

TITLE: Demographics of Hunger and Homelessness

OBJECTIVES: To understand our conceptions and misconceptions around hunger and homelessness, and to understand the demographics around hunger and homelessness

TIME REQUIRED: 90 minutes

MATERIALS: Flip chart, markers, hand outs on

DIRECTIONS:

1. Beliefs Inventory

- A. My Images of Homelessness (5 minutes)
 - Pass out the 'My Images' sheet (located at the end of this workshop session), and have everyone fill it out anonymously. Collect these forms and use them to create summary statistics of the group's initial thoughts on this subject.

- B. Opinions Walk (20 minutes)
 - The facilitator should create a continuum on the floor by writing STRONGLY AGREE at one end and STRONGLY DISAGREE at the other. Explain to participants that you will read statements about hunger and poverty in the United States (listed below). After each statement, they are to indicate their level of agreement by "voting with their feet" (walking to a spot on the continuum for the subsequent discussion). Note: Some participants may be uncomfortable with sharing their opinions in this exercise. If anyone is truly distressed, they may sit this out, but only as a last resort.
 - A discussion of where our opinions come from should follow each question (ask one or two people – call on them! – to say why they chose to go where they did). The goal of this curriculum is to address all of these issues!
 - Suggested statements for the Opinion Walk:
 - If people are hungry, it's probably because they are wasting their money on other things.
 - There is enough food to go around.
 - Hunger and poverty are due to laziness and lack of ambition.
 - There is no hunger in my community.
 - I don't think I will ever go hungry.
 - I would give away some of my own food or wealth to ensure that others did not go hungry.
 - People are hungry because they are poor.
 - People are poor because political and economic policies keep them poor.
 - Hunger limits people's ability to learn and be productive.
 - The presence of hunger and poverty in this country is evidence that there is something wrong with our national priorities.
 - The government should do more to help those who are poor.
 - There will always be hunger and poverty.
 - People are hungry and poor because the rich have more than their fair share.



- C. “Truth or Fiction Steps” (20 minutes)
 - This activity is actually called “all true statements,” but DO NOT GIVE THIS AWAY. All of the statements are, in fact, true. Have everyone stand on a line in the middle of the room facing one direction. Instruct the youth that, after hearing you read each statement, they MUST take one step forward if they believe the statement is true, and one step back if they believe the statement is false.
 - A discussion of where our opinions come from should follow each question (ask one or two people – call on them! – to say why they chose to step forward or back). The goal of this curriculum is to address all of these issues!
 - Statements for “Truth or Fiction” (do not feel obligated to use all of these. Many are redundant if substantial discussion has happened for other statements):
 - Some people are homeless as a way of life
 - If you are in prison you are not considered homeless
 - Some homeless work and get paid while they are homeless
 - 1/3 of homeless children do not attend school regularly
 - Most homeless people are men
 - 30-45% of homeless men are veterans
 - There are couples that are homeless
 - Nearly 50% of homeless women have been a victim of domestic violence
 - 45% of homeless women are homeless because of domestic violence
 - 30% of homeless people suffer from mental illness
 - The percentage of homeless people who are black is higher than the percentage of blacks in society
 - Less than half of homeless people are alcoholic/ drug addicts
 - The average age of homeless people is in the 30’s
 - There are more
 - Someone might be homeless for a short time and get back on their feet and never be homeless again.

- D. Group Discussion (10 minutes, but be flexible: this part of the workshop is actually a bit redundant after the last 2 pieces if the youth offer insights when called upon. If you are running behind, this should be cut first.)
 - Ask the group, based on what they know and what they saw or heard during the activity, to brainstorm on the following question (write up responses to each on their own half of a divided flipchart page): “Who is Homeless?”

- 2. Actual Statistics (20-25 minutes because these are very powerful and some are shocking. Reading these will definitely start conversations!)
 - Present each participant with a copy of the updated hunger and homelessness statistics attached to this workshop session agenda. Go through these statistics, with each person in the room reading one bullet point. When finished, ask people what they learned or what surprised them.



- After looking at these statistics, hunger and homelessness can seem like overwhelming and impossible obstacles. DON'T LET THE YOUTH BECOME DISCOURAGED! Tell them that the goal of this winter's curriculum is to show that the problems can be solved. Use the poem below as a means to inspire them to keep working.

For Those Who Came

You enter our world
For reasons of your own
Moving from soul to soul
Touching some
Afraid of others

Did you know that we too
Are afraid
No, I think not.
But we are
Afraid.
Fearful that you'll pass us by
You who are full of life and
Youth
And hope
And dreams
Afraid that you'll touch us with
Your dreams
We are tired of this life
And we've forgotten how to hope.

But don't pass me by
Because you hold hope
Within your touch
Don't fear my tears
It's my way of smiling
And saying I'm grateful
Take some of me with you
When you go
Keep me alive within your heart
Because I'll remember you
Forever.

J.B. would like to dedicate this poem to "Those who came and dared to care" the Boston Youth outreach Volunteers. J.B. is a Vietnam Veteran who is staying at the Shattuck Shelter's Medical Respite Program. J.B. wrote these poems while recovering from injuries he received after being struck by a car.



My Images of Homelessness

Please CIRCLE the number on the word scale that best expresses your view for each set of words.

“When I think of Homeless people, I think of people who are...”

Kind	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Cruel
Healthy	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Unhealthy
Dishonest	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Honest
Happy <u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Sad	
Quiet	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Loud
Hardworking	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Lazy
Brave	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Cowardly
Religious	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Not Religious
Poor	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Rich
Intelligent	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Ignorant
Warlike	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Peaceful
Lucky	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	Unlucky

