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## **Intro to Homelessness**

I recently volunteered at a homeless shelter and while it was a good experience, many people there had or were using drugs and alcohol. I wanted to find out more and I did some research regarding the relationship between drugs and alcohol and homelessness...

So Homelessness is a big societal problem that is one that often goes under looked. In 2017, there were 554,000 homeless people in the United States of America and it has only increased over the past few years. Unfortunately, addiction of drugs and alcohol with homelessness is strongly connected. The people who abuse substances in the United States are more likely to become homeless. The National Coalition for the Homeless is an organization that does research and observes the homeless through statistics and ways to help. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, 38 percent of homeless people in the United States are addicted to alcohol. In addition, they also found out that 26 percent of homeless people are addicted to other substances.

Furthermore, mental illness is starting to be a factor in things. The National Coalition found that an estimated 33 percent of homeless people have a mental health disorder. This is high in comparison to the general population. The most common mental disorders shown are the homeless, Bipolar depression, schizophrenia, Post traumatic stress disorder, major depressive disorder, and severe anxiety. This is only a few out of the many. Also, these are hard or impossible to cure especially for the homeless because many do not seek help and there are limited resources that are available.

There is a connection however. When a person has a mental illness and is not treated for a long period of time, they tend to have a harder time to work and do other normal activities. To cope with depression, anxiety, or mental disorders, they often result in using drugs and alcohol which only makes matters worse through addiction and worsening symptoms over time.