

NOBODY DREAMS OF BEING HOMELESS



GROUP ACTIVITIES HANDOUT

GOALS

- To learn how homelessness affects youth across Canada
- To learn about homelessness from a youth perspective
- To learn about different reasons for youth homelessness

MATERIALS

- Laptop, or other device with access to YouTube
- Large sheets of paper for brainstorming responses
- Markers

OPENING QUESTIONS

All human beings need to have hopes and dreams. They give us things to look forward to, to strive for. After each question, give the group time to respond.

- What is one thing you are looking forward to this week/month?
- What is one thing you are looking forward to this year?
- Do you have any dreams that want for yourself for your future? What do you want to do when you grow up?

Every homeless person has their own hopes and dreams for themselves and their life. Every homeless person has a unique path that leads them to their situation. Every story is different. Obstacles and hardships often build up until homelessness becomes a forced reality. In 2017, 60% of homeless youth in Canada's capital reported domestic violence as their reason why they were forced to leave home.

Source: <https://www.unitedwayottawa.ca/youth-homelessness>

Image below via Shutterstock/Gullatawat Putchagarn



VIDEO STUDY

Note: Please turn on captions for the videos below. The following videos are interviews of homeless youth that can be pretty upsetting to listen to or read about. Please give trigger warnings for issues of domestic abuse, neglect, alcohol and drugs, mental illness and disorder, mention of physical violence, and mention of death of an interviewee. There are no graphic images. As always, you know your group best. Feel free to only show the video clips that you feel will be safe for your group.

Also, as of the time of producing this resource all links were live and active. Sometimes things on the internet change quickly and links are pulled down. If these links don't work, we hope you will understand.

Video 1 (warm up): Youth Services Bureau of Ottawa Public Service Announcement

(1.5 minutes long)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8Yq9RPH-bE>

Questions after video:

- Do you share similar dreams to the young woman in the video?
- Do you think you would have done anything different in her situation?

Now, watch the videos below and reflect on the following questions after each video. Encourage participants to brainstorm their ideas on paper, or discuss responses as a group. If you choose to write down responses, be sure to take them up after watching the videos.

1. What do we learn about the interviewee through the video?
2. What are the biggest obstacles that the interviewee faces?
3. How does learning about the interviewee's story make you feel?

CLOSING PRAYER

Hear our prayer today for all elders, adults, youth, and children who are homeless this day.

We pray for Nathan, Katie, Robyn, Mickey, Amy, and Lee Anne.

We pray for Terra. May light shine and lead her soul to rest in peace.

For those sleeping under bridges, on park benches, in doorways or bus stations.

For those who can only find shelter for the night but must wander in the daytime.

For families broken because they could not afford to pay the rent.

For those who have no relatives or friends who can take them in.

For those who have no place to keep possessions that remind them who they are.

For those who are afraid and hopeless.

For those who have been betrayed by our social safety net.

For all these people, we pray that you will provide shelter, security and hope.

We pray for those of us with warm houses and comfortable beds that we not be lulled into complacency and forgetfulness.

Jesus, help us to see your face in the eyes of every homeless person we meet.

Empower us to work for justice and peace through words and deeds, and through the political means we have.

Give us courage, spirit, and open hearts to greet and meet the homeless people in our neighborhoods.

In your name we pray. Amen.

Video 2: Nathan in Ottawa, Ontario (2:10 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHIKwt2N-A8>

Video 3: Katie in Winnipeg, Canada (5:40 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9E5OFdl8wNI>

Video 4: Robyn and Mickey in Ottawa, Ontario

(5:24 min)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_hBg7xZ3Yw

Video 5: Amy in Kelowna, British Columbia

(1:47 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgL78z61ZNY>

Video 6: Terra in Toronto, Ontario (6:16 min)

Special trigger warning – Terra died shortly after this video was shot. She was hit by a train. Knowing this information makes this video extra hard to watch, but it also provides an avenue to deeper reflection. Please discern if watching this video will be ok for your group.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1sT44x4BXw>

Video 7: Lee Anne in Montreal, Quebec (2:12 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOsRPgQnsQg>