

The Role of Dysfunctional Thinking Styles in the Development and Maintenance of Substance Abuse in the Homeless population.

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Homelessness in the Western world has increased exponentially within the last few decades. This is in parallel to the increased rates of depression, rising with each successive generation. Authors have referred to depression as the “disease of modernity”. Further, research on depression and substance use has revealed that these disorders co-occur. This comorbidity is worrisome, as it has been linked to increased risk for relapse for depression and substance abuse, more severe chronic illness presentations, greater social impairment and increased risk for suicide. These impairments have been demonstrated within the homeless population. Substance use disorder history has been reported to be a key risk factor in repeated homelessness. Furthermore, substance use has been linked to violent and maladaptive behaviours, leading to social exclusion and isolation. The prevalence of Axis I disorders within this marginalised group of society are estimated as high at 50% to 70%. Yet little research is being conducted in identifying adequate psychological treatment interventions for the homeless. A study was conducted in a sample of homeless individuals. A mediation analysis examined how prior childhood trauma acts upon dysfunctional behaviour through the indirect mediator of dysfunctional cognitions.