



# Substance Abuse and Homelessness

June 30, 2017

Written by: Fernando Vazquez

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, a large proportion of homeless individuals struggle with substance abuse (2009). Although this may be true, in order for one to overcome this problem, it should be seen as an illness which needs a large amount of treatment and support (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). Substance abuse can be a cause of homelessness but it also may arise as a result of it (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). Gathering an accurate count of substance abuse among homelessness is difficult but in 2003, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration estimated that 38% of homeless people were alcohol dependent and 26% were dependent on drugs other than alcohol (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).

Among homeless people, substance abuse is much more common than among the general population (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). Addiction often leads to fractured relationships with friends and family and can often cause individuals to become unemployed further intensifying the problem (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). In 2008, the United States Conference of Mayors conducted a survey of 25 cities to find the top three causes of homelessness and for single adults, substance abuse was the number one cause of homelessness (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). 12% of cities also cited substance abuse as one of the top three causes of homelessness among families (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).

Although substance abuse can be a direct or indirect cause of homelessness, it may also stem from it (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). Many people who have nowhere to turn to, often seek out drugs and alcohol as a way of dealing with their situation (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). Drugs and alcohol are often seen as a way to escape from problems, but in contrast, it only makes the problems worse (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009). Substance abuse lowers the chances of finding employment and a home (National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009).

Substance abuse can be a direct cause of homelessness and can also become a bigger problem once a person is homeless. Although some people choose drugs and alcohol over employment and stability, many turn to them as a result of becoming homeless. Here at T's 4 Hope, we wish to spread awareness about this problem and the consequences it has on individuals, communities, and our nation as a whole. If you would like to volunteer, please contact us at [Ts4Hope@yahoo.com](mailto:Ts4Hope@yahoo.com) or 954-867-6765.

Reference:

National Coalition for the Homeless, 2009