

The Street

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Many of the homeless in the North America are youth turned out by hateful, abusive, or perverse parents or stepparents. This chapter is to address the needs of a street person during the first few hours to weeks until they find a safe support group and hopefully some kind of proper shelter. The language of this chapter is mostly directed toward teenage women but the survival tips apply equally to both sexes and any age. The streets are not an option in terms of living, the fact that you are out there means you had to run before there was time to plan, you must move quickly to find safe shelter and support.

Reasons to Leave Home

If you are seriously considering leaving the reasonably free supply of food, clothing, heat, bed, safe storage, secure space, and roof over your head you must have a very good reason. *But NEVER trade sex or abuse from your alleged guardians for these!* Leaving might be the right choice, but the street is what happens when you have no choice, think hard, don't you have a relative, friend, teacher, co-worker, anyone you can go to for shelter to avoid the street?

Physical Abuse

If you are in a situation where you fear for your personal safety or have already been assaulted you should do two things first of all file a police complaint and open a file with family services documenting the problem. It will probably save the whole family from the physical abuse of the type you have been suffering. Unfortunately abused parties like drug addicts suffer from withdrawal, you may be in more hot water for removing the abuser from the home by those who remain. If these actions cause no change and you have tried every other place to hide it might be worth risking a flight away even to the dangerous cold streets to escape worse violence at home.

Sexual Abuse

At the first sign of sexual abuse leave your house and open a file at welfare services and the police as well as demanding a temporary restraining order be placed that day. You must do this to protect not only yourself but any other vulnerable family members. If the police, court, or social worker takes no action attempt to find a friend or relative to hide with. Sometimes this separation is all that is needed. Especially in second or third abusive relationships you might not be able to expect even your mother to believe your claims of abuse, unfortunately this may be the end of your relationship with your sick family. Only as a last ditch emergency action should a girl go onto the streets to avoid rape or sexual abuse since a teen girl is also a prime target for street predators.

Just because you have been raped or sexually abused even repeatedly for a long time doesn't mean you are used up and there is no reason to resist. Survival sex is a slippery slope of being softened up often leading to the most abusive and undesired acts step by step while letting those with the money rule your body and often get their hooks deep into your soul. Previous victims of abuse often try to cleanse themselves by trying to grab the power back in the wrong way, by becoming a more depraved abuser they are chasing the dragon of becoming a whole person. Don't enable the abuse of others by feeding a dangerous addiction to abuse. You also risk becoming another abuser if you choose the wrong path toward healing and self empowerment.

Reasons not to Leave Home

Annoyance with your parents or siblings, discipline, or school related problems are probably best dealt with in your own home, you have no idea how bad the streets can be especially for a girl, a sexist world it is, most every perv wants to take a piece of a teenage girl, plenty like to find a boy to abuse too. We are not worried that you will remain homeless for more than a few days, our concern is that your leaky roof and stained bed will be owned by a brutal pimp and your rent will be paid in depraved sex acts with diseased strangers.

Dangers on the Streets

Since you have no safe storage on the streets everything you own must be with you at all times, this leads to the bag lady or shopping cart homeless that you have seen.

If you are underage you are unable to sign a legal contract for a car or apartment and are considered something similar to property of your parents or guardians, get a fake ID as soon as possible. Identification Papers has information on fake IDs and a hack to get past underage work laws.

Most cities make it illegal for the homeless to sleep hoping it will make them disappear or die, when you are asleep behind a bush or on a bench don't be too surprised if others rifle through your bags and pockets stealing any useful or valuable things they might find, not to mention placing you in a very vulnerable position for physical or sexual abuse.

Worse yet a young woman without any hand to hand combat training is at the mercy of a huge abusive rapist type. Your best defense is being in good shape and sprinting away from the first sign of trouble.

Sometimes you happen to be in a dead end street or the exit door is blocked there is no option of running away. While some naive feminists and well armed police may disagree, the idea that an armed woman is just some weakling who is only going to turn over her weapon to her attacker is just foolish. If you bring justice to an abuser through an act of self defense you must realize that the police, courts, appointed lawyers, prisons and parole boards all discriminate heavily against the homeless and minorities we feel it is almost impossible to give you good advice whether to hide the evidence and run or to find a good lawyer. There is much danger from the (un)justice system when a woman protects her own life but sometimes it's the only option.

If during your fight for survival you become somehow involved with someone who is in the drug trade and are arrested at the same time as them you can expect the system to attack you like a mother bear. Once you are convicted with a felony drug crime, almost all social services including healthcare, food stamps, and student aid can be denied to you for the rest of your life.

It seems to us that the system needs to maintain a class of people who only have the option of larceny, selling drugs, or prostitution. It is catch-22 laws like this among other abuses that make us realize the legal governance of our nation has been overthrown and we must fight a revolution to return our legal constitutional republic.

Unprepared

Most decisions to hit the streets happen in a fearful rage after an attack. Hopefully you got out with at least a warm jacket, shoes, and clothes. Unless you managed to grab a wallet or purse you have no money, ID, or phone. In this case you must find the first police station or hospital and report the crime, but be wary of giving identifying information - you don't want your abuser to convince the cops to send you home. Many people make the mistake of wandering the streets for hours or days as the evidence quickly loses its potency. Get help but be cautious if the help includes a lock down type facility.

As an aside, if you managed to grab your phone think hard about who pays the bill and who controls the account. Your abusers can easily file a missing person report or even a stolen phone report and track you down that way, you might just pull the battery out to be safe for a few days. Credit or debit cards also leave a trace where they were used. If you really need cash have a friend with a car withdraw cash from an ATM on the other side of town.

Evil Helpers

There are those men and women who prey sexually on the freshly homeless. Be wary of a single man or women of any age who offers you a place to stay with no strings attached in their own home. Never accept room and board for any kind of sexual favor. Never accept any drinks or drugs from strangers or those you have recently met.

Even churches cannot always be considered a safe place, the same is true with homeless youth shelters, unfortunately these low pay positions are an easy place for men who want to abuse young people to meet their prey.

Be on very high alert and avoid places where prostitution is common, pimps may recruit by coercion or they may just kidnap rape and begin to sell the body of a young woman. Many pimps use the introduction to hard drug addiction and controlled supply method to enslave men and women. Sometimes you will even feel pressure to engage in survival sex to get a place to stay or food.

Choosing Good Helpers

Only accept help from a Pastor, Rabbi, or volunteer once you see their home has what appears to be a normal husband, wife, and children, don't stay alone by any singles, widowers or divorced, a normal dinner with the family should usually be enough to scan for weirdness, especially watch how the kids interact with their parents, look for fear. Some Christian types may try to push their faith on you, you already know what you believe you don't owe them that, but for survival pretending that you are listening is a small price for a safe roof and food to eat until you can get on your feet. At the same time you can also be looking for another place to stay. **DO NOT ABUSE THIS TRUST, DO NOT STEAL FROM THESE HELPERS!!** If you need something ask.

There are cults that might take you in even give you a place to sleep, be careful and bolt if it appears that they are into locking down doors, brainwashing, punishments, or trading food for conversion or good deeds.

Personal Needs

Until you can find what is a safe place to stay the temptation is there to shoplift for your needs, this might indirectly solve your shelter problem with a night in jail but it could also dump you back in you abusive and now wary former home.

Shelters

Most shelters require a sign up some time in the early afternoon, stop by a few of them and see which ones are clean and which ones will try to turn the underage back over to their abusers. Homeless shelters are one of the first places the police check during a man hunt. Expect to have your stuff pawed through as you sleep unless you are literally on top of it, stash valuables someplace safe before hitting the shelter for the night. Systems like the federal "Homeless Management Information System" are a real concern because many police agencies can tap into it without a warrant. See <http://epic.org/privacy/poverty/> for more information.

Food

If you knock on doors you would be surprised how most people will give you either part of a warm dinner or at least a can of creamed mushroom soup that was in back of the cupboard if you ask nicely, sometimes just to get you to go away. See Free Food for more ideas.

Getting Off Drugs

See Free Dope#Getting Clean

Services

Before identifying yourself be sure that the service you are checking into will not inform your abusive family of your location.

Rape and Battery Support Groups

Some of the best services for women are rape and battery support groups, some will even match you with a safe formerly abused woman to stay with and counseling. Don't get freaked if some of these women are a little fragile or weird, they had to glue their shattered life together from some serious shit, you are part of their healing. **DO NOT STEAL OR TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEM!** Be wary that some groups are based on the premise that all men are evil, overlook this and work on your healing. Unfortunately there are few services for abused and raped males, ask at the free clinic though.

State Welfare Services

This varies from one state to another be careful since some states if they believe your story will throw you into something similar to juvie hall for abused kids with lockdowns and regular searches. As we know abused people learn to abuse be careful not to jump from the pan into the fire.

Foster Home

Most often a state welfare agency will send you to a foster family who will assume full parental power over you for at least a limited time. These people are often unsung heroes but like teachers may have become burned out and now do the service for the stipend. Keep your eyes open for potential abuse which rarely occurs and keep in good contact with your social worker. It is a good idea to set up escape plans now while things are cool in case the freaks at state welfare decide you are a liar and send you back to your abusers. Stashing escape gear, making deals with friends, teachers, and spiritual leaders for emergency shelter is vitally important. An effective tactic is to go for help where they wont expect, for example Catholic kids asking Jewish welfare agencies for help, Muslims going to Protestant aid institutions, etc. Take counseling seriously and if you feel that the worker is getting nowhere with you ask if another social worker could be assigned. O

Stealing

In some times and places you may be forced to shoplift to survive (although if you look around there is usually an alternative.) No matter what, *never* steal from those who take you in to help you! You are first of all hurting yourself as you seriously risk being turned back out back to the cold street, you

also burn the people they might have helped survive in the future. If you have a need for some survival item or cash just ask them, or get it in some other way.

Mail

In 1994, the Postal Service issued a ruling that the homeless are eligible for a PO Box if they can provide a piece of official identification, a way to be reached, or proof that the postmaster knows them. The rule also declared that homeless people are entitled to general delivery service indefinitely, not for just 30 days. See Postage for more info.

E-mail

Most cities have at least one bookshop or cafe with a free public access computer.

Public libraries usually have free internet access, but aren't always the best place to log in (if you have a library card) because they often keep extensive usage records. They also sometimes put time restrictions on the machines. Library cards (often required for access) are hard to get if you don't have an address verification.

Just remember that no public computer can be trusted as safe. Don't do anything crazy. See Internet Communications for more information.

Health Clubs

Would you ever expect us radical yippie types to suggest you go for one of the biggest CorpGov ripoffs of all, the gym? Yup. Athletic clubs basically subsidise the price of membership because ninety percent of the overweight slaves who sign up never show up for the first week, but they are stuck in some crazy year contract. If possible beg the ID from a person who resembles you or modify the ID and use his key card to get in. Once the employees get to know your face they will check your ID less, don't get to friendly though since the homeless are really not welcome at these clubs. Women may want to find a women's only club so they don't have to put up with guys harassing or oggling them. Most gyms have the locker rooms in front of the desk, so if you just need a shower, you can usually just walk in. Even if you have to pay it is often worth the money if you are without a proper home for the following services:

- Clean Showers - you have no idea how nice a private clean shower stall is when you are in a filthy squat or shelter hopping.
- Therapy Pool(warm pool) - the streets are cold in the winter, it is amazing what an hour in a therapy pool will do for your back and muscles cramped from nights on the ground shivering.
- Sauna - If we manage to find an abandoned room the chances of it having proper heating are pretty low, often we can find a dank damp moldy building to squat somewhere. An hour or so sweating it out in this dry air and cleaning the fungus and mold out of your lungs can make such a difference in your health and energy level. This is also an opportunity to dry our your feet and prevent immersion foot.

- Exercise Equipment - not that we really need it so much, we are on our bicycles or walking all day but it is a good idea to work your abs and back groups to prevent back injury. Use the stretching stations to limber up and prevent injury.
- Locker - try to rent a big one, this may be your only safe storage space.

If you want this plan to work you need to visit a public restroom and pre-clean yourself, at least your visible areas, before hitting the club, also put on some bagged clean cyclist or workout clothing. The employees must *NEVER* know that you are homeless or they will surely terminate your membership!

Men, Women, Roommates, and Safety Pacts

A word to the young women (but can also apply to young men, TG's. and homosexuals of both sexes) who are forced out of their family home for whatever reason and into one of the many less desirable shelter scenarios presented in this book. Until you get a serious case of street smarts (don't ever fool yourself that takes several hard years and lots of very painful mistakes) be very wary of taking residence where there are any males in the mix.

Unfortunately thanks to a chemical called testosterone, that courses in amazing quantities through the veins of males from their early teens onward, the normal rational judgment of even the sweetest smartest guy is clouded to a varying extent when it comes to interaction with young women. If possible make your life easier by rooming or crashing in a female only environment, if at all possible with a strong locking door and secure windows. All of the catty female politics that might annoy you are infinitely simpler and safer than dealing with some confused guy who might decide to stalk you or get his hands on you. Please do not be surprised if you are attacked by these well meaning women as well. Women can be as vicious as men, even more so when they are being made to feel that only men cause pain. Just remember that psychological pain and jealousy can be even more powerful than sex hormones whatever their orientation do not stay with someone who is a threat to you, you need a place where you can be safe.

Your best plan is to make a long term pact with one or two trusted like minded people in a non physical relationship who swear to stay together and guard the safety of the others first above any other consideration. It is also every revolutionary's responsibility to watch out for the safety and care of newly homeless girl and boy and to guide them into them own safety pact group.

Crash Pad Romance

Nearly every guy in our movement is a decent honorable person but we want to leave no room for error with our most vulnerable, the abused run-away. Let your mixed social interaction take place only in public or group areas. Realize that an abused woman or man may have varying feelings toward romantic advances from either sex, from disinterest to active revulsion, pushing the issue can not only prolong and interfere with their healing but may also lead to a misunderstanding and serious allegations of misconduct against you.

Mental Illness

A reality is that an unfortunate percentage of those seeking or living in alternative housing are not there as a form of protest against a broken CorpGov system but because they have untreated and sometimes dangerous mental illness, do what you can to see them get proper treatment, at arms length if you must, but don't make them your problem as well. Choose your friends and roommates wisely.

Survival

Shelters

The idea is to somehow get inside and warm and safe. Homeless shelters, squats, and alternative shelter can all provide some of what you need if you can get inside, anyone who has been out knows that emergency bed space for both men and women is a precious and limited commodity often denied for dubious reasons, especially considering the crazy rules and waiting lists that can be involved.

Sympathy Psych

If you can dress and clean up nicely and act the non-destitute, normally successful part people will actually have more sympathy for you as they see a small reflection of themselves and their life in your situation. This might get you into shelters, people's homes, and other options where a "gross" homeless guy would be turned away in disgust. Play to your audience for success in sheltering. Women should not overplay abuse or fragility. No matter how hard it is, acting as "normal" as possible will pay off in protecting and sheltering yourself and any children with you. It is amazing how a firm handshake, a steady look, and a confident posture will change attitudes on the homeless.

Destitute Sheltering

If all else fails and you are stuck overnight outside we would hope you have some wilderness camping gear and can get to a park or industrial area. Most homeless forced to sleep outdoors are not so well equipped due to dire poverty or theft. Even a cardboard box and a plastic trash sack is better than nothing at all. Try to insulate with cardboard and crumpled newspaper - this could save your life. Keep your torso, groin, neck and head insulated at all costs. Hide under anything that will give some protection from the elements.

Alcohol and Cold

It may make you **feel** warmer, but alcohol will speed the progression of hypothermia (getting too cold) by letting all of your heat out of your core areas to your arms, legs, head, and face. Hypothermia is the leading cause of overnight death in the homeless population. *Don't drink alcohol to stay warm!*

Nearly all drugs and medications interfere with the body's natural temperature regulation of the body, either inhibiting blood flow and risking frostbite or by allowing heat to escape and risking hypothermia.

Hot Water

No matter how you do it, acquire a thermos and keep it filled with hot water, you should be drinking this hot water by the gallon every day and night. It is usually not too hard to walk right in to a restaurant, convenience-market, or gas station and fill up before the staff can even begin to complain or kick you out. The other good source for hot water is to use a pocket stinger heater. Pack your bag with an Immersion Boiler and plug in wherever you can find power, many outdoor signs have a place to plug in - keep your eyes open. Power plugs are everywhere, even outside. Most hot water faucets you will encounter just don't put out water warm enough to keep usable heat even if stored in a thermos. Even if you are not getting enough calories in your diet, drinking the hot water will save the caloric energy you would have used to keep you warm in cool or damp weather meaning you can get by on less.

Other Tips

See Free Clothing for tips on increasing the warmth of your clothing.

Other

Call 911 if you think the cops or ambulance can help you or get to a pay phone and dial these free numbers

National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800 799 SAFE

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN) Hotline: 800 656 HOPE

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline: 866 331 9474

See Free High School for information on how to get emancipated, becoming a legal adult before 18

See Low Impact Crashing and Squatting for more homelessness tips

<http://www.1800runaway.org/> Find A Place To Go in Your Area *Find a place to go in your area. these places are especially for runaway and homeless youth and children.*

<http://www.artistshelpingchildren.org/shelters.html> Shelters, Homeless and Otherwise *Doesn't list every shelter, but it's a good resource.*

<http://www.covenanthouse.org/houses> Covenant House Listings *if you need a place to stay or want to stop being a drifter/homeless and are under age 21, this is the place to go.*



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