

Poverty and Adverse Childhood Experiences

For me I think the biggest thing I learned or maybe I should say was reinforced is how close a lot of us are to the poverty line. Poverty does not always look like what some people imagine, I listen to these children and I think about my own childhood. People sometimes look at you and do not realize that a lot of the stuff you own was given to you, or that at some point you had it and your family went from being "ok" to being poor. I never lived in a car or a shelter but a lot of times we had to ask family for shelter and for some reason I feel identified with these kids. As one of the girls in "Poor Kids" said, one of my biggest dreams as a child was to have my own room. I find it so interesting that as a kid I would sometimes think if we would have to eventually live in a car and how that would work. Just like those kids I thought that education was my only way out and my heart breaks for them. I never went hungry and that is where the difference comes, somehow my parents or my relatives always made sure that there was something for us to eat. I admire those kids in both "Poor Kids" and "Hard Times Generation: Families living in cars" because they seem so tough and like the reporter in second video said, these kids have been forced to mature faster because of the circumstances in which they have grown.

I think that poverty plays such a strong roll in your mental health and the way in which you view life. As a kid life is tough as it is and when you throw poverty into the mix, it makes it so much harder. Bringing old clothes to school, having other children know that you are part of the free meals program, not knowing if there will be food when you get home. I thought it was very interesting how one of the girls in "Poor Kids" seem in a way kind of pessimistic about the future and mentions how one day everyone is going to be poor and she even includes the person behind the camera. She has gone through so much that it has change her perspective in a way that levels the balance not by saying "one day I will be rich" but by saying one day "we'll all be poor". Kids are so perceiving that even if the parents never cried in front of them which I hardly doubt, that makes a mark on them. As one of the

dads says how this makes him feel like less of a father for not being able to provide, I am sure that makes a mark on children.

I think that as a nurse you have to be able to realize that these children might cross your path and you have to pay a lot of attention because it will not always be so obvious. I think that just as our bodies learn to compensate so do our behaviors. A lot of these children do not want you to know about their needs and situations for fear and embarrassment but that does not mean that they do need our attention. I think that as a nurse I want to more compassionate and not be so fast to judge families about their situation because so many people live every day one step close from becoming poor. Both the "Play Spent" and the "Making tough choices" simulations make you realize how difficult it could be living paycheck to paycheck, and sometimes regardless of the route you take, something could go wrong or set you back. Sometimes these families do not seem to get a break and one thing happens after another and it is not as easy as it seems. I think that out of all the statistics, one of the more interesting to me was that "among the developed countries, the US has the highest number of children leaving in poverty".

The TED talk was really interesting also, it does not surprise me that adverse childhood goes on to create more sick children and adults. However, even though some of the things seem obvious when you listen to them, it makes them more real when you hear them. I think I agree with a lot of what was said in "Nadine Burke Harris: How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across A Lifetime". Prevention is part of our job, and if we learn to see how trauma affects in the future, we could prevent problems later in life. As the video "developing child" says, it is important to stimulate a child's brain but in order to do that we have to work together so that we could get rid of the obstacles that are encountered along the way. It is not enough to say that a child needs stimulation or an environment free of trauma if we do not do anything to prevent that trauma or to lessen the effects of that trauma.

