

Samantha Gonzalez

Poverty Simulation

There are various factors for poverty, and specifically child poverty. Child poverty can be due to the parent being unemployed or because of low income. Other factors can range from parent's education to parent's health to possibly even size of family. Unfortunately, living in poverty can cause limited access to health care, possible lack of housing or food, lack of education and so on. All potential effects of poverty can impact both parents and children in many ways.

The documentary *Poor Kids* was interesting to watch. I remember when I was a younger, my dad would tell me stories of when he worked at McDonald's. I was about 6 months old, and my mom did not work while he was working his one low income job. In order to have food on the table, he would go to the dumpsters behind McDonald's and try to find the leftover food they would throw away to bring home just to make sure my mom and older brother could eat. Thankfully, I don't remember any of these moments, but hearing about it was hard. Watching this documentary showed that as young as these kids were, they saw everything their parents were undergoing. Brittany mentioned that she didn't have hot water because the bills were not paid. That is not something a child at her age should be concerned over.

Families Living in Cars was also very difficult to watch. Again, kids as young as they were in the video should not have to go through days of coming home to a car or finding gas stations to take showers before school. A little boy mentioned turns are taken at night while sleeping to make sure one watches for safety. I could not imagine worrying about that even now at my age. It's a dangerous world nowadays, and anything can happen at any moment. It's a wonderful thing that programs and communities exist to help families going through these types of circumstances. Nowadays you see all kinds of people living in their cars or vans/buses today out of choice because they love it. They are what you call "Minimalist," however they don't have children. If I had to guess, I don't think children who have to live in cars with the family and pets enjoy it much.

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Brain development in a child is important in regard to formal learning throughout the growing up process. The early years is the best time to develop connections in order to be successful adults. Being warm, loving, and responsive vs violence in the family, no safety for the child, and possibly poverty could impact the child's development and future. You commonly see situations when a child will grow up and "work the streets" when they grow up around it. That is all the child may know, and it's the saddest thing. Children may often think, "Dad used to do this, so I'm going to do it too." Or maybe they may see their sibling do something, and want to follow their footsteps.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences video had a lot of new information that was unheard of by myself. I knew of some areas that Nadine Harris mentioned, but some were new to me. The developmental pathways for each type of abuse was so interesting to know more about. After taking the ACE quiz (I received a 2), I realized more that there are more subtopics than I initially thought. I was more aware of the sexual abuse and abuse aspect; however, I didn't think about alcohol in the family being a future problem. Growing up, my dad drank every day and it separated our family for a while. One of the biggest reasons why I left home was because of it, and it hurt to leave my mom in the situation but she wanted me to accomplish what I wanted to do. Today, I worry when a loved one of mine drinks excessive alcohol and although it's not the same situation as others have faced I still somewhat feel the relation. It truly does change your view in many ways and can be traumatizing.

Recently I have noticed that childhood poverty is more common. You see parents on the streets with their child by their side. You feel bad for them and just want to help them. What I would like to do is research programs and communities and see how I can help now. I know one day as a nurse, I'll be able to help in the health aspect and I look forward to those days. This population is just like everyone else, and they deserve the same care as any other person would receive.