



## **Drug Addiction and Homelessness: A Tightly Knit Circle**

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“Don’t give money to the homeless,” says the common middle-class adult, “they’ll just use it to buy drugs.”

This is a quote that I grew up hearing. Though I didn’t interact with the homeless or hear their stories until much later in life, my first impression of homeless people was that all of them got to the place they are because of drug addiction. That is simply not true. Unfortunately, though, addiction to illegal drugs seems to be a dangerous trend in homeless communities. A 2017 [study](#) revealed that 26% of homeless people at the time were addicted to some sort of mind-altering chemical or drug.

Simply from the outside looking in, this could likely be the result of such extreme conditions experienced by the homeless. The struggle to find food and a safe place to sleep at night can be mentally taxing, to the degree that would drive someone to substance abuse. It could be that the homeless person never struggled with drug usage before, but harsh conditions drove him to participate in something he never thought he would. The idea of “escapism,” that is, the use of something as an escape from hard or depressing times, might apply here. Just the lowness of daily life as a homeless person could drive someone to use drugs and become addicted.

Further, homeless people who desire to overcome their addiction are offered less services than those who are not homeless. Hayley Hudson writes for RehabSpot.com [saying](#), “when food and shelter are the main priorities, some lack the motivation to seek substance use treatment and personal development.” Unfortunately, there are many times that overcoming drug addiction becomes a lower priority because of the nature of the homeless person’s life and environment. Being surrounded by many people that use illegal drugs all with the goal of getting through another day without food and comfort makes a difficult place for rehabilitation. It could become a tightly knit circle of dependency and encouragement for continued drug abuse.

So, hearing a quote like that, saying “don’t give money to those who need money” was a dangerous thing to learn. It made sense, I could help by buying food and drink for them. It did put a misconstrued image of the homeless in my mind, though. There are so many ways to help the homeless out of illegal drug use. You could buy them food and drink, provide the basic necessities, and have good conversations with them. Clearly, a very important aspect of helping those who struggle with drug addiction is to walk with them and support them (financially and otherwise) through rehabilitation.

Hopefully you have become a little more aware of the importance of these situations and can partner with T’s 4 Hope and other organizations that will help the homeless, including those that use illegal drugs.