BECOMING STRONG

Impoverished Women and the Struggle to Overcome Violence

"My future looks good at this present time in my life." A surprising statement, perhaps, coming from a 36-year-old homeless woman, but this quote is typical of the majority of women to whom the reader will be introduced in this book.

Becoming Strong: Impoverished Women and the Struggle to Overcome Violence offers a radical departure from the orthodox view of homeless women as weak, lacking in agency, and/or pathological. Drawing on research conducted with homeless women in three U.S. cities (Los Angeles, Chicago, and Detroit), authors Laura Huey and Ryan Broll present an alternative view that is rooted primarily in the thoughts, beliefs, and experiences of homeless women themselves. Through analysis of nearly 200 semi-structured interviews with homeless women, it is revealed that there is no singular response to the various types of trauma these women have experienced – from violent victimization to sudden deaths of loved ones to the process of becoming homeless itself. Instead, the women interviewed exhibited a broad range of responses, which included both symptoms of trauma and signs of resiliency. And, rather than being passive victims of circumstance, most of the women see themselves as strong individuals, oriented towards the future and determined to build something better for their lives.

Being Strong not only examines trauma and the role it can play in shaping homeless women's lives, but also explores how women can and do grow from traumatic experiences. It also looks at those situations where women remain trapped in negative patterns and offers solutions for responding to issues that perpetuate the cycle of female homelessness. In presenting its findings, this book draws upon current research and theories from diverse fields within sociology, criminology, and psychology, offering readers a complex view of a set of complex issues.

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Impoverished Women and the
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