



No Safe Place: Children as Victims of Sexual Abuse and Homelessness

It is 11:00 PM on a Thursday night. You were hanging out with friends and you stayed a little later than usual. By the time you get home, the lights are still on. Walking up to the front door, you can see the silhouettes of two figures you know well. Mom and dad have been worried, waiting for you. You walk inside, lock the door behind you and sit down in front of them; they continue to stand.

One hour past curfew doesn't seem too bad. It's a school night, but who cares about middle school anyway? After 30 minutes of conversation, back and forth about the details of everything you did that night, you finally come to the conclusion that there's no point in arguing anymore. You don't fight the punishment. You just go upstairs, lay in bed, and think about how awful it is to be grounded for a week over this. Enraged and blowing things out of proportion, a thought pops into your head. "You could run away for a while."

Deep inside, you know the absurdity of such an idea. You know that you wouldn't last on your own and eventually, you would just come back home to the same worried silhouettes. They would probably take you into their arms and lovingly tell you to never do something like that again. They would feed you and give you clean clothes to change into, even if it was just one night away. This, however, is not always the case for those who run away.

Sometimes, there is more behind running away than being mad at parents for discipline. In fact, as of 2019, 34% of the time, children run away because of sexual abuse. [According to Family](#)

[Resources](#), 80% of those children are girls who have experienced deep, traumatizing sexual abuse from the ones that should be their safest place. They go on to remind the reader that going home isn't an option. It's not liked these children have the choice to come back into loving arms that would do anything to take care of them. Often, the fear of being violated again far exceeds the desire for a roof over their heads.

“The overwhelming number of children classified as homeless,” [writes APM](#), is a result of “families enduring periods of unstable housing and moving from place to place: emergency shelters, cars, houses of relatives or friends.” While this may be true, it would be clear that children who are homeless as a result of running away from their families often do not even have the luxury of a companion in such struggles, nor do they have the opportunity for someone to provide for them in any sense.

Logically, the importance of catering to immediate, mental health, and housing needs for the homeless child who experienced sexual abuse is key. Awareness is primarily the first step to any issue, but it does not stop there. These homeless children need to experience true safety and love all over again, and those able to provide any kind of unmerited support should rise to the occasion.

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