

WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness is:

**Living or staying in a place not meant
for human habitation.**

- ❖ Car
- ❖ Tent
- ❖ Storage unit
- ❖ Bench
- ❖ Public (street, alley, yard, etc...)
- ❖ Condemned building

WHAT IS POVERTY

Poverty is:

The state of being
extremely poor.

- ❖ Financial
- ❖ Lack of other resources
- ❖ Lack of support

P o w e r

- Misuse of()
- Lack of communication
- ...

Labeling

- Stand out
- Different
- Lost identity
- ...

(Social) Exclusion

- Being avoided
- Rushed the appointment
- ...

STIGMA

- Blamed for()
- Misunderstood
- Unworthy
- ...

Stereotyping

- Misuse of()
- Lack of communication
- ...

Discrimination

- Hostility
- Substandard care
- ...

P o w e r

STEREOTYPE

- ❖ A set form; convention.
- ❖ *In Sociology:* a simplified and standardized conception or image invested with special meaning and held in common by members of a group.
- ❖ A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

STIGMA

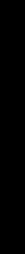
- ❖ Stigma is a Greek word that in its origins referred to a type of marking or the tattoo that was cut or burned into the skin of criminals, slaves, or traitors in order to visibly identify them as blemished or morally polluted persons. These individuals were to be avoided particularly in public places.
- ❖ A mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person.

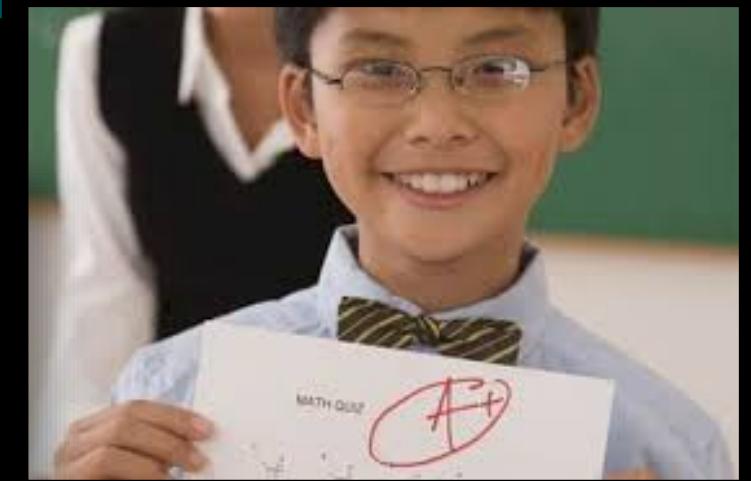
MORE STIGMA

- ❖ Social stigma is the disapproval of, or discrimination against, a person based on perceivable social characteristics that serve to distinguish them from other members of a society. Social stigmas are commonly related to culture, gender, race, intelligence, and health.
- ❖ “By definition, of course, we believe the person with a stigma is not quite human. On this assumption we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often unthinkingly, reduce his chances.” -
- Irvin Goffman, *Stigma*

Stereotype - why we think something or someone is that which it is.

Stigma - what we think about something or someone which is.





ONTOLOGY

Ontology is:

- ❖ The branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being.
- ❖ A set of concepts and categories in a subject area or domain that shows their properties and the relations between them.

WHICH CAME FIRST?

Sometimes stereotyping and stigma are so closely related that they can appear to be circular in nature.

POVERTY



STEREOTYPING POVERTY

- ❖ Live in run down house/project
- ❖ Live in the “hood”
- ❖ Dirty self and family
- ❖ Old/torn/dirty clothes
- ❖ Foul smelling
- ❖ Free or reduced lunch for children
- ❖ Utilizing social service agencies
- ❖ Going to food pantries
- ❖ Food stamps
- ❖ Drives a beat up car
- ❖ Frequenting certain types of gas stations or stores
- ❖ Poor manners and behaviorisms

STIGMATIZING POVERTY

- ❖ Bum
- ❖ Poor
- ❖ Lazy
- ❖ Nasty
- ❖ Diseased
- ❖ Drug addict
- ❖ Alcoholic
- ❖ Useless
- ❖ Worthless
- ❖ Undeserving
- ❖ User and abuser
- ❖ Crazy
- ❖ Problematic
- ❖ Criminals
- ❖ Uneducated
- ❖ Freeloader
- ❖ Thieves
- ❖ Untrustworthy



STEREOTYPING HOMELESSNESS

- ❖ Unshaven
- ❖ Saggy/dark eyes
- ❖ Stumbling while walking
- ❖ Pushing a cart down the street
- ❖ Carrying a backpack everywhere
- ❖ Asking for money
- ❖ Dirty
- ❖ Messy hair
- ❖ Old/torn clothing
- ❖ Sleeping in a car in parking lot
- ❖ Sleeping on a bench
- ❖ Going to a soup kitchen

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THE TRUTH ABOUT POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS

- ❖ Homelessness and poverty are not people, homelessness and poverty is the episode or event at that particular point in their lives.
- ❖ Homelessness and poverty is not an identity, yet it can become such.

“Normalization is the effort on the part of the stigmatized individual to present himself as an ordinary person.” - Irvin Goffman, Stigma

- ❖ Many homeless individuals and families refuse to identify as homeless.
- ❖ Many times those in poverty and homelessness do not want others to know about it or are ashamed of the situation, thus they do things to act normal and portray a sense of well-being and connectedness.

METHODS OF NORMALIZATION

- ❖ Find places to wash clothes
 - ❖ Find places to shower
- ❖ Try to dress up
 - ❖ Regular grooming
- ❖ Hanging out in places inconspicuous
 - ❖ Living in woods versus streets or parks
- ❖ Don't talk about it
 - ❖ Don't pan handle
- ❖ Don't tell friends and family

WHY POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS

Societal Factors

- ❖ Systematic structures and processes
 - William Julius Wilson - More Than Just Race
- ❖ Lack of education
- ❖ Generational
- ❖ Runaway youth
- ❖ Age out of foster care

WHY POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS

Personal Factors

- ❖ Poor choices
- ❖ Addiction and Substance abuse
- ❖ Money management
- ❖ Grandiosity
- ❖ Criminal activity
- ❖ Physical health
- ❖ Mental health

WHY POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS

Situational Factors

- ❖ Loss of job
- ❖ Lost opportunity
- ❖ Disaster
- ❖ Divorce/separation
- ❖ Fleeing a situation (DV)

Overcoming the Stigma

Do we or do we not have the answers for
overcoming STIGMA???

“Lies only exist if we create them, and they only survive if we believe in them. Lies are a distortion of the word, a distortion of the meaning of a message, and that distortion is in the reflection, the human mind. Lies aren’t real - they’re our creation - but we give them life and make them real in the virtual reality of our mind.”

- Don Miguel Ruiz, The Fifth Agreement

WE DO HAVE THE ANSWERS

Personal Education

“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.” - Malcolm X

Self-reflection

“The journey into self-love and self-acceptance must begin with self-examination... until you take the journey of self-reflection, it is almost impossible to grow or learn in life.” - Iyanla Vanzant

Getting Involved

“If you really want to see change, and have change, you’re going to have to get involved.” - Cindy McCain

WE DO HAVE THE ANSWERS

Not Making Assumptions

“If we don’t make assumptions, we can focus our attention on the truth, not on what we thinking is the truth. Then we see life the way it is, not the way we want to see it. As we shall see, when we don’t believe our own assumptions, the power of our belief that we invested in them returns to us.” - Don Miguel Ruiz, *The Fifth Agreement*

Empathizing and Understanding

“Sometimes all a person wants is an empathetic ear; all he or she needs is to talk it out. Just offering a listening ear and an understanding heart for his or her suffering can be a big comfort.”

— Roy T. Bennett

Discussing

“Discussion is an exchange of knowledge; argument an exchange of ignorance.”

— Robert Quillen

WE DO HAVE THE ANSWERS

Exercising Compassion

“Give to everyone who begs from you; and of them who takes their good away from you do not ask them again. And as you wish that men would do to you, so do to them.

- Jesus

Listening

“Listen with curiosity. Speak with honesty. Act with integrity. The greatest problem with communication is we don’t listen to understand. We listen to reply. When we listen with curiosity, we don’t listen with the intent to reply. We listen for what’s behind the words.”

— Roy T. Bennet

Embracing

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

— Leo Buscaglia

Stereotypes and Stigmas are but fallacies to reality. They do not reflect the truth of the human condition.

Love and compassion are the cornerstones for understanding, which becomes the foundation of truth. Truth advocates the existence of respect and dignity. - WN