

Poverty Assignment

In the video "Poor Kids", all the children were currently dealing with hunger, homelessness, bullying, depression, or some other awful thing. Even further, one of the children was realizing that because his family had no money for opportunities now, he would not get to live his dream when he got older. Upon revisiting the children five years later, not much had really changed. Unfortunately, they had just gotten more used to it. It was difficult to watch at times because I have gone through similar situations. It is also difficult as a parent to imagine your child having to think those things. At times, I felt fortunate because I am no longer in a situation like that, but I also felt guilty for having so many things to take for granted. The ending was just as frustrating as the beginning in that these children have grown so accustomed to living in poverty. I guess that the most important feeling I have is being thankful for the opportunities that I have. Though this does not help with the feelings of sadness after watching this. I am baffled every day that there are people who live in such an affluent country and are still unable to provide food for their families. Assistance programs are greatly needed but are not always able to do enough.

In the video "Hard Times Generation", another concerning point is that the parents do not even feel as though they can ask for help because of the risk that someone will take their children away because they cannot afford a home. One of the girls in that video is a great example of some of the ways in which poverty can affect a child's mental status. The interviewer commented on how "grown up" she sounded but this is not a good thing. All kids should have an opportunity to be a kid. The homeless population in the area was so immense that the shelters were unable to even accommodate them all. Millions of dollars in aid are not even able to make a dent in the problem. Even more unfortunately, there are those in this country that believe that assistance is just making the problem worse and creating "lazy" people.

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In the two poverty simulators, I ended the “game” with money, but at what cost. There is no way to win. Either you run out of money and have to realize that you would be starving and homeless, or you have money but have a poor relationship with your children and so much stress that you are not able to function properly. For many Americans, it is not a game. They work back-breaking jobs with no health insurance only to come home and still not have the money to pay their bills and feed their children. Having to decide whether to make an extra fifty dollars or support your child in the arts and academics, is heartbreaking.

The Harvard “Brain Hero” and “TED-talk” videos confirm that events that take place during childhood truly shape one’s future and therefore, the future of those around them. If a child’s education is impacted by the adverse events that they experience, that decreases the likelihood that they will go on to college and get an adequately paying job. This would obviously impact their future children and the cycle would continue. Not only does it affect finances, these struggles have a negative impact on health. Chronic stress contributes to many diseases in a population that is least likely to have access to quality healthcare. Adverse childhood experiences negatively affect brain development and immune systems. Childhood trauma even decreases life expectancy from diseases and from suicide. Unfortunately, this is not being treated like the disease that it is. It is essential to treat poverty as though it needs to be cured.

These situations are heartbreaking and all too common. The videos as well as my life experiences will impact my practice in that I will be more understanding of those who are less fortunate. Wealth should not determine the right to basic healthcare needs. It is very important that all healthcare professionals treat everyone equally, no matter their finances. Not only will I be sure to do that, but I will also continue to volunteer at shelters and food banks to attempt to help the local population. I have a great passion for speaking out about the inequality of certain

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populations regarding healthcare and basic needs. No one should have to choose between healthcare and feeding their family.