



November 2015

Homelessness

National Homeless Youth Awareness Month

<http://www.nctsn.org/resources/public-awareness/national-homeless-youth-awareness-month#q5>

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network is using their site as a repository for excellent material to help understand the factors impacting children and families experiencing homelessness. Noting that 2.5 million children and youth experience the loss of their home and often their friends and community. Of course, their sense of emotional security and stability is understandably disrupted. This site has fact sheets, psychological first aid for families and youth and guidance for dealing with complex trauma. The page includes numerous additional links to paper and resources for families, educators, and mental health providers. Great resources for supporting families and youth.

The National Center on Family Homelessness

<http://www.familyhomelessness.org/index.php>

This is another comprehensive site that also addresses research questions. The site dedicates sections to children and families, veterans and domestic violence. The site includes a trauma-informed curriculum for displaced persons which highlights the importance of system wide approaches to address this complicated issue. See http://www.familyhomelessness.org/tic_curriculum.php?p=ss

There area also some great webinars on working with children and families experiencing homelessness. See <http://www.familyhomelessness.org/webinars.php?p=s>

Fourteen Children's Books about Homelessness

<http://humaneeducation.org/blog/2013/11/11/14-childrens-picture-books-homelessness/>

This site lists book titles, author names and a recommendation about which grade level the book might be used. It also includes a brief description of the book. For example (from the site):

“Fly Away Home” by Eve Bunting
1991. Grades PreK-3

A young boy talks about his and his father's lives living in an airport and has hope for himself when he sees a trapped bird find freedom.

"The Lady in the Box" by Ann McGovern

1997. Grades K-4

When two siblings discover a homeless woman living in their neighborhood, they discover how easy it can be to make a difference in someone's life.

"Mutt Dog" by Stephen Michael King

2005. Grades PreK-2

Mutt Dog is brave and fast and gentle and loyal and smart, but he's also hungry, and he doesn't have a home. Then one day his luck changes, and he at last finds a family—and a cozy, loving place to belong.



Play Therapy with Children Experiencing Homelessness

Sturm, D. C., & Hill, C. (2015). Play Therapy with Children Experiencing Homelessness. In D.A. Crenshaw & A. L. Stewart (Eds.), *Play Therapy: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice* (pp. 276-289). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

This chapter is a useful resource for information about working with this population as well as effective play therapy approaches. These approaches include child-centered play, sibling play, filial therapy and school-based counseling. A clinical case example is included to help illustrate these approaches. The authors provide an important reminder to practitioners to examine personal beliefs related to the population and the situation, noting that,

“the time spent in the shelter or temporary housing may actually represent security and stability. In families plagued by interpersonal violence, substance abuse, community violence, and extreme poverty, the time spent in a shelter may be the first time in a long time where they have been able to feel safe together. And it may be that the very factors contributing to their current situation are, in fact, the most significant to their therapy.”(p.285)

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Playfully,

Anne

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