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### Poverty and Mental Health Reflection

Poverty and mental health impact on the overall structure and success of a family. As adults we often hear how resilient children are and how they may not remember certain aspects of their childhood, when in fact the children are hyper aware of their situation. From early on in life children can determine where they fit in compared to their peers. Children are extremely observant and as a society we often blame the parents for their situation.

Not having enough food can consume your thoughts. The children in the videos discussed how they thought about food all day. They vocalized how it made them feel sad because their stomach hurt and how being in nutrition club made them happy, but then they realized they had to make it last all weekend. Proper nutrition impacts the brain. It is expensive to acquire. Food is one of the most basic needs to survive. Imagine a child understanding that they are starving and may not survive. How could we not expect this type of situation to impact mental health. We cannot expect poverty to impact the overall health of an individual. We must start treating the body holistically. Providing nurturing food is not enough. I finally understand Maslow's hierarchy of needs. You can have shelter, but not food. These basic aspects not being met will not allow you to have the sense that you belong in this world and impacts your mental health.

Furthermore, poverty deeply impacts mental health and affects confidence. I had developed biased views in my younger years. It was ignorant to think that if an individual wants better, they can achieve if they work hard enough. The reality is not all men are created equal. The same opportunities do not exist for everyone. In the documentary "Poor Kids" the mother expresses that she feels hopeless often with the amount of stress she is under to provide stability for 2 kids and herself. Just to show how biased I am, I was watching her smoke cigarettes thinking, "how much did those cigarettes cost?" That

was the one thing this mother did for herself and it likely aiding in relieving her stress. Although it is not a healthy choice it wasn't drugs, but she received judgment like it was from me.

I recognize that there are circumstances in life that are unfair, harsh and can impact the rest of your life. There is a large focus on shaming individuals who do not live to a certain standard. Who sets that standard? We allow society to tell us who we are, what we are and our worth. Why do we call it help "handouts" and "hand me downs." Everything designed to help has a label of shame with it after you get past the resource. We are constantly consumed with labels as a society. Is it brand name, is it off label? We associate quality with labels, and it affects cost.

There are not enough resources for society. As a nurse I will be more aware that a patient who is labeled as non-compliant may not truly be non-compliant. They may be facing difficult financial decisions and I need to ask more questions. I need to make sure I know who to ask to aid with providing resources to these individuals. When I speak with my peers, I need to help with the negative connotation that is presented with the care we provide. I need to be more patient. In the moment of being rushed to provide care to it is easy to disregard a patient who is acting out or asking for their 5<sup>th</sup> round of snacks.

In conclusion, these videos have helped me to realize I am biased. I judge others as if I have no personal struggles. I need to think of my own circumstance within my family. No one chooses to be addicted to drugs, to be poor or struggle with mental health. You can grow up with all the opportunities in the world, be the child of a pastor and struggle with mental health or be poor. Some individuals are they way they are because of their childhood circumstances, and it has impacted their entire life. It has consumed their life and they are living day to day. They were never presented with the opportunity to think or plan for the future. Of all these situations, one does not deserve more attention or help than

the other. I have 12 hours to be effective; whether it is listening to a patient, gathering resources I realize now sometimes it just getting someone their 5<sup>th</sup> serving of peanut butter crackers.