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Social Change Project on Homelessness

Assignment 1

SOCW 6361

Describe a current social problem.

Homelessness continues to be a wide spread issue across the world. Every year millions of people experience homelessness. The growing number of families experiencing homelessness is a social problem that can described as complex with economic and social barriers such as poverty, and the lack of affordable housing.

How might this problem be incongruent with social work values/ethics?

Social work values and ethics consider every human life worthy of usefulness and fundamental human rights (NASW,2017). Housing and shelter are fundamental human rights that social work values consider essential for the health of each person. Homelessness is incongruent with this value of equity of accommodation.

How/when has Homelessness been identified historically, and what were the actions taken to address this concern?

Homelessness is a complicated, interdisciplinary issue and it is argued that psychology can provide resolutions for the problem. Research explains that understanding the behavioral health needs of the homeless populations and creating interventions to address their needs is instrumental in preventing and ending Homelessness (Jack at. el., 2017,pg.113). Subsequently the deinstitutionalization that happened in the 1960s where thousands of patients were reallocated from mental institutions to community based care, leaving many individuals in a homeless state and marginalized. While the problem grew, Homelessness started to be acknowledged as a public health problem that could be tackled with mental health and social services. The government also began making communities conduct and report annual point-in-time counts of homeless people to monitor the magnitude of the problem, that has continued to today. The current PIT count in 2016 uncovered that nearly 550,000 people were homeless on any given night, with 68% living in sheltered locations and 32% in unsheltered locations (pg. 113). The vast majority of homeless Americans are homeless for a short period. Still, statistic shows that about 22% are chronically homeless which is federally described as being continuously homeless for at least one year or being homeless four times or more in 3 years for an accumulative period of being homeless for at least one year (Jack, 2017).

How have the groups affected by this concern changed over time?

Most research on Homelessness has concentrated on the significant number of homeless, single, middle-aged men. However, there is an increasing study on the rising number of homeless women and families that may have different needs. A considerable amount of attention has been on veteran homelessness more recently. In 2009, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) embarked on a multiyear federal initiative to avert and stop veteran Homelessness, and billions of dollars have been invested toward that goal. Ever since that, there has been a 47% drop in veteran homelessness per reports in PIT counts, and more than 30 communities and three states have confirmed a functional end to veteran homelessness (Jack et. al. ,2017).

Describe the policy area related to this social problem.

The Housing First (HF) model has to turn into the leading model for supported housing and has been proven to be successful in reducing Homelessness in several randomized controlled trials. Comprehensive primary care and behavioral health services have been combined into many homeless clinics to focus on the complex needs of homeless populations (HVP,2006) The Housing First approach is led by the idea that people need necessities such as food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as securing a job, maintaining a budget appropriately, or attending to substance use issues. Furthermore, Housing First is established by the theory that client choice is valuable in housing selection and supportive service participation and that implementing that choice makes it possible for a client to be more successful in remaining housed and enhancing their life (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016).

When it comes to **homeless veterans**, Veterans Affairs **policy** is "Housing First," as well. It's an evidence-based, low-barrier, supportive housing model that emphasizes permanent supportive housing to end Homelessness. This Housing First method contributed to a 33 percent decline in Homelessness among **Veterans** between 2010 and 2014, as determined during the yearly point-in-time counts (Kayne,2014). The housing first approach gives **Veterans** that are experiencing Homelessness, particularly the ones that have been **homeless** for extended periods and have mental health and addictive disorders with permanent housing without delay. There are no requirements to obtain a house, and permanent housing is made available as the first service, followed by other services, like healthcare and employment, centered on the **Veteran's**needs and preferences.

What are the different aspects of the policy?

The Housing First model does not make people experiencing homelessness address all of their barriers, including behavioral health problems, or to advance through a sequence of services programs before accessing housing. Housing First does not require participation in services before obtaining housing or to retain housing. The Housing First approach beliefs housing to be the foundation for life advancement and allows access to permanent housing without requirements or conditions past those of an average renter (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2016).

Who supports and who opposes the policy?

The Department of Housing and Urban Development supports the housing first approach through two programs Supportive Housing Program and the Shelter Plus Program.

* What changes/amendments have been made to the policy?
* Explain how this policy affects clients you might see in a clinical setting and why, as a clinical social worker, it would be important to advocate for change.

Reference

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