

Why do people experiencing homelessness camp in parks or sleep on sidewalks, instead of staying in a shelter?

It's too far away. I can't walk there.

I don't feel safe in a co-ed shelter.

You have to leave with all your stuff, by 7am. There's no place to go.

I feel safer sleeping outside by myself or with friends. There are no rules, no curfews and no strangers.

I like my privacy.

I don't want to give money,
but I want to help.
How can I help?

Give a gift card to
a grocery store or
restaurant so we can
get healthy food.

Advocate for us
by contacting
your local
politicians.

Donate to or volunteer at
a local organization that
supports folks experiencing
homelessness.

Give me eye contact
and say hi!

Bus
tickets

Buy dinner tickets
at The Salvation
Army and give
them out.

Smile and
say something
kind.



Someone seems to be in distress.
How can I help? Who can I call?

Ensure your
own safety
and dial 9-1-1

First responders are
trained for these
situations and will
know what to do.

Avoid stereotyping or
stigmatizing people. There
are many paths that lead to
homelessness, and each person
has a different story.

Acknowledge the people
experiencing homelessness
you encounter. Smile
and say hello. Engage in
a simple conversation if
they feel like chatting.



Is it okay to buy someone experiencing homelessness a meal or give them food?

Everyone likes to have the ability to choose what to eat and when to eat it, including people experiencing homelessness. Just like anyone else, they may have allergies or be a picky eater. Or they may not trust that the food someone hands them is safe and edible.

Give out gift cards from local restaurants or grocery stores.

Granola bars are easy to keep in your pockets or bag, and provide energy and nutrition.

A bottle of water helps prevent dehydration, a common health concern for the homeless community.

Give money to an organization working with people experiencing homelessness or donate food to a food bank.



I don't understand why some people struggling with mental health don't take their medications.

1-in-3 Canadians will experience a mental ill-health period in their lives.

Many people don't want to take medication because it didn't work or they had a bad experience.

Some people see certain behaviours as being a symptom of mental ill-health. But there are many reasons why someone might behave in a way we don't understand.

Lack of accessible health/wellbeing programs like a regular counsellor or psychologist.

People start feeling better.

Medication is only a small part of treatment. People need their basic needs met and access to supports.