

Mental Health

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness/Homeless Hub

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<https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/topics/mental-health>

First read		Second read
<p>Highlight and then record 3-4 of the most important words and/or phrases from this section in this column, with a short explanation of why they seem important:</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p> <p>→</p>	<p>People with poor mental health are more susceptible to the three main factors that can lead to homelessness: poverty, disaffiliation, and personal vulnerability. Because they often lack the capacity to sustain employment, they have little income. Delusional thinking may lead them to withdraw from friends, family and other people. This loss of support leaves them fewer coping resources in times of trouble. Mental illness can also impair a person’s ability to be resilient and resourceful; it can cloud thinking and impair judgment. For all these reasons, people with mental illness are at greater risk of experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Homelessness, in turn, amplifies poor mental health. The stress of experiencing homelessness may exacerbate previous mental illness and encourage anxiety, fear, depression, sleeplessness and substance use. The needs of people experiencing homelessness with mental illnesses are similar to those without mental illnesses: physical safety, education, transportation, affordable housing, and affordable medical/dental treatment. When providing care to those experiencing homelessness, it is essential to create a non-threatening and supportive atmosphere, address basic needs (e.g. food and shelter), and provide accessible care.</p> <p>People with mental illness experience homelessness for longer periods of time and have less contact with family and friends. In general, 30-35% of those experiencing homelessness, and up to 75% of women experiencing homelessness, have mental illnesses. 20-25% of people experiencing homelessness suffer from concurrent disorders (severe mental illness and addictions). People who have severe mental illnesses over-represent those experiencing homelessness, as they are often released from hospitals and jails without proper community supports in place.</p> <p>Community-based mental health services play an important role. Homelessness could be drastically reduced if people with severe mental illness were able to access supportive housing as well as other necessary community supports.</p>	<p>The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty lists the top causes for homelessness among families as 1) lack of affordable housing 2) unemployment 3) poverty and 4) low wages, in that order. For unaccompanied adults, it lists 1) lack of affordable housing 2) unemployment 3) poverty and 4) mental illness and lack of needed services, and 5) substance abuse and lack of needed services, in that order. This organization lists two different causes after poverty. What are they?</p> <p>→</p> <p>Discuss some of the ways that people with mental illness are at greater risk for homelessness.</p> <p>→</p>

	<p>They encounter more barriers to employment and tend to be in poorer health than other people experiencing homelessness. Housing outreach services that provide a safe place to live are a vital component of stabilizing the illness and helping individuals on their journey to recovery.</p>	
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