

## Poverty Simulation

I was reminded of how hard it is to budget your money with a low income and all the inconveniences that life can throw at you when I did the exercise online. My experience was only for 6 months, and it was very difficult so I can only imagine what these families must go through when they are in this situation for years. Trying to decide which bill is important to pay now as well as gas for your car so you can get to work is a huge stressor because you need running water for hygiene, but you also need a paycheck. Having that constant stress of what to pay and when to pay is the biggest burden and if you have kids that stress is enhanced even more especially if you are a single parent. If the parent gets sick or if their child gets sick, they cannot afford to go see a doctor. So, it makes sense as to why their health is in poor condition plus they cannot afford the healthier food to eat so they must pick fast and convenient food to eat with little to no nutritional value. I can understand why the parents, or the children engage in harmful substances such as drugs or tobacco products because that is their only escape from reality. It doesn't matter if it's just for a minute or two, at least for those two minutes they are free. That constant feeling of being hungry, sick, stressed, or physically exhausted makes you feel that there is no way out regardless of how hard you are working to provide for yourself or your family. Which leads to depression or domestic violence in the home. I also learned that the kids of the parents who are in this situation have to grow up fast and are deprived of school activities or just school in general. I believe an education is the single most important accomplishment to have because that is the foundation to better yourself and your future. It doesn't matter if it is a GED or a high school diploma because all colleges or decent paying jobs are asking for one of those two. I believe this is where the poverty cycle starts. The parents or parent does not hold a GED or diploma, so they take what job is available or remain unemployed until something comes along. The job the parent holds is low paying with no health benefits or retirement plan so this means the parent cannot afford routine yearly checkup for themselves or the kids as well as not being able to put any sort of savings back for the future. They literally live paycheck to paycheck with little to no food, poor hydration, and maybe shelter. Well, this leads to the kids getting picked on at school because of their odor or clothing attire which can make them have feelings of aggression, depression, or both. So, the parents are stressed, and the kids are stressed which can then lead to abuse of some kind in the kids or parents whether it be alcohol, drugs, physical, or mental. Abuse doesn't always happen in every situation but is common in low-income families. The kids go through school with all these emotions which is like a ticking time bomb ready to explode at any moment and cannot concentrate on school because they are hungry or sleep deprived. So, the kids start causing disruption in class or they are constantly in fights which causes more stress on the parents. The parents who are still married end up in divorce and the kids drop out of school to get a job fulltime or because they are tired of being in that environment and then the cycle starts all over again. We see as a society where the struggles of money come into play on our daily lives, but yet to figure out a system to make it work. I know there are programs such as Medicaid or food stamps for low-income families, but those programs seem to not work as effectively as they should due to the number of families that are being helped. Another issue to consider is the economy, because that affects every aspect of a person's life. If the economy is thriving and doing well, then people get to maintain their jobs. The cost of bills, groceries, and gas are at least reasonable, so families are not as stressed. In the end leads to more productive and healthier society, because parents can save money for their retirement and kids are able to go to college to receive a higher level of education in order to start a career. If the economy is not thriving or being productive, then

neither can society. People become unemployed due to layoffs, companies go bankrupt, and cost of everything increases significantly. So, there is no extra money to pay for all the bills, groceries, or gas which leads to families becoming homeless. It's a process that is hard to recover from and takes time which is the most frustrating aspect. I hope and pray that we can come together as a country during this pandemic and make our society better. I want us to be able to look past our differences and just help each other so we can all move forward and love the life we live. I thank god every day for the opportunities and blessings I have in my life and I want others to be able to say the same thing.