

# Homeless Youth

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Twenty-three percent of homeless people are under the age of eighteen and nine percent are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four according to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (2015). The American Psychological Association (APA) reported that between seven and eight percent of twelve to twenty-year-old youths spend a minimum of one night per year in a shelter (2009).

The APA also reported that although poverty can be one of the contributing factors to homelessness among this population, the causes can vary (2009). Family conflict can often lead to adolescent homelessness (APA, 2009). Some youths may choose to leave because of sexual or physical abuse (APA, 2009). Adolescents who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered sometimes are told to leave when they open up to their parents (APA, 2009). According to the APA, child welfare agency involvement and homelessness are strongly connected as well (2009). This is because homeless families are more likely to have their children taken and placed in foster care, and severing ties between parents and children (including through foster care) is often a strong predictor for not only homelessness, but emotional dysfunction as well (APA). Those who have grown out of foster care or juvenile justice placements often have nowhere to return to and with minimal job skills and little income it is often difficult for homeless adolescents to obtain safe and affordable housing (APA, 2009).

Homeless adolescents run a high risk of becoming victims and they are often a target for robberies and assaults (APA, 2009). Homelessness can also reinforce anti-social behaviors such as substance abuse (APA, 2009). A lack of legitimate income leads some adolescents to engage in prostitution which puts them at an even greater risk for harm (APA, 2009). Involvement in prostitution and substance abuse increases the risk of exposure to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (APA, 2009).

Homelessness can really force someone to grow up quicker than they need to. It is extremely difficult to develop marketable skills for the workplace when you have no one to guide you or provide you with some emotional support. This can lead some to seek income through activities such as prostitution and narcotics peddling. Often coupled with substance abuse, these behaviors put those involved at greater risk for victimization. This is especially true when discussing adolescents. It is our mission at T's 4 Hope to bring awareness to this issue. Homeless people are not just adults; there are many adolescents and children who are experiencing homelessness every day as well and with your help we can give these children a bit of the support they

need. We accept donations and volunteer work as well. If you are interested, please contact us at [Ts4Hope@yahoo.com](mailto:Ts4Hope@yahoo.com) or 954-867-6765.

References:

American Psychological Association. (2009).

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2015).