



Homelessness

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Where do homeless people live?

Hidden & Complete Homelessness

- Complete homelessness - public
 - On the street
 - In homeless shelters
- Hidden homelessness
 - Couch-surfing with friends
 - In hotels
 - In cars
 - In college/university

Statistics on youth homelessness

Every year more than 2 million kids in the US will face some time being homeless

About 50% of teens reported intense conflict or abuse in the home as a major reason why they are homeless

Almost 40% of the homeless in the US are under 18.

About 50% of young people who leave foster care at age 18 become homeless in 6 months



Sara's story

Choose the best options to help yourself out of each situation.



Sara's story

Your name is Sara. You are 17 years old. You live with your mom, who is a nurse. Mom is struggling to pay rent.



One day, mom tells you that she can't make payments anymore and is going to lose the house. You have to move in with her boyfriend. He is always angry with you and loses his temper often. When you move in, his yelling at you and mom gets worse. What do you do?

Option 1: Do nothing and deal with it.

Option 2: Pack a backpack and leave your house.



Option 1: Do nothing and deal with it.

You do nothing and put up with his yelling. You and mom get more and more miserable each day. Nothing changes. Bad choice.

Try Option 2: Pack a backpack and leave your house.



Option 2: Pack a backpack and leave.

You tell your mom you want to leave. She says you are always so dramatic, and decides to let you go. You are hurt that she doesn't fight for you to stay.

You pack a backpack with some clothes and only a few dollars. What's your next move?

Option 3: Text a teacher for help.

Option 4: Text a friend for help.



Option 3: Text a teacher.

You decide to text your favorite teacher. He is shocked at your situation and calls Child Protective Services. CPS orders you back to your house. They find no evidence of abuse in your house so you must stay. Mom is furious. No change, try again.

Try Option 4: Text a friend for help.



Option 4: Text a friend

You text a friend and her parents agree to let you stay at her house for the night. You eat dinner with them, feeling part of a happy family. They give you a blanket and let you crash on the couch. The next day, you realize you have nowhere to go again.

Option 5: Ask your friend to stay again at her house.

Option 6: Go back to mom's boyfriend's house.



Option 5: Stay with the same friend

Your friend agrees you can stay with them again. Several weeks pass and you start getting used to staying at her house and love the sleepovers and talking with her parents. After 2 months, her parents sit you down and tell you that you have to leave. You've been eating their food and taking up space in the living room. What do you do?

Option 7: Text another friend

Option 8: Get upset and run out of the house.



Option 6: Go back to mom's house

You head back to your mom's house, hoping your absence made her miss you. Your mom is happy to have you back, but her boyfriend is furious and insists you leave. Mom looks unhappy but doesn't say anything to stop him. Try again.

Try Option 5: Ask your friend to stay again at her house.



Option 7: Text another friend

You text another friend who happily agrees to let you stay in the couch in their basement. You feel grateful for another happy family and another night's dinner. Several weeks pass, but you notice again that the parents seem to be getting annoyed with you always there.

Option 9: Text another friend.



Option 8: Run out of the house

You get upset and pack your things and storm out of the house. You walk around outside but it gets dark and you get scared. It's cold and the streets feel unsafe.

Try Option 7: Text another friend



Option 9: Text another friend

You text yet another friend but he doesn't respond. You text your whole friend list but no one will let you stay.

Option 10: Beg your friends for someone to let you sleep over.

Option 11: Head to a house party you heard about



Option 10: Beg your friends

Your friends say that everyone in school is talking about how you always need a place to stay. Your face burns red in embarrassment. Try again.

Try Option 11: Head to a house party you heard about.



Option 11: Head to a house party.

You pack your backpack and head to a house party you heard is happening today. You are so stressed out that you can't enjoy yourself. You drink too much to try to stop thinking about everything, and end up talking to a guy who graduated high school a few years ago. You end up spending the night with him because you have no other choice of where to sleep.

Option 12: Crash at his place.



Option 12: Crash at his place.

The next morning he drives you to school. He says you can stay at his apartment since you have nowhere to go. You don't like him at all, so you really don't want to.

Option 13: Ask around school for a new place to stay.

Option 14: Crash at his place again.



Option 13: Ask around school.

It's definite - everyone in school has heard about your situation. You're sure they avoid you when they see you walking towards them - no one wants to be the next house for you to spend weeks at. It's an awful day - you can't focus and you decide to skip the rest of your classes.

Try Option 14: Crash at his place again.



Option 14: Crash at his place again.

You end up staying with John again. He's rude and his apartment is dirty, but he lets you stay over so you deal with it.

Option 15: Weeks pass with John.



Option 15: Weeks pass with John.

You've gotten used to living with John. He's a bad influence - he always gets you to cut class and stay with him and drink. You don't want to, but he keeps suggesting he might not let you stay anymore if you don't skip class to hang out with him.

Option 16: Ignore him. Go to school anyways.

Option 17: Skip class and drink with him most days.



Option 16: Ignore him. Go to school.

You ignore John and go to school. It's important to you to keep studying. But you are so depressed that you can't focus, and you feel everyone is judging you for your family life, and for staying with someone like John. Your grades get worse, and you decide just to quit school. What's the point of staying?

Try Option 17: Skip class and drink with him.



Option 17: Skip class and drink with him

You skip too many classes and end up getting too far behind to catch up this year. You decide to just quit school - what's the point of staying? You drink too much, upset at having no choice but staying with John, and upset you became a high school drop-out.

Option 18: Reach out to your teacher for help.



Option 18: Reach out to your teacher

You hate wasting your days like this and decide to text your teacher for help. He reports your situation to Child Protective Services. They investigate, find your mom has been neglecting you, and permanently remove you from her care.

Option 19: Move in with a foster family and get adopted by them

Option 20: Move into a group home



Option 19: Move in with a foster family

CPS places you with a foster family. You find it hard to adjust to a new family's rules, and you feel you are treated differently. You thought they would adopt you, but because you have behavioral issues and depression, and because you are so old, they say you are too much to handle and ask to end the placement.

Try Option 20: Move into a group home



Option 20: Move into a group home

You move into a group home with other abused and neglected children. You hate it - there are so many rules and you have no privacy and no freedom. All the other young people are always acting out. You can't go anywhere without someone showing their ID card to see you. You can't wait until you turn 18 to leave.

Option 21: Leave foster care when you turn 18 years old



Option 21: Leave care at age 18

You turn 18 years old. You are given the option of staying under the care of the government until age 21. Even though this means you would have a bed and food, you decide to leave.

Option 22: Try to find an apartment and job.



Option 22: Find an apartment and job.

You look around for an apartment, but no one wants to rent to an 18 year old. Because of your interrupted school experience, no one wants to hire you for a job. You have no savings, and you don't know where you will stay tonight.

Option 23: Walk into the town's homeless shelter.



Option 23: Go to the homeless shelter.

You decide to head to the local homeless shelter. You can't believe this is happening to you - the outside looks dirty and there are a ton of people sitting around. You speak to the receptionist. She says you are not high priority because you can still go to your mom's house as an adult. She says there are no beds for you tonight.

Option 24: Call John.

Option 25: Sleep outside.



Option 24: Go see John.

You walk over to John's house. You explain to him what had happened, and he decides to let you back in. You stay in a relationship with him, eventually getting pregnant a year later. You think about your mom's situation and regret finding yourself in the same position as she was. You're determined to figure out how to leave John one day, but with no savings, no family to help, no education, and no work history, you know it will be a long road ahead of you.



Option 25: Sleep outside.

You are fed up and tired, so you head to the park. You find a bench in a dark and hidden part of the park. You are nervous, but decide to roll up your jacket and sleep on the bench. You can't sleep for hours-the bench hurts your back and the cold sits in your bones. You are petrified of every sound. When you finally wake up in the morning, you find your backpack has been stolen.

Try Option 24: Go see John.



Thoughts?



How many choices did she actually have?

Education, job, foster care

Is being homeless an individual failure?

Intergenerational

Brainstorm reasons for homelessness

What are some reasons why a young person might become homeless?

Reasons for homelessness

- Unable to find work
- Unable to make enough money
- Unable to find rent they can pay for (housing too expensive)
- Health care emergency
- Run away from bad family situations
- Disability - physical or mental illness, can't work
- Natural disasters
- Leaving foster care

What is the experience of being homeless or in a shelter like?

Pursuit of happiness & danger