

Abstract

Thesis background: The background of this thesis is that societal expectations and gender roles play a key role in the development and progression of addictions among women living in homeless shelters. Society often places specific expectations on women, which may include pressure to fulfill traditional family roles, adhere to certain social norms, and cope with gender stereotypes. This pressure can be so stressful for some women that it leads them to seek escape in the form of addictions, such as drugs, alcohol, or self-medication.

Objective: The aim of this thesis is to explore and analyze how societal expectations and gender roles specifically influence the development and progression of addictions among women in homeless shelters.

Methodology: In this thesis, a qualitative research method was applied, specifically the phenomenological approach, which allows for a deep understanding of the personal experiences and perceptions of the research participants. The aim of this method is to investigate which factors of societal expectations are considered most significant in the women's relations to their addictions. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which provide flexibility while offering a structure for comparing responses. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed into case studies for detailed analysis.

Results: The results of this thesis indicate that societal expectations and gender roles are significant contributors to the development and progression of addictions among women in homeless shelters. Women often face pressure to fulfill traditional family roles, social isolation, economic insecurity and stigmatization, which increase their predispositions to addictions. Past traumas and violence also play a key role, as does the lack of support and understanding from family and friends. These factors collectively create an environment where the risk of developing addictions is heightened, highlighting the need for targeted prevention and intervention strategies. Additionally, there is a lack of nonprofit therapeutic services designed for homeless women, making it difficult for them to access the necessary care and support.

Conclusion and recommendations: The research has shown that societal expectations and gender roles significantly influence the development and progression of addictions among women in homeless shelters. The main factors are pressure to fulfill traditional roles, isolation, economic insecurity, stigma, and past traumas. To address these issues, it is crucial to strengthen social and psychological support, increase the availability of free therapeutic services, provide prevention, education programs on addictions and trauma-focused care, and actively fight

against the stigmatization of these women. These measures can significantly contribute to the prevention of addictions and the improvement of living conditions for women in homeless shelters.

Key words: Women, addictive substances, societal expectations, stress coping, relationships