

Housing Insecurity in Relation to Sexual Violence



**A safe place to live is a human right for all.
However, societal inequities prevent equal
access to affordable, safe, and stable housing.**

Having a safe place to live is important for sexual assault survivors and access to safe, secure housing is also a protective factor that can buffer against sexual harassment, abuse, and assault. Homelessness is a risk factor for experiencing rape or sexual assault. People who are homeless experience disproportionate rates of sexual violence (National Sexual Violence Resource Center [NSVRC] 2020a). In one study, 78.3% of homeless women and 90% of homeless men surveyed had been subjected to rape, physical assault, and/or stalking at some point in their lifetimes. Historical and structural oppression is a main driver of homelessness, with Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) overrepresented in the homeless population (NSVRC, 2020b).

In our work to prevent sexual harassment, abuse, and assault, we share a vision for a world where individuals, families, and communities thrive. To realize this vision, we must create social and physical environments that provide every person the opportunities for good health and positive well-being. This means that health equity, the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2022) is also a major part of our work. Access to affordable and safe housing is a component of health equity (National Resource Center on Domestic Violence [NRCDV] & NSVRC, 2021).

As we work to prevent sexual violence, we can help eliminate housing insecurity, homelessness and increase access to safe, secure, and affordable housing, which will in turn help build safer communities, create health equity, and protect against sexual violence.

References

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