

Single mothers

[Family](#), [Mother](#)



Just Mom and the Kids More than one fourth of all children in the United States live with only one parent (Healthy Children). Single mothers and their children face a variety of financial and emotional complications on a day-to-day basis. Though single motherhood can be just as satisfying as sharing these experiences with a partner, there are unique difficulties to its situation. Single Motherhood is when a mother is raising a child without the support of spouse. Around half of today's mothers will spend some time as a sole custodial parent (Legal Momentum).

Statistics say around forty-five percent of single mothers have never been married (Legal Momentum). That means fifty-five percent of single motherhood is due to divorce, abandonment, or death of a husband. The reasons why American women are increasingly becoming single mothers are teen pregnancy, father disappearances, adoption and the biggest of all, divorce (Webster University). Of three people interviewed two single motherhood were due to divorced and one was by choice of never being married. Single motherhood is less ideal and leads to extreme amounts of stress.

Epidemiological studies show that single mothers have low levels of self-satisfaction and high levels of anxiety and depression compared to other mothers (Social Science Computing Cooperative). Not being able to provide for your child, going through a divorce or death of a husband and dealing with the behavior of the kids are causes of a single mother's stress. When explaining how she copes with her situation Veronica Williams says, " It was rough, really rough, trying to manage all they have going on and fitting it in

day to day. It was stressful at times, but I took it one day at a time and did what I could do" (Williams).

The depression and stress also can come from all the household tasks, everyday jobs, and errands the mothers have to take care of on a day-to-day basis. Their responsibilities are overwhelming for one person. Single mothers have a great amount of weight on their shoulders with finances, house keeping, and parenting with no help from a spouse. Veronica Williams, a single mother of two young children, explains the biggest financial burden in her family is childcare. " Finding child care for my children is a financial burden it can be so expensive, but it's something I need to do in order to work.

I have to get money to raise them" (Williams). Having a spouse there to help maintain finances for the family would take a load of weight off of the single mother. A mother has to perform responsibilities that would traditionally be a father's job, for example; taking out the trash, caring for the lawn, home repairs and vehicle maintenance. They often look to their children for help around the house. When asked about how her children helped around the house Veronica said, " They're much younger so they can't do much, but keep their toys picked up.

House keeping will be a little easier when they can help though"(Williams). Looking to the children for assistance around the house is not an option for single mothers when the children are so young. As the children get a little older they become more helpful and responsible. Christine Wilson, is a teacher and single mother of a fifteen year old daughter, when asked about

managing housekeeping she explains, " My daughter is able to complete household chores like washing the dishes, dusting the furniture, well when money is involved" (Wilson).

Since the 20th Century children with single others were sent out to work earlier than those who had both parent's in their lives (Gordon, *Pitied but Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare, 1890-1935*). As the child gets older the single mothers have a little more help around the house, but whom do they have to turn to for help with parenting? Parenting is extremely difficult without a spouse to turn to for advice, assistance, and comfort.

Children of single mothers have a significant amount of responsibilities to take care of, because their mothers especially need help when she is raising the child (KidsHealth). The extra responsibilities can bring a lot of stress to the child in that situation. These stressful situations can lead children to sleeping disorders, self- esteem issues, and drug and alcohol abuse. Its only normal for children of single mothers to think about what it would be like if their parent's were still together.

Single parent children are more likely to have emotional or behavioral problems. Children of single mothers also are more likely to have low self esteem, use drugs or commitsuicide(Wisconsin Fathers). Single motherhood often leads to excessive tress and responsibilities for the children in the family. When asked about how she coped with her parent's divorce eighteen-year-old student, Miracle Hawkins said " I was young so I didn't really understand it, but now it doesn't really bother me. It's probably better that they aren't together anyway.

It's actually a life lesson for me. My mother shows me how to be a strong, independent woman and I feel like if they were together I wouldn't have realized some of the things I know now. It helped me to mature much quicker than friends who aren't living with single mothers"(Hawkins) Having only one parent in a child's life forces them to grow up much faster than a child whose parent's are still together. Through observations, interviews, and research it is concluded that single motherhood is a difficult task not only for the mother, but for their children as well.

The financial and emotional problems and responsibilities it comes with are overwhelming for a mother with children. Single motherhood is not an ideal lifestyle, however it is manageable for hard working and dedicated mothers and their kids. While at the Thurman Brisbane Center I observed some of these hard working and dedicated mothers and their children. The Thurman Brisbane Homeless Center provides a variety of programs and services to assist individuals and families who are homeless.

Since 2000, Thurman Brisbane Center has provided residential services to more than 15, 000 individual men, women and children (Thurman Brisbane Center). When volunteering at the Thurman Brisbane Homeless Shelter I organized arts and crafts, instructed, talked, and played games with the children living in the shelter. I realized the children learned differently depending on their family situation. I decided that certain children were more independent, than others. The weekend of Valentine's Day the project of the day was to make Valentine's Day cards for their family.

There were two little girls, Gabby and Raven, they both were five years old, but had very different personalities. I then wondered if that had anything to do with the parenting of the children. Gabby was very quite and shy and didn't ask for any help when we were creating our Valentine's Day cards. She colored a picture of her mother, her brother and herself. Gabby spelled everything without any help from me. Ere family. She asked for help drawing hearts on her card and she asked me to help her with spelling when she was writing in her card.

After talking and observing the girls a little more, I learned Gabby mother was a single mother living at the shelter with only Gabby and her older son. I then learned that Raven's father, mother, and older sister were also living at the shelter with her. These two girls helped me to understand that family situations can make huge impact on personality of a child. Working at the Thurman Brisbane Homeless Center has helped me improved my rebelcommunicationskills, develop more patience, and it taught me valuable Job skills.

Before I started working at the homeless shelter, I considered myself a shy person when communicating with people I didn't know. After volunteering for approximately five months, I became more comfortable and confident with myself and with communicating with others. When you learn and practice patience you don't get as irritated, stressed or overwhelmed. Working with young kids requires tons of patience, mainly because you have to explain and re-explain, especially when they re young, Just so they can understand.

After working with the kids on a few Sundays I have developed that patience I needed.

I learned how to talk in a tone that they would listen to and understand and how to take deep breaths to try to relax when I found myself getting impatient. Working at the shelter taught me valuable Job skills such as, commitment, organization, and active listening. I committed myself to working at the shelter for two hours every other Sunday. Although, there were times when I would have preferred to go to the mall or go to the movies, I knew I had made a commitment to myself and the staff at the shelter to be there. I was determined to finish the Job I started.

Another Job skill I improved on at the Thurman Brisbane Center was organization and creativity; I had to come up with ideas for arts and crafts to do with the children at the shelter. Each day we brought entertaining activities for them to do and often awarded them with candy, popcorn, and other prizes for the good awesome art projects they created. The activities and projects were based on the upcoming holidays or the current season. In October, for Halloween time the kids and I made fake ghost and decorated bags for them to put their trick-or-treating candy.

During Thanksgiving holiday we made colorful turkeys out of brown paper bags and construction paper. In January our projects consisted of designing snowmen, snowflakes and mittens all out of construction paper. As mentioned before during the month of February we made Valentine's Day cards for families and friends. Before going to the Thurman Brisbane shelter I had to assure I was prepared and organized to make sure the day went

smooth. Based on my lesson I had to make sure I had all the art supplies and prizes I would need for the day.

I had to focus on what the kids liked, didn't like, and their personalities so I could try to relate to them better and develop relationships with them. I now realize that active listening skills are critical when working with anybody. Working at the Thurman Brisbane Center was very beneficial not only did it help with my research project, but it also helped me to develop mentally. Seeing the grins on the kids faces when we came with activities and candy for them made volunteering worthwhile. I was glad to have made a difference in the lives of the children.