this being said, we need to start taking into account what is causing so many people to become unhoused. We must acknowledge this so that we can start helping people avoid this because the consequences are awful for everybody on this planet, whether or not you have a home. However, most important of all, we must absolutely begin to acknowledge and propose solutions, because otherwise, nothing is ever going to change, and things need to start changing now. This problem has been getting much worse for past several decades, and has been getting less and less attention and coverage. We need to reverse both of these, because they go together.

Keywords: *abatement, gentrification, homeless, homelessness, unhoused, violence*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Here is a mind-blowing statistic that should not even exist. “In August 2021, there were 47,979 homeless people, including 14,881 homeless children, sleeping each night in the New York City municipal shelter system. A near-record 18,357 single adults slept in shelters in August 2021” (Coalition for the Homeless, 2021, para. 2). This information tells us that we have nearly 50 thousand people who are in homeless shelters in New York City alone. This statistic does not even include individuals on the street. There are millions of people without homes all over the world, and that is not all. The problem keeps worsening and has received less attention and media coverage over the past few decades. Even if you are one of these people who is aware of this problem, you probably do not even remotely understand how serious it is. It is one of the biggest threats to humanity, if not the worst.

Now, if you are unhoused, you understand perfectly how terrible it is. However, if you are not, which is most individuals, then you probably think it does not matter much. Well, it does. It is not only horrible for people to be homeless, but this impacts everybody in one way or another, not just the unhoused themselves. In their article “Solving Homelessness from a Complex Systems Perspective: Insights for Prevention Responses, ” Fowler et al. discuss how communities struggle to manage the burdens of homelessness. When you think about that, it actually makes sense because if you have people in your community who have no living space, you have to have some kind of program or group to help those people, and people have to contribute to this. This possibility can cost a lot of money, and we already spend a lot of money on our housing, so it would be better just to make housing more affordable so that more people

can buy a home and nobody has to suffer that way. But unfortunately, the opposite is happening because there are so many individuals without homes, and so many of them are children.

We have to understand right off the bat what causes the issue of homelessness in the first place. The answer is very complex. There are many causes of homelessness, including lack of affordable housing, economic insecurity, poor health, and so on. Homelessness is affected by many things related to those three major categories; it is also very important to know how being homeless can negatively affect people, which is also very complex. Your health can be put in significant jeopardy. You are much more prone to violence as well as becoming violent yourself. You might not even be able to go to school, which is hard to imagine. Homelessness is not the kind of thing you want to be a victim of. There are just so many issues that the unhoused have to deal with. Plus, as previously said, it impacts people who are not unhoused as well, so nobody gains from this in the long run.

That said, we must start addressing this issue and covering it more adequately. There are many solutions, and some have already come into the picture, but we simply just need to do more than what we already have done, and that is what this proposal is all about. It covers the three aspects of homelessness that we all must know in order for this problem to be addressed. First, it is important to understand how people are negatively impacted by homelessness. We first need to discuss what causes homelessness and then learn about some of the impacts of homelessness. Once we have learned that, we must acknowledge the important part, which is the solution to the problem of homelessness. There are many solutions, and some are already being put into play. Still, we must grow on that trend; to do this, we need to learn more about the causes of homelessness and its effects to show its significance on humanity and how serious and extensive it is.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

There are so many children who are without a home. “In August 2021, there were 47,979 homeless people, including 14,881 homeless children, sleeping each night in the New York City municipal shelter system. A near-record 31,947 single adults slept in shelters in August 2021” (Coalition for the Homeless, 2021, para. 4). The reasons for this are many. This subject is very complex and has a lot of problems that do not receive much attention. It receives much less attention than it used to and has worsened over the past few decades.

Many factors contribute to people being unhoused, and its effects can be quite impactful, especially for children. However, there are also many solutions to addressing this crisis. According to Abraham Maslow’s theory of Hierarchy of Needs, there is a pyramid of needs. It is five levels. The conditions at the bottom must be met before moving up in the pyramid. The level is physiological needs, which are basic survival needs. This category includes air, water, food, clothing, shelter, sleep, and warmth. Without these things, people cannot properly function. Other things in your life cannot be met until these basic requirements are met. (McLeod, 2020) The things on other levels of the scale are essential too, though, so it is important that we make sure these needs are met so people can live a fair life, and if everybody cooperates, it should not be too hard.

Why Are So Many People Unhoused?

Lack of Affordable Housing

One of the most common reasons for being unhoused is the lack of affordable housing. Affordable housing is becoming less available. The federal housing budget significantly

decreased in the 1980s. Evictions rose by 800% in 1982. (Grant et al., 2013) There are plenty of examples of how this problem has worsened. Europe has seen significant increases in housing instability in recent years. Housing insecurity represents the bigger problem of hidden homelessness. On average, the poor spent over 40% of their income on rent in 2016. Nearly one million US households were evicted in 2016. Evictions are a massive problem in Europe. (Fowler et al., 2019)

In many cases, this is linked to the government not funding enough for housing. In Australia, state governments are responsible for public housing, and there has been a reduction in government funding for housing, which has caused Victoria to be unable to improve its housing situation. (Crane et al., 2005) It appears that the government has significantly reduced its funding in recent decades, so there has been a huge lack of affordability for many things, and housing is pretty much at the top of the list.

Economic Insecurity

Many families end up unhoused due to economic problems. Two leading factors are child poverty and income inequality. Families with young children led by a single parent are the most vulnerable. More families are falling into poverty, yet affordable housing is becoming less available. There was a significant increase in child poverty from 16% in 1979 to 31% in 1983. It nearly doubled in just three years. (Grant et al., 2013) This increase is linked to the fact that the government has significantly reduced its funding for housing in recent decades. Gentrification has also factored into this. It has forced people out of their homes. Gentrification is a problem all over the world. One significant cause of poverty is unemployment (Crane et al., 2005). So many economic issues could be easily fixed, drastically decreasing the number of people without

homes. If governments were more effective at addressing social issues and were better for the poor in most instances, this problem would diminish greatly.

Other Causes of Homelessness

Your health can have an effect as well. Many people with health problems and disabilities are not able to work. Becoming unhoused can also happen as a result of widowhood, the death of a parent, issues within the households, marital problems, the loss of work and a job, or even mental illness. The list goes on with behavior and relationships that can cause an individual to become unhoused (Crane et al., 2005). Not having good family relationships can lead to homelessness. Socioeconomic factors also often lead to displacement and racial discrimination. People of certain races or ethnicities might be unable to buy a house or some kind of home in certain areas (Fowler et al., 2019). Racism is responsible for many housing crises on so many levels.

Another significant cause of homelessness is a lack of education. Obviously, if you are not educated, you cannot get a good job that will allow you to pay rent. Another cause is drug addiction. Statistics have shown that 91 percent of unhoused people use drugs, including alcohol. This statistic means that only 9 percent of those who are unhoused do not use drugs. The cost of drugs often affects your ability to pay your rent. Another cause can be people living in bad psychological conditions (Alowaimer, 2018). For example, somebody with depression can become unhoused if they do not receive some kind of help. Mental illness and cognitive disabilities can also be a cause. Many individuals with cognitive disabilities have considered bad relationships with their family members to be a cause of homelessness. Many normal individuals have considered their homelessness to be a result of debt, which is another common cause. On top of that, people with mental illness or cognitive disabilities have even more difficulty finding

a home. (Yamamoto et al., 2016) Basically, if you are disabled in some way, either physically or mentally, you will be more vulnerable than the average person to homelessness. Many people with disabilities do not receive the help they need, which is another significant factor.

Impacts of Homelessness on Children and Youth

Health

Homelessness has had a significant effect on the health and well-being of children. It often has a negative impact on social relationships. It can also lead to depression. It can even have a severe effect on their development. Many children who do have a home also do not get enough nutrition. They are the most likely to be victims of food insecurity. Homelessness also creates a lot of excessive stress for everyone (Grant et al., 2013). Stress can significantly impact your health because it affects your ability even to function. These types of problems come on an enormous scale. Homelessness is a severe threat to public health all over the world. The average life expectancy for unhoused people in Europe is 30 years less than the general population. Homelessness represents a serious global public health challenge (Fowler et al., 2019). People without homes are very vulnerable. Being unhoused makes you more prone to diseases. (Alowaimer, 2018) This increase is due to the fact that exposure without protection and sanitation can make you sick.

Exposure to Violence and Trauma

Being without a home can also put you in danger. If you are unhoused, you are more prone to violence. “Violence is the most dangerous crime for all people, because often, it leads to death. There are many people in the world who suffer from violence and a lot of people classify the homeless as sources of violence in their societies” (Alowaimer, 2018, p. 2). People without homes are also likely to be violent themselves. “Many homeless people commit crimes such as

theft, murder and kidnapping. If we look at the crimes that happened, we find that most of these are committed by homeless people” (Alowaimer, 2018, p. 2). Alowaimer (2018) states that homelessness is one of the primary causes of violent crime, which jeopardizes the whole human population.

Long-Term Effects of Homelessness

The short-term effects of being unhoused are very significant, but there are also many impacts of this crisis that can have long-term consequences. Seastres et al. (2020)

...indicate that homeless individuals have an increased mortality rate throughout their lifetime, being most marked in younger age groups. Deaths among younger homeless individuals are commonly related to accidental and/, or drug/alcohol causes, while deaths among older homeless individuals are most often related to cardiovascular disease and cancer. It has also been found that nearly one-third of these deaths in homeless individuals are from conditions amenable to timely and appropriate provision of healthcare. (p. 476)

This increase in mortality rate means that being unhoused can even impact how long you and your children, and even your grandchildren live, even if you are only unhoused for a short time. This information further proves the link between homelessness and health.

Abatements Sweeps Encampments

The unhoused population has been creative regarding shelters and the ability to survive outdoors. Within the struggle of people who are unhoused is the abatement, which is the reduction of a homeless encampment. This situation has done a lot of harm to people without homes. The interesting thing is that the government has used them to address the increase in people who are unhoused, but they are controversial and have worsened the problem in many ways. An abatement means that the authorities remove one or more persons from a location because there are ordinances that ban living in a public or private space. There are four

significant ways in which abatements have harmed the health of the unhoused population, as stated by Chang et al. (2022),

First, forced relocation and property seizures stripped people of health resources and necessities (e.g., personal belongings, social support) required to survive unhoused. Second, abatements drove unhoused people into hazardous, isolated, less visible spaces, which increased health risks while reducing access to health outreach workers and support systems. Third, abatements were the grounds for frequent negative encounters between unhoused people and authorities such as law enforcement - interactions that produced anger, stress, and distrust. Finally, distrust of authorities and law enforcement led to people's reluctance to seek or accept formal forms of support and protection. The necessity of self-policing in encampments created cycles of interpersonal violence that resulted in suffering, injury, and premature death. (p.1)

This situation is a big problem for people without homes in Santa Clara County, California.

Unfortunately, many of the housing problems in this area are totally avoidable.

Another big problem is “the sweep,” when authorities remove people from a living location. A sweep is pretty much a form of eviction. “If an individual refuses or cannot move, they are subject to citation and potential arrest, and their belongings can be confiscated and discarded. Abatements, and the controversies surrounding them, have a long history in the United States. However, the magnitude of abatements has escalated in many cities since the 1990s due to substantial increases in anti-homeless ordinances and technologies facilitating the reporting of neighbor complaints, despite ongoing legal concerns surrounding the constitutionality of sweeps” (Chang et al., 2022, p. 1). The past 30 have demonstrated a trend of more people losing their ability to keep a home. Another term to define is “encampments.”

Encampments are tents, wooden pallets, tarps, cars, vans, or other materials set up by unhoused people in order to survive without shelter. People who are unhoused, housed residents in the community, business interests, and various local government agencies, including public health, criminal justice, and law enforcement, are stakeholders in the social struggle over the existence of encampments and the right to live outdoors when there is nowhere else to live. (Chang et. al, 2022, p. 1)

This study represents the seriousness of what can happen when people are forced out of their homes. A whole term being used to describe this behavior is a sign that abatements are harming the unhoused more than they are helping them.

Other Effects of Homelessness

Another significant impact of homelessness is a lack of education. Many children without homes cannot attend school (Grant et al., 2013). Homelessness can also have impacts on people who are not homeless. Communities struggle to manage the burdens of homelessness. They are basically coming off as saying that homelessness impacts everybody, even if you are housed yourself (Fowler et al., 2019). People might not think about this, but it is true. On top of all this, there are many issues that the unhoused have to deal with, and one of these issues is poverty. Many people without homes do not have jobs and cannot find jobs (Alowaimer, 2018). Homelessness affects everybody in one way or another, whether people realize it or not. Poor health and substance use disorder can be both a cause and consequence of homelessness. About 2.1 million people in the United States experience homelessness each year. People who are unhoused have high rates of emergency department use, hospitalization, substance use treatment, use of social services, arrest, and incarceration (Peng et al., 2020). This act affects people who are housed because if they need these things, they are less likely to receive the help they need.

Solutions: Policies and Practices

Chafee Foster Care Independence Act

The Chafee Foster Care Independent Act is one of the most significant policies that has been put into effect to help the unhoused. The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP) offers assistance

...to help current and former foster care youths achieve self-sufficiency. Grants are offered to States and Tribes who submit a plan to assist youth in

a wide variety of areas designed to support a successful transition to adulthood. Activities and programs include, but are not limited to, help with education, employment, financial management, housing, emotional support and assured connections to caring adults for older youth in foster care. The program is intended to serve youth who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18, youth who, after attaining 16 years of age, have left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, and young adults ages 18-21 who have "aged out" of the foster care system. (Children's Bureau: An Office of the Administration for Children & Families, 2012, n.p.)

This act has made a big difference.

As of September 30, 2007, there were an estimated 496,000 children in substitute/foster care. Of these children an estimated 39% were identified as being 13 years of age or older (AFCARS 2007 data). During the Federal fiscal year 2007, states reported that approximately 29,000 young adults exited/emancipated from foster care. (Administration for Children & Families, 2008, para.1)

Case Management

Case management as a primary service has been offered to a lot of people without homes. They have been asked to try it along with other things they are already doing and receiving. For homeless people with mental illness, case management with additional services improved psychiatric symptoms, and assertive case management decreased psychiatric hospitalizations. For unhoused people with substance abuse problems, case management resulted in more significant decreases in substance use than usual care did. Coordinated treatments for homeless adults with mental illness or substance abuse usually result in better health outcomes than the typical care (Hwang et al., 2005). If more research was conducted on this and health care was provided for these people, this practice would have a significant impact.

Treatment First Program vs. Housing First Program

Another solution is providing people with treatment or housing. There are two known approaches, treatment first or housing first. There has been debate about which approach is better. There have been explanations about the benefits of both approaches. Poor health and

substance use disorder can be both a cause and consequence of homelessness. About 2.1 million people in the United States experience homelessness each year. People without homes have high rates of emergency department use, hospitalization, substance use treatment, use of social services, arrest, and incarceration. Treatment First is a standard approach to treating unhoused people with disabilities, which requires buyers to be in psychiatric treatment and substance-free before receiving permanent housing. Another approach, Housing First, provides permanent housing and health, mental health, and other supportive services without mandating buyers to be “housing ready” (Peng, 2020).

Both approaches have been compared to determine their effectiveness on housing stability, health outcomes, and healthcare utilization among people with disabilities who are unhoused. Housing First programs reduced homelessness by 88 percent and improved housing stability by 41 percent. For those with HIV, Housing First programs reduced homelessness by 37 percent, depression by 13 percent, emergency department use by 41 percent, hospitalization by 36 percent, and mortality by 37 percent. Therefore, they concluded that Housing First programs improved housing stability and decreased homelessness more effectively than the Treatment First programs. In addition, Housing First programs showed health benefits and reduced the need for health services. Healthcare systems that help patients who are unhoused might promote their health and well-being by having effective housing services available. (Peng, 2020) Both approaches seem to be doing what they need to do. If they actually go with the Housing First approach more often, we might be able to reduce the housing crisis and prevent it from getting worse in the future.

Summary

There are many things that cause people to become unhoused. Many of these problems are not receiving much attention. The more significant issue is that there are so many consequences of homelessness that are not acknowledged either. However, there is good news: since the 1980s, this problem has received a lot of coverage. The issue of homelessness did not start receiving much attention until the 1980s. Since then, its attention has declined again. It was rarely televised in the 1990s. However, there have been methods to help cover the issue. There has been media coverage and professional coverage. Media coverage had a huge spike in 1987, but since then, it has dramatically declined and has been consistently low since 1997. Professional coverage has steadily risen since 1974 but is still pretty low. There was almost no coverage in the 1970s. However, the coverage of the problem has changed over time in many different ways. (Buck et al., 2004) If this problem continues to receive coverage and leaders start addressing the issue, it will almost certainly be lessened within time. The critical factor in all of this is the fact that everybody has to contribute to help fix this crisis, and it cannot just be fixed overnight with just the government passing policy after policy. People have put themselves out there and helped a person without a home or about to be without one. Helping others is a no-brainer solution.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

There are many causes of homelessness. There are so many homeless children. There are many harmful effects of homelessness, especially on children and juveniles. However, despite how serious and severe this global social issue is, many solutions are coming into play to help address homelessness. So here is the critical question: *Why are so many people homeless, and what can we do about it?*

This study aims to answer the following research question:

RQ: *What are the causes of homelessness, and what are effective solutions?*

I used the Purchase College Library's Academic Search Complete database to search for and found peer-reviewed articles on all three parts of the topic of causes of homelessness, effects, and solutions. All three aspects are essential to understand the nature of homelessness. When I searched for articles, I focused on each aspect separately. This attention to detail helped me to exclude any articles that did not pertain to the searched aspect.

Then I used the articles to create an annotated bibliography and used that as a reference for my literature review, which I then constructed with a lot of effort and articles. Next, I used two additional articles containing valuable content I felt I needed to include. Finally, I used headings to construct a well-crafted literature review that makes sense, is easy to read, and interpret. I read each article and then extracted the useful content I found in each of them and crafted a literature review. Additionally, I used current articles for information.

There were several limitations and obstacles in my research. For instance, I was not able to conduct an experiment or any kind of case study due to my limited time and specific barriers,

such as the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, I had to rely on just the content I found in the articles I used and some information I had previously known, which was suboptimal. I was still able to craft a well-written literature review, but I probably would have written something better if I could conduct some kind of study. In many of the articles I analyzed, much of the content was based on a case study. That makes things much more reliable, so that did help to an extent.

I found a couple of questions to address. Then I wrote up a two-part annotated bibliography. After that, I worked off it to craft a well-detailed literature review. First, I well addressed the issue of homelessness. Second, I managed several aspects of homelessness. There are a few keywords I had to help separate those three aspects. The keywords include *homelessness, cause, poverty, insecurity, effect, impact, lack, violence, vulnerable, prone, disease, solution, organization, program, problem, issue, efficiency, and effectiveness*. Searching for causes, effects, and solutions gave me the best results. I found a lot of reliable content that helped me craft my literature review.

My study is on a very important social issue. It is caused by many things that many people do not realize. It has huge effects on so many people, and it does not receive anywhere near enough attention, so the purpose of my study is to help get people back in the game, and I think that is very important because we cannot address a problem unless enough people understand it and take it seriously. I could explain the problem well enough, which most people should be able to understand as long as they thoroughly read all of it. My research question is pretty straightforward. What causes homelessness for so many people, and how does it impact humanity? Also, what are the possible solutions to homelessness? I answered this question by finding several peer-reviewed articles and collecting data by crafting an annotated bibliography. The method I used was smart because I was able to obtain a lot of reliable information about the

topic, and make a strong argument about it. I am not biased toward my topic, but I feel it is very important to address it. That is the primary reason I chose it, and I am reading and writing about it. I am very passionate about social issues, and this one is one of the most serious ones, so I came up with it and went with it mainly for that reason.

I feel that I have treated this subject ethically and with no bias. I picked this topic because I was most interested in finding out why individuals and children become homeless. In addition, I wanted to know what might be done to lessen this societal problem.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

What causes people to be or become unhoused? What are the effects on people without a home, and what are reasonable solutions to helping people without homes get a house? Well, the answers to these three questions are all very complex and require a lot of research and explanation. The primary purpose of this study is to figure out how we can help everybody get a safe and comfortable home, what is preventing that from happening, and what the difficulties are in doing so. I thoroughly researched these three areas and learned about many other problems correlated with homelessness that I was unaware of, and the number of solutions out there is stunning. I read many articles with precious content and picked the ten that I felt were the most knowledgeable. I then crafted an annotated bibliography of those articles as a guide, which helped me find the critical facts from each one. I discovered that this social issue has so many variables that you cannot track them all. However, the effects are the most shocking regarding how serious and numerous they are. I mean, my literature review was all over the place trying to explain all these different factors and impacts that you never think of with the knowledge I now have. However, more than anything else, I found a long list of solutions that seemed very effective, which signifies that a lot of action needs to be taken to address this global issue.

The thing that I was very careful about when looking at these articles was seeing how well they proved each point they were making. The authors did their research and used many statistics that made my jaw drop. There is so much to be said that it almost seems impossible to cover everything. Still, every article covered something different, and they really focused on that particular aspect of the problem and explained very well why it is important to consider all this information. We are dealing with people's lives when talking about homelessness, so there is a lot of valuable research done on this that is based on statistics and the severity of the problem

across the world so that we understand this is a problem everywhere and not just in a few well-known cities that have economic problems and whatnot.

There is much to unpack here that is important that we explain more in this chapter. Some of the causes of being unhoused would never come to you unless you knew a lot about the phenomenon, which most people do not. The economic part is just a fraction. There are so many other problems that do not even relate to economics. For example, your health can play a significant role in many situations.

In many cases, dysfunctional relations and family-related problems are the main force. Racism is also a common factor among minorities. Fowler et al. (2019) state:

Many people with health problems and/or disabilities are not able to work. Becoming unhoused can also happen as a result of widowhood, the death of a parent, problems within the households, marital problems, the loss of work and/or a job, or even mental illness. The list goes on (Crane et al., 2005, as cited in Fowler et al., 2019). Behavior and relationships can also cause an individual to become unhoused. Not having good family relationships can lead to homelessness. Socioeconomic factors also often lead to displacement. This can include racial discrimination. People of certain races or ethnicities might not be able to buy a house or some kind home in certain areas. (p.)

These are the causes found in these two articles. But there is so much more. Economic insecurity and the lack of affordability only account for about half of people unhoused, as shocking as that is. Examining all of this is essential before change can be made.

The effects are also severe because these teach people why addressing the issue of homelessness is so important. The part that most people are not aware of is the fact that people being homeless has direct or indirect consequences for everybody. You do not have to be without a home to be negatively affected by the problem, even if it is more impactful for those who are. Your health and well-being are not the only things that are reduced when you have no home. The long-term effects are quite severe for many reasons.

Studies indicate that homeless individuals have an increased mortality rate throughout their lifetime, most marked in younger age groups. Deaths among younger homeless individuals are commonly related to accidental and/or drug/alcohol causes, while deaths among older homeless individuals are most often related to cardiovascular disease and cancer. It has also been found that nearly one-third of these deaths in homeless individuals are from conditions amenable to timely and appropriate provision of healthcare. (Moore et al., 2020)

This statement means that being unhoused can even impact how long you, your children, and your grandchildren live, even if you are only unhoused for a short time. This situation explains how being without a home is life-threatening to many people and affects more people than just you. A lack of education is another significant impact of being unhoused.

Abatements are another huge problem. There are four major ways abatements have harmed the health of the unhoused population. Chang et al. (2022) list examples.

- First, forced relocation and property seizures stripped people of health resources and necessities (e.g., personal belongings, social support) required to survive unhoused.
- Second, abatements drove unhoused people into hazardous, isolated, less visible spaces, which increased health risks while reducing access to health outreach workers and support systems.
- Third, abatements were the grounds for frequent negative encounters between unhoused people and authorities such as law enforcement - interactions that produced anger, stress, and distrust.
- Finally, distrust of authorities and law enforcement led to people's reluctance to seek or accept formal forms of support and protection. Finally, the necessity of self-policing in encampments created cycles of interpersonal violence that resulted in suffering, injury, and premature death. (p. 1)

This list is an example of how the government has tried to help but in the process has made things worse. They believed abatements would help, but in reality, they did the opposite. This is why more research should be done, because that way we will know what is effective and what is not and what will actually fix the problem and worsen it.

Now, many solutions are quite effective in addressing homelessness. I found a few in my research. The Chafee Foster Care Independence Act has helped a lot. This program offers assistance to help children get foster care, so they do not have to live on the street. I mainly focused on children, so this is very important. Case management is another helpful tool. “This has been advised to a lot of people without homes. They have been asked to try it and other things they are already doing and/or receiving. For homeless people with mental illness, case management with other services was effective in improving psychiatric symptoms, and assertive case management was effective in decreasing psychiatric hospitalizations. For unhoused people with substance abuse problems, case management resulted in greater decreases in substance use than usual care did. Coordinated treatments for homeless adults with mental illness or substance abuse usually result in better health outcomes than the typical care” (Hwang et al., 2005, n.p.). If more research were to be conducted on this, we would see a significant decrease in the number of people who are suffering as a result of being homeless. There is also the idea of which should be given to an individual first, housing or treatment. There are programs that offer both first. It is hard to determine, which one should be given first, but they both seem to be beneficial. They have both been compared with statistics. Peng et al. (2020) state

Housing First Programs reduced homelessness by 88 percent and improved housing stability by 41 percent. For those with HIV, Housing First programs reduced homelessness by 37 percent, depression by 13 percent, emergency department use by 41 percent, hospitalization by 36 percent, and mortality by 37 percent. Therefore, they were able to conclude that Housing First programs improved housing stability and decreased homelessness more effectively than the Treatment First programs. In addition, Housing First programs showed health benefits and reduced the need for health services. Healthcare systems that help patients who are unhoused might promote their health and wellbeing by having effective housing services available. (p. 405)

Therefore, I can probably say that the Housing First Treatment seems more effective. We should provide that to promote significant change. There are many other solutions where you can

question their efficiency and effectiveness. I did not even find most of them because there are so many inexcusable solutions that we have not done more to address this serious problem that negatively impacts everybody.

All this being said, there is so much to be said, but this topic is much more to be said that I do not even know. The significance of this phenomenon is how much there is to it and how little is understood. Most people do not understand it at all. It is hard to understand unless you read and learn about it. Three essential parts can be learned infinitely, and it gets more complicated as you go. Therefore, you cannot stop looking for facts until people know enough of them when change starts to happen. That is the point I am trying to get across. It is extremely important to understand that principle. Focusing on those three is the first step to addressing the problem. This problem has gotten worse over the years and has received less and less attention since then, so we need to start putting these facts back out there and get people to help contribute to helping everybody get a home where they will be safe, healthy, and comfortable.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Homelessness is a very complex problem that keeps getting worse. It has been getting worse since the 1970s but has received less attention and coverage from the media, television, and all other sources that can report it. I thoroughly researched the three critical areas of this topic. I already knew a lot of information, but I learned how much worse many of the problems are. I did not realize how serious and many drastic aspects of the topic are. Many factors lead to people becoming unhoused that I did not even consider, like domestic violence. This factor is a considerable contributor that never came to my mind prior to my research on this. Its effects to me are even more shocking. There were many I never even knew. Its correlation to violence shocked me. It is unbelievable that people without homes are prone to violence and can also become violent themselves. Being prone to diseases is another significant impact I never thought of about people without homes enduring. It makes sense when you think about it, but you might realize these impacts if exposed to this phenomenon.

I was very thrilled by the solutions that we have; even I was surprised by many of them as well. They all support the conclusion of this research, which is that there are many causes of homelessness, and many of them are preventable. Being unhoused can negatively impact everybody in various ways, and their many solutions that could easily be put into play. Unfortunately, not nearly enough is being done to address any of this, and it is essential that more action starts being taken on it. How many people live right is negatively impacting how everybody lives, whether you are housed or not. We all depend on one another, and we must all contribute to each other in anything that anybody does to make an impact. It is not okay that we have people living on the streets in very big, overpopulated, wealthy cities while everybody else is complaining about things that are not important at all and even thinking about how those people can be helped when they desperately need help. We have to end that way of living and have

people start caring more about the unhoused because everybody is affected negatively, and nobody should be suffering. That is not okay!

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