



Domestic Violence and its Relation to Homelessness

By Nicole Arcieri

People all over the world experience homelessness for many different reasons. What is one of the main factors contributing to the homelessness crisis? Domestic Violence. According to the Cauf Society, domestic violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness globally. Domestic violence can include physical, emotional, sexual and economic abuse, according to domesticviolence.org. People who are victims of domestic violence oftentimes live with their abusive spouses and may end up leaving their homes in the interest of safety. According to domesticviolence.org, 20 people a minute are physically abused by someone close to them.

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, over 48,000 beds were set aside for victims of domestic violence for just one night in 2019. Additionally, women and youths are disproportionately affected by this phenomenon. Specifically, indigenous women face

higher rates of domestic violence as opposed to non-indigenous women, according to the Cauf Society. The U.S. has high rates of domestic violence cases, and that's just based on what is reported, as the Cauf Society's statistics show that victims of domestic abuse who are undocumented are less likely to report their abusers out of fear of getting deported.

Living on the streets can be life-saving for victims of domestic violence, however, making the decision to stay in an abusive relationship versus becoming homeless is a difficult one that no one should have to make. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, "Lack of affordable housing and long waiting lists for assisted housing mean that many women and their children are forced to choose between abuse at home and life on the streets." Moreover, victims of domestic violence may find it difficult to find a place on their own. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, "Victims often have poor credit records and employment histories because of the violence they have experienced. Landlords often discriminate against victims if they have a protection order or any other indicator of domestic violence."

Domestic violence has many faces. It is important that we protect and support all victims of domestic violence. In order to tackle the homelessness crisis at its root, we must evaluate what factors contribute to this phenomenon. Offering shelter to people who are homeless is a step, but to really get at the core of the problem, we must address the issues that cause homelessness. Learning more about the ways in which domestic violence may occur, working with organizations that offer support and being a positive influence and guiding light for survivors are just some of the ways we can ultimately end the homelessness crisis.