



The Harrowing Connection of the LGBTQ+ Community to Homelessness

There has always been a negative stigma regarding the LGBTQ+ community, historically based on personal bias and ignorance. Whether people thought of it as a sin, unnatural, or just downright wrong, the people of this community have been unfairly subjected to slander and abuse for a long time.

Even today, abuse towards LGBTQ+ communities remains high, as outdated stigmas fuel hatred for a community that only wants the freedom to be themselves. Another unfortunate commonality is familial rejection of LGBTQ+ folk, often leaving them, if underage, homeless and without stable income.

While some families respond with open arms to family members coming out as LGBTQ+, many respond harshly, even going so far as to cut off vulnerable members and even disowning them. The reality is that a lot of these LGBTQ+ folk that are abandoned by their blood-line support systems at young ages are left homeless, as they don't have the abilities to create a stable income that would fund a living system. The hardships don't even end there, as many homeless LGBTQ+ people are more susceptible to abuse, violence, and exploitation than cis heterosexuals. Not to mention if said homeless LGBTQ+ folk also happen to be people of color, the rates would only worryingly increase. It's also hard for LGBTQ+ people to find homeless shelters that accept and respect them, as social stigma and ignorance often interfere with people's morals.

The numbers of homeless LGBTQ+ youth aren't low either, as the William's Institute stated that 40% of the homeless youth served by agencies identify as LGBT, 30% of street outreach clients identified as LGBT, 43% of clients served by drop-in centers identified as LGBT, and 30% of clients utilizing housing programs identified as LGBT (data from the National Coalition for the Homeless : LGBT Homelessness).

The issue of a disproportionate number of LGBTQ+ folk ending up homeless due to their abandonment and the failure of the government to help them is disgusting and needs to be remedied. It definitely isn't an easy fix, as people usually aren't willing to change their own mindset so easily, but it's a necessary one. Schools need to create safer havens for LGBTQ+ students, and educate more children regarding the community, in order to prevent more ignorance spreading in the future. There should also be more discrimination laws put in place in order to prevent people being barred from new housing opportunities and shelters based solely on their sexual or gender orientation. As regular people, there isn't too much we can do, except for donating to charities like the National Coalition for the Homeless and educating ourselves and others on how we can help. We can also organize movements to help this marginalized group, and volunteer at shelters as much as we can.

I just hope that one day, the LGBTQ+ community can thrive and truly live life as any other. It disgusts me to see that the ignorance of the past still lives today, and that so many lives are disregarded for something as trivial as their gender and sexual orientation.

Sources:

<https://nationalhomeless.org/issues/lgbt/>

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