

Housing, Homelessness, and Sexual Violence Statistics

Sexual Violence Most Often Occurs At/Near Home

- More than 50% of all rape/sexual assault incidents were reported by victims to have occurred within 1 mile of their home or at their home (U.S. Department of Justice, 1997).

Runaway Homeless Youth

- Sixty-one percent of girls and 16% of boys report sexual abuse at home as reason for running away (Estes & Weiner, 2001).
- The National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Throwaway children estimate that 1.6 million children run away from home each year in the U.S.

Runaway Homeless Youth who Identify as LGBTQ

- According to the National Runaway Switchboard, about 40% of the 1.7 million runaway and homeless youth identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ) nationally.
- The National Runaway Switchboard estimates that young people who identify as LGBTQ are seven times more likely to be a victim of crime than their straight peers.

Runaway Homeless Youth at Risk for Sexual Exploitation

- One in three teens will be recruited by a pimp within 48 hours of leaving home (From National Runaway Switchboard).
- At least 100,000 to 300,000 youth are at risk for commercial sexual exploitation annually in the U.S. (Estes & Weiner, 2001)
- The most common age of entry into commercial sex industry in the U.S. is 12 years old (GEMS, 2009). For boys, it is 13.
- Studies show that the age at which youth leave home directly relates to sexual victimization on the streets; the younger they are when they leave, the more likely they are to be victimized (Tyler et al., 2004).
- Forty-four percent of homeless youth are fearful of being sexually assaulted, molested, or raped on the streets (Kipke et al., 1997).
- Twenty-four percent of homeless youth report witnessing someone being sexually assaulted, 16% of which occurred on the streets (Kipke et al., 1997).
- 70% of homeless youth report experiencing some form of violence, 32% of which includes sexual assault (Kipke et al., 1997).

Homelessness and Sexual Violence among Adults

- Lifetime risk for violent victimization for homeless women with mental illness is 97%, making sexual violence a normative experience for this population (Goodman, Fels & Glen, 2006).
- According to a study of homeless and marginally housed people, 32% of women, 27% of men, and 38% of transgendered persons reported either physical or sexual victimization in the previous year (Kushel et al., 2003).
- In a six-year study of 436 marginally housed and homeless single mothers in MA, 66% reported that they were severely abused by their caretakers in childhood, with 60% reporting abuse before the age of 12 and 43% reporting sexual abuse during childhood (The National Center on Family Homelessness, 2007).
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Homelessness, Sexual Violence, and Prostitution

- In a study of 325 women in prostitution, 50% reported history of child sexual abuse; 45% were homeless (Surratt et al., 2004). Most were staying at shelters, homes of other individuals, or on the streets
- In a study of 222 women engaged in prostitution, forced sex while in prostitution was commonly reported by women in escort business (32.1%), women in street prostitution (38.6%), women working out of drug houses (46.6%), and those engaged in survival sex (37.9%). Large percentages of women involved in prostitution were homeless (Raphael & Shapiro, 2002).

Sexual Violence by Landlords

- Thirty-eight percent of respondents to a national survey reported receiving reports of landlord sexual assault; in these cases, 79% of women reported that their landlords refused to repair locks, supply heat, hot water, or make the space “safe” (Keeley, 2006).
- Landlords also made sexual propositions, stalked tenants and/or engaged in unwanted sexual contact with the tenants before committing sexual assaults (Keeley, 2006).

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