

LOSING YOUR SENSE OF SELF: POST-IT ACTIVITY

Supplies

This activity can be done on your own or with a group.

Each person will need:

- 1 pen or pencil
- 3 Post-It notes (or other pieces of paper)

Before You Begin

Think about the physical items that have the greatest meaning to you. It could be photo albums, a piece of jewelry, a guitar, etc. It should not be children, pets, money, or credit cards (think about physical items with sentimental value).

Write down three items, each on a separate Post-It note or piece of paper.

If you're with a group, ask each other what types of items you're choosing.

STEP 01

Through this activity, you are going to put yourself in the shoes of a young person facing housing insecurity in Grants Pass, Oregon.

To start, let's imagine that you can no longer live in your home. This happens quickly: many of the young people at Covenant House fled violent homes and had to get out fast. You try to gather as many belongings as you can, but you're in a hurry, and you can't take everything with you.

Look at your three items and choose one to leave behind. Crumple up the Post-It note and put it aside.

How do you feel about losing that item?

If you're with a group, ask people to share what they lost and how they would feel about saying goodbye to that item.

STEP 02

Ask yourself: where would you go first if you couldn't live at home anymore? How long would you be able to stay there?

Let's imagine that you leave your house and you're not sure where to go. You reach out to a few friends and bounce around between couches, but you don't want to overstay your welcome and you don't have the funds for a hotel room.

After about a month, you run out of favors and find yourself sleeping outside. But the weather takes a turn for the worse.

Pick up your two remaining Post-It notes, one in each hand. The item in your left hand has been ruined in the rain.

Crumple up the Post-It and put it aside.

How do you feel about losing that item?

STEP 03

It is illegal to sleep outside in Grants Pass, Oregon. You decide you can't risk staying outside any longer and ask someone where to find the closest shelter.

How would you feel? What is your impression of homeless shelters?

Many young people are directed to adult shelters first. Imagine that's where you end up. You're scared, as you have heard they can be dangerous.

You have a hard time falling asleep in a room surrounded by strangers of all ages. You finally do, but when you wake up, you discover that your final item has been stolen.

Take your final Post-It note, crumple it up, and set it aside.

How does it feel to lose your final item?

WHY DOES THIS ACTIVITY MATTER?

Homelessness is not just about losing a roof over your head: you also lose pieces of your identity. The items you selected probably show what you value and what makes you who you are.

Thinking of it like that, how would you describe what you lost and its impact?

This activity also helps us better understand what a young person might go through before they walk through the doors at Covenant House.

Knowing that, why is it important that Covenant House offers more than a place to sleep?

What would help make you feel safe in this moment?

What else would be important to you?

