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PRINT: ISSN 0970-9274 ONLINE: 2456-6608

J. Hum. Ecol., 23(4): 285-293 (2008)
DOI: 10.31901/24566608.2008/23.04.02

Problem Behaviors of Homeless Youth: A Social Capital Perspective

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KEYWORDS Social Capital. Adolescence. Homelessness. Problem Behavior

ABSTRACT Homeless youth are one of the most marginalized groups in our society. Many researchers identify much higher levels of various problem behaviors among these youth compared to their non-homeless peers. The current study examined the utility of social capital in predicting problem behaviors among homeless youth. Overall, the theoretically derived social capital variable significantly predicted substance use frequency, sexual risk behavior, depression, delinquent behavior as well as number of days homeless. Thus, social capital was useful in understanding and predicting the current life situation among these youth and may be worthy of further study. Findings suggest that meaningful change should utilize interventions that go beyond the individual and are geared towards modifying the social context of individuals' lives.