

HOMELESS

Including Street Exposed Youth

A Fine Line (Video 2289) 1995; 39 min

Audience: general adult; health care workers; senior students

Synopsis: Six clients from the Hostel Outreach Program participated in the production of this documentary on the homeless mentally ill. These people and many more like them have ended up on the streets because of their mental illness and lack of support. The *fine line* is the line that separates anyone from the comfortable life, sometimes taken for granted, to that of despair and homelessness.

Beating the Streets (Video 2226) 1998; 49 min

Audience: adult; students

Synopsis: Joe Cloutier developed the Inner City Drama Association in 1986 as a means of engaging pre-teens and developing their self-confidence and creative self-expression. Over a period of years the ICDA evolved into a theatre program that involved adolescents and dealt with issues of homelessness, violence, racism and suicide. This video focuses on two participants, Marilyn Brighteyes and Lance Marty and shows how they change and become more confident and better able to handle life challenges. Under the influence of these and other young people the drama program develops into an alternative school that see its first graduate, Lance, admitted to the University of Alberta Aboriginal studies program.

Dakota (DVD No.1623) 2005; 15 min

Audience: youth

Synopsis: Actor Conrad Coates produced this short film to highlight the situation of young homeless women, the nearness of despair despite the availability of help. The young protagonist in this story find engagement in her adoption by a stray dog, is distracted from a suicidal impulse and begins the process to seek social assistance.

Different From You: Unfulfilled Promises to the Mentally Ill (Video 1624) 2002; 60 min

Audience: adult; post-secondary students

Synopsis: In the 1970's there were 35,000 people in California mental institutions. Today almost all have been discharged into the community, but the promise of services to help them re-integrate into society has turned out to be an empty one. As elsewhere in the United States, people with psychiatric disorders make up a majority of the homeless. Milt Kogan, a family physician at the City of Angels Hospital in Los Angeles, is responsible for the medical management of mentally ill patients who are living on the streets or in the city's inadequate board and care facilities. On his medical rounds, he tends to the needs of clients with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and other major mental illnesses. The testimony of the mentally ill homeless illustrates how patients cope with their symptoms, as well as with drug abuse and social stigma. Kogan also visits some successful self-help programs as well as board and care facilities. Interviews with mental health professionals offer additional perspective.

Hometime (DVD 1347) 2001; 49 min

Audience: general adult

Synopsis: Filmed in Sydney Australia this documentary examines the lives of men who find shelter and treatment at Charles O'Neill House. Operated by the St Vincent De Paul Society, the house offers not only substance abuse and mental health counselling, but also offers vocational training with attention to the whole person. The film contains interviews with a number of residents and staff members and illustrates group exercises and other features of the house life. This is interspersed with images of life in the house and on the streets of Sydney. Part of the educational efforts of the house included the active participation of the clients in the making of this film.

In The Gutter and Other Good Places (Video 2142) 1993; 53 min

Audience: general

Synopsis: This documentary highlights three years in the lives of three homeless Calgary men who work 10 to 12 hours a day picking bottles and cans from dumpsters and garbage cans. This activity keeps them busy and helps them pay for lodgings, cigarettes and alcohol. All the men came from ordinary homes, as family photos, high school and college yearbooks attest. One of the men, Ron Beard, a geologist with a petrochemical company lost his job due to an alcohol problem. Having fallen through the cracks, he states, with an optimism that belies his circumstances, "although we blew it, we're still working people."

Inside Outside: Building a Meaningful Life After the Hospital

(DVD & Video 2607) 2004; 50 & 20 min

Audience: adult; health professionals

Synopsis: Former psychiatric patients and filmmakers Pat Deegan and Terry Strecker put together this film depicting the lives of eight people with significant histories of institutionalization. As they transition from nursing homes and psychiatric hospitals into the community, the film puts forth the message that recovery and a better life in the community are possibilities even for people who are viewed as the most chronic or impaired. Following is a twenty-minute introduction about the people in the film and the process of transition. Pat Deegan discusses the film before an audience of people with psychiatric disabilities at the Pilgrim State Hospital. The creation of the film is presented within the context of the United States Supreme Court "Olmstead Decision." Each of the individuals featured in the film are introduced, including some information about their psychiatric histories. Deegan then introduces her concept of four inside-outside stages that people in the film go through as they learn to make the transition from institutions and adapt to actually living in the outside community. The Introduction provides the viewer with information to engage groups in discussions about topics related to recovery and community integration.

Introducing TJ (Video 1400) 2000; 27 min

Audience:

Synopsis: Therapeutic Jurisprudence represents an approach to meeting the needs of mentally ill people confronting a judicial system which frequently sends them to jail for minor offences when they would be better served by referrals to mental health programs. Featuring Judge Ginger Lerner-Wren of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, this video examines the first Mental Health Court in the U.S. This video focuses on "TJ" as an example of how the system works. Under the judge's direction, people suffering from severe mental disorders are separated out from the general criminal population and given referrals to therapy, rehabilitation, and housing.

Letters to A Street Child (Video 1404) 1999; 23 min

Audience: parents; general adult

Synopsis: This story is partly based on the life experiences of the author Andrée Cazabon, now a Canadian filmmaker. The perspective is from that of the parents, particularly the father, who kept a diary of his letters. The letters act as a voice-over on the images of street scenes, squats and drug use. No attempt is made to explain "why" but the mixture of image and feeling attempts to convey the core of the story.

No Place to Go (Video 2439.2) 1992; 27 min

Audience: adults; senior students

Synopsis: This companion video to **Shattered Dreams** (In **SCHIZOPHRENIA**) examines the lives of the homeless mentally ill in several Canadian cities. Though the use of medications in psychiatry has reduced the number of beds in hospitals there has often been little care available in the community for these people. As a result many live in substandard housing or are incarcerated for minor offences. Some live on the streets. Also examined are a number of community services that are available.

No Quick Fix (Video 2274) 2000; 52 min

Audience: parents; senior students

Synopsis: Andrée Cazabon, (see **Letters to a Street Child**) having lived on the streets herself follows the daily lives of Cathy and Laurent for several months. The purpose is to show the way young people carry on their lives in the face of hostility, official suspicion, with poor nutrition and drug exposure. Andrée's objective was to relieve the pain and uncertainty of parents. Like many, Cathy and Laurent's parents feel confused, guilty, anxious and bewildered.

Repetition Compulsion (Video 1646) 1997; 7 min

Audience: women; health care workers; post-secondary students

Synopsis: Ellie Lee's animated documentary explores how prolonged childhood abuse in the lives of homeless women has set the stage for further victimization on the streets. Many homeless women develop intimate and destructive relationships with homeless men for companionship and protection. Lee worked for four years with homeless women who had suffered long, unaddressed histories of physical and sexual violence. The interviews with these women reveal the feelings of fear, depression and hopelessness.

Sleep of Reason (Video 1284) 1997; 43 min

Audience: adults; parents; students aged 15 to 18 years; health professionals; legislators

Synopsis: The video opens with a series of pictures from downtown Toronto representing the lifestyle of homeless youth. Commentaries from a number of individuals who are closely associated with this social situation provide the viewer with a sense of the wide diversity of opinion. The perspectives range from those of municipal politicians, health and social service agency workers, youth advocates and homeless persons. Local bureaucrat, Tom Jacobek presents his personal model of homeless youth subtypes that he contends can be used to get people into appropriate treatment and rehabilitation programs. The gulf, which separates these different points of view, is considerable, particularly regarding effective and successful solutions to these problems. The issues which affect this marginalised population are numerous; many of which are examined in this video: the educational system, peer and family dynamics, the occupation of vacant buildings, called "squats," the size of this population, the incidence of illicit drug use and prostitution. Also presented is the role of harm reduction programs like needle exchanges, the exploitation of homeless youth, political viewpoints and the effectiveness of various programs

The Street, A Film with the Homeless (Video 2288) 1996; 58 min

Audience: adult; senior students

Synopsis: Over a period of six years, director Daniel Cross followed the lives of Frank O'Malley and the brothers Danny and John Claven, three homeless men who spent much of their time in and around a Montreal subway station. Cross attempts to become involved with the three men's lives, and he creates a sympathetic chronicle of their years on the street. Though the efforts of the filmmaker at being a social worker seem ingenuous and only falter in the face of these men's problems that are lifelong. The men are seemingly without support, but resist change while they chronically cycle through the detox, hospital and prison systems.

Taylor's Campaign (Video 2287) 1997; 75 min

Audience: general adult; post-secondary students

Synopsis: Ron Taylor is a Vietnam veteran, ex-truck driver and former homeless resident of Santa Monica California. Like many cities Santa Monica has a significant homeless population and here the city government was planning to evict these people by removing their constitutional rights. Taylor, financed by a fifty-dollar campaign chest, challenged this attempt by standing for office and conducting a spirited campaign despite the lack of resources. In the mean time, ordinances were enacted to prevent food from being supplied to the homeless and police were routinely used to keep them moving. Hampered not only by minimal funds, he would often take time off the campaign to help a constituent get to a shelter or treatment facility. Though not elected he did manage to bring attention to the issues for the homeless and get the people working together to protect their rights where the attitude seemed to be "if you can't work for your food then you should starve."

This Beggar's Description (Video 1601) 2005; 65 min

Audience: general Adult

Synopsis: Philip Tétrault has schizophrenia. He has spent much of his adult life institutionalized in jail or hospital, or on the street. He is also a poet and friend of Leonard Cohen. This is his story and his struggle and that of his family.

Train on the Brain (Video 2348) 2000; 50 min

Audience: adults; health professionals; post-secondary students

Synopsis: Alison Murray filmed this documentary to capture the life of homeless youth travelling the rails of North America. In a way similar to the hobos of the past these people, many of them young women, illegally travel across the country on freight trains. Giving a unique perspective to homelessness, Alison's camera follows an assortment of travellers from Vancouver to Ottawa, Chicago, Nashville and west again to Oregon. All are exposed to the vagaries of weather, of drenching thunderstorms, heat, humidity and ever-present dirt. Though train hopping is an extremely dangerous lifestyle, it is made more so by violent encounters with police, and threat of arrest by railway authorities. Except for the annual "hobo convention" the youth are generally shunned during their stopovers between trains. Substance use is little noted, but lack of money reduces access and the added risk of intoxication magnifies the obvious dangers. Uncertainty follows every move, hopping the wrong train can lead to being marooned, thirsty and hungry, yet there is a spirit of freedom that some committed travellers refer to as addicting.

West 47th Street (Video 1591) 2003; 83 min

Audience: Adult

Synopsis: Created, in part, to reduce stigma of mental illness, this feature documentary filmed over three years follows the daily lives of Frances, Fitzroy, Zeinab and Tex. These people are all members of Fountain House, a psychosocial rehabilitation center in New York City. The film follows their daily lives as they progress off the streets and out of homeless shelters, encounters with the hospital system, at home and at work.