

I've always heard about the word poverty, but I never took the time to learn about what it means, and how many people are living in poverty not only in the United States, but worldwide. Adverse Childhood Experiences has never been brought to my attention, so I hadn't heard about what it is and how it affects a child's mental and physical health until this module. It's a very sad world we live in today, with how poverty and adverse childhood experiences can affect a child's future in such a great way, and after learning about the two, I want to be able to recognize and help these types of children through not only my nursing practice, but in my everyday life.

I wasn't sure what to expect when I started to watch the first movie over poverty. It broke my heart to hear one of the little girls talking about how all their storage got thrown away because her parents were unable to pay the bills. I understand not being able to have a storage unit if you don't pay the bills, but I had no idea they could just throw away a person's belongings. One young boy said, "I'm a 14-year-old boy with nothing going for him," and it was just heartbreaking to hear, because he already has the word failure in his mind when it comes to thinking of his future. Another family had to give up their dog to the pound before moving to a motel room, because they couldn't afford to take care of the dog. This was another eye-opening situation for me, because I could never understand giving my dog up, but that just shows how fortunate I am to be able to have the decision to care for my dog and never give her up. When they got to their motel room, there was only one small bed for one adult and two kids, no refrigerator, and no microwave. The family ended up having to use their sink as their "refrigerator" and filled it with ice daily to try to keep their essential groceries from getting spoiled. Another family through the poverty documentary ended up having to live in a shelter, and one of the little boys said, "you don't want people to find out you live here, people will make fun of you." It's sad how embarrassed the little boy was of his living situation, I can only imagine how it mentally and emotionally affects him, especially if he gets made fun of for it.

The situation those kids and parents had to go through every single day is unimaginable, and it makes me want to make a difference in the lives of children going through poverty.

The second video about the children living in cars was unique to watch how each kid's thought process was about their living situation. One of the kids said, "it's not that much of an embarrassment, it's only life, you do what you need to do," when asked about how she felt living in a truck. I loved how positive the little girl was about her living situation, because it takes a tough person, especially being a kid to be so positive having to live out of a truck. Since they did live out of their car which doesn't have a shower or sink, they talked about having to get ready at gas stations and having to alternate gas stations each morning, so they didn't get ran off by the workers. I've personally known a family that had to get ready at a gas station, even though they had a house, because their water was shut off from not paying the bills. Some of the other kids that were interviewed talked about how scary it was living out of their car and how they were afraid someone would come rob them or their parents of the little money they had. I can't imagine how scared they all feel, because I get scared walking to the Walmart parking lot alone, it's just unimaginable what these kids are going through daily. Throughout the video I was shocked to find out a lot of parents had to lie about their addresses on school paperwork, because there was no option for "living out of a car," and they didn't want their kids to get taken away by CPS. It's a sad situation these parents must go through, because they love their kids and don't want them getting taken away.

Although the Brain Development and Ted Talk videos weren't very long, they were filled with so much information I've never heard of. It was interesting to me how early destruction in a child's life can affect the way a child's brain develops. I always knew having a stressful life can affect a person mentally, but I never knew it could affect the way a brain develops. It's sad how many people go through childhood trauma, and how it could put a toll on their future. In the Ted Talk, it was talked about how kids were referred to her for ADHD, but she

was unable to make that diagnosis, and ended up finding out most of the kids she saw went through so much trauma she knew something else was going on. It makes me wonder about all of the “trouble makers” I went to school and if they were “trouble makers” not because they liked to be bad, but because they had so much going on at home that no one knew about. This is important and I’m so glad I learned this through the Ted Talk, because it opens my eyes to be more compassionate towards these troubled kids, and not to judge them right away, but to try and figure out what’s really going on in their life. This will help me in my nursing career, because I think I want to work in the children’s emergency room, and I need to have the compassion for every kid I encounter.

I believe how great of a threat adverse childhood experiences are to a developing child as well as how underrecognized they are because I have never heard anything about how it affects a child’s brain, immune system, and so much more until this module. From this day forward, I hope to always have an open mind, and to never judge before I know what someone is or has gone through. It’s so important to me to be the difference in someone’s life, and I truly believe these videos and simulation activities have tremendously helped me work to be a better person.