

# Vulnerable populations

[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



Vulnerable Populations BSHS/302 April 2nd 2012 The Homeless a Vulnerable Population A homeless population is a social group of a vulnerable population that is at an increased risk for several health related issues that can have adverse outcomes. Vulnerable Populations deserve the right of protection by responsible others because of compromised, or the lack of freedom of autonomy. Part of this respect and responsibility is to have an understanding of the nature of homelessness. Part of the solution is forging a relationship between available resources and knowing the health status of the homeless for reducing further risk they could face, and for allowing the medical profession to diagnose and treat health related problems.

History of the Homeless The history of homelessness is thought to be traced back to the Colonial era around 1640 when the English "vagrants" were considered outcast and were policed. "These homeless people were noted as "Sturdy beggars" and were found in nearly every colonial town" (Oracle ThinkQuest, n. d.). The larger towns on the East coast had more numbers of the homeless than that of smaller towns because of settling when leaving England. The large numbers of homeless of that era came about because of the King Philip's War of 1675-1676. This war was against the native people. This war forced many of these colonies to move out and seek shelter in the forest and coastal areas. For a time these people survived in these places, until a law was passed that stated "idleness" was prohibited in the cities. This law was a result of many of these people becoming servants. The French and Indian War led to more people threatened and forced many more to become refugees in other areas. As time went on, and more wars came about the homeless starting increasing like never before. By the mid-1800's most of

the growing city's of the East Coast were made up of staggering numbers of homeless. At this time there were a few private charities and organizations whose focus was to help the homeless and solve the problem; because there was no intervening by the government. Because of lack of funding these organizations barely thrived. An outcry was soon heard condemning the government for not helping, but still it did no good. The Civil War began and cause an even more increase in the homeless. Many of the veterans became unemployed and many lost their homes and property to the war and catastrophes. The loss caused them to wander in the streets, as many looked upon it as a type of poverty and crime. This caused another outcry for something to be done. Timeline of Homelessness In 1892 Congress designated an allotment of \$20, 000 for a labor project study and the homeless. In 1908 President Roosevelt appointed a Housing Commission for the purpose of investigation into the homeless. The borrowing and mortgaging of 1925 caused a financial collapse and destitution was seen and felt everywhere. In 1932 the rise of the homeless was way up again because of the Great Depression. Several years following the Great Depression held catastrophes that led many more becoming homeless, such as the tornado outbreak in 1936 from Tupelo Mississippi to Gainesville Georgia, leaving many without homes. In 1933 the National Industrial Recovery Act was set in motion to help slum areas and public poverty problems, and was a first major step in working to solve the problem of the homelessness. Following in 1937 the United States Housing Act established an administration for public housing, and in 1938 the housing act set in motion a project for the homeless. The United States census of 1940 showed proof that more

devastating conditions were with homeless. In 1961 President John F. Kennedy restores hope for the homeless by telling the nation that all Americans should have decent living places, following in 1965 Congress formed the Department of Housing and Urban Development, giving access to affordable housing for the low income. Issues experienced The homeless experience many issues from the simplest things as wearing the same clothes for days, going without food for several days, fearing for safety, not sleeping in a bed, and weathering the elements. These are often the first of ideas that come to a person's mind when one thinks of the homeless, but there is a bigger picture to being homeless. Bias is an issue that the homeless face. The homeless often are considered drug abusers or alcoholics, when the truth is that many of the homeless become drug abusers or alcoholics because of the state of homelessness. Many people do not choose to be homeless, but because of job loss, loss of home they find themselves in this state. Many homeless people suffer from some form of a mental disorder; this is another issue they face. Because of the illness they need medical treatment, availability to counseling, and other types of support. Barriers such as receiving medical care needed have been created for the homeless care because of lack finances, lack of transportation, the use of telephones, and receiving mail. Compassion is another issue; many homeless feel that health care professionals have no concern for their health or state they find themselves in. There is often a disconnection from family members, leaving them feeling isolated and unloved. Because of this disconnection and isolation many homeless only have contact with those who are paid to have contact with them. Living on the street poses more

problems for the homeless and can open them up to abuse. Many have been brutally attacked leaving them with another scar for life. Living on the streets places the homeless in unsanitary conditions leaving them vulnerable for health problems like, skin ulcers, diabetes, respiratory infections, and AIDS. Diabetes and tuberculosis are found to be the highest in the homeless than any other group of people. Interventions for the Homeless Outreach is the most critical intervention of all for the homeless. It is the step that leads to all other steps. Human connection is vital for survival. Fear and mistrust of service professionals is common for the homeless. Because of the loss of family and friends for many, they fear negative experiences with service provider. By focusing on the individual's strengths and desires, the service provider can help to gain trust and move beyond just diagnosing, prescribing and treating, and understanding the person that is beneath the illness or addictions. This intervention is what keeps the professional caring and emphatic to the clients. Another strategy is that the professional should look into the client's situations to see if the person is at risk, or in a crisis to intervene quickly and get the person the help and resources needed to alleviate the urgent situation. Crisis intervention may require an ambulance, police, and a place of safety. Because survival status can change in just a moment continued monitoring should be done by the professional. In less urgent situations, partnering between resources to help solve problems can be done to educate the client in basic skills. Reinforcing and coping mechanisms is another intervention used to help the person recognize their own strengths and aide in growth. Rewarding even the smallest achievements can help produce self worth. Positive feedback is another

intervention used with the homeless to achieve desired goals. Consistently setting limits by the professional encourages and strengthens the idea of interpersonal boundaries, and builds a healthful relationship between the client and professional. The boundaries include; defining the nature of the relationship, informing the client of rules and expectations, and matching the expectations to the client. Finding what it will take to end homelessness means there will have to be ongoing critical thinking for new strategies and techniques, because homelessness being a crisis, resembles a revolving door. As many are placed in housing, many more become homeless daily. It is estimated that in a given year's time, four or five times more people become homeless than those who are homeless. Based on this estimation there has to be a national thinking for strategy to prevent homelessness because this is a national problem. "Interventions for new housing resources and community-building strategies that address the social factors that contribute to homelessness" must be a priority for every state in this nation to end these episodes of homelessness" (Burt, 2001 pg. 5). There needs to be strategies that address the systems problems and that can provide emergency relief to help eliminate homelessness in this nation. These strategies should include rethinking and improvement on affordable housing, school improvement, better training, and support services. Personal, structural, and political factors very often have influence on the magnitude of homelessness. Creation of new jobs, easing the cost of utilities, providing medical care can help to offset the cost of household budgets and allows more focus on maintaining a household budget. When the basics of life are filled, this in itself helps to reduce the number of homeless. Homeless can

differ in many ways based on circumstances, influences, social, and economical impacts of the nation. Regardless why there are homeless there should be an ongoing effort to eliminate it. Prevention is the answer and should be the first strategy in this national problem. Burt (2001), " When assistance is restricted to those who are homeless tonight, not much can be done to prevent homelessness tomorrow" (What Should Communities and Legislators be Doing? pg. 5) References Oracle ThinkQuest. (n. d.). Retrieved from <http://library.thinkquest.org/07aug/00518/history.html> Burt, M. R. (2001). What Will it Take to End Homelessness?. Retrieved from [http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/end\\_homelessness.pdf](http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/end_homelessness.pdf) Burt, M. R. (2001). What Will it Take to End Homelessness?. Retrieved from [http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/end\\_homelessness.pdf](http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/end_homelessness.pdf)