

What Dangers Do Runaways Face?

Runaways face poor nutrition
Inadequate sleep
Exposure to the elements
A host of medical problems
Physical Assault and theft
Substance Abuse
Dangerous sexual behaviours including exploitation
Some turn to survival sex, theft and panhandling to live

Adapted from, The Problem of Runaway and Homeless Youth @ www.childinc.com/runaway.htm

According to the National Runaway Switchboard, every day between 1.3 & 2.8 million runaway and homeless youth live on the streets of America. 75% of runaways who remain at large for 2 or more weeks will become involved in theft, drugs or pornography, while one out of every three teens on the street will be lured into prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home. Gay or bisexual youth are even more likely to be involved in prostitution.

Risks that Runaways face are malnutrition, psychological disorders, HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, drug and alcohol issues, robbery, sexual and physical assaults, depression, conduct disorder, post traumatic stress disorder.

According to the findings of **The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the US, Canada and Mexico Study,**

- 325,000 children are reported and being sexually exploited in the US annually. Of that figure 121,911 ran away from home and 51,602 were thrown out of their homes by a parent or guardian.
- Amongst runaway and homeless youth, approximately 30% of shelter youth and 70% of street youth engaged in prostitution in order to meet their daily requirements for food, shelter, drugs etc.
- 75% of children who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation are from middle class backgrounds.
- 40% of girls who engaged in prostitution were sexually abused at home, as were 30% of the boys

*Adapted from Focus Adolescent Services – Runaways and Missing Children
www.focusas.com/Runaways.html*