

## Poverty Simulation Reflection

As I am writing this paper on my new laptop, in my comfortable, warm house I feel extremely spoiled and blessed. I have never had to worry about not having electricity, heat and air, or money. I forget to be grateful for these things because I do not notice that they are there because they have always been. The risk of becoming homeless and having the electricity shut off is a constant reality for these families in poverty and it has never crossed my mind. Being more aware of the struggles that people face will make me a better nurse because I can treat more than just the physical ailments they have.

The kids in the videos are constantly watching people and wishing that they had what those people take for granted. The kids do not wish for lavish things but instead just a warm house, money to buy food, and jobs for their parents. The money that some of the kids work to get like mowing the lawn or picking up cans, has to go to their parents to help buy food or gas. It devastates me that these kids have nothing and can virtually do nothing about it.

All of these kids had to grow up fast and they know/worry about things that kids should not even realize. Even though some of the kids are homeless they still want to reach out and help others that are just as unfortunate as they are. None of the kids in the videos are bitter about their situation, but they all want to make something of themselves and not live like this forever.

Depression, anxiety, and fear are a common struggle for the parents. Some do not choose to live this way and do not want their kids to have to live like this. The shock of going from having what you need to moving into a homeless shelter and not being able to afford food is devastating. I loved that when the parents did find jobs, they were proud of any kind of work they could get. There was no complaining about the labor they had to do, only joy for having a job that pays. No parent wants their family to be in a position to lose their house, not have food to eat, or living in their car. Some of the mental illnesses that parent go through because of their low income and struggles affect the kids for the rest of their lives whether they know it or not.

Children living in poverty are at a higher risk for developing illnesses, experiencing toxic stress, and having an altered growth pattern. All of this can lead to a lower educational attainment, which will lead to the inability to rise up and out of their current living situation. Intervening and promoting proper development can improve health, behavior, and learning for these children. Living in poverty takes its toll on everyone involved. Doing what you can to help those struggling with homelessness and poverty can reduce the rates of crime, teen pregnancy, high school dropout rates, and substance abuse.

Childhood trauma can change the physiology of a child. Living in an environment with an abusing parent, someone who struggles with a mental disorder, constant exposure to adversity, abandonment, or fear; or being homeless will affect the child physically and mentally. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; physical or emotional neglect; parental mental illness, substance dependence, incarceration; parental separation or divorce; or domestic violence. ACEs are very common and there is a quiz to take to see how many ACEs you have experienced. The higher your ACE score the higher your risk for health issues are even if you do not participate in risky behaviors yourself. The brain and body develop different when exposed to ACEs and the more you are exposed to the more health risks you will have. Being aware of the number of ACEs patients have will allow you to understand why they behave the way they do and get to the conclusion of the medication or therapy that they are in need of.

As a nurse I need to be aware of the economic conditions in which my patients live in. This will allow me to know the type of resources I can make available to them. Poverty can affect so many different aspects of a child's life: birthweight, nutrition, lack of immunizations, language development, mental capabilities, and social development. I will know how many ACEs my patient has and treat them accordingly. Being aware of all aspects of my patient's life will make me a better nurse. Being an advocate in the community and helping outside of the hospital walls will also make me a better, well-rounded nurse.