

Preface

Runaway and Homeless Youth: New Research and Clinical Perspectives analyzes up-to-date research about runaway and homeless youth based on results from the national Runaway Youth Project (RYP), which is part of the larger Missing Persons Project (MPP) (see [Appendix A](#)).

This book uses social sciences theories to explain why children and adolescents run away and become victimized. This work focuses on an ecological theory approach to explain the ways in which individual, social, peer, family, and school factors increase the risk or protect against youth running away from home. This book also offers new insights about the social and behavioral profiles of runaway and homeless children and adolescents when they go missing and live on the streets.

Chapter 1 describes the experiences of children and adolescents who run away from home or become homeless for other reasons. This chapter examines why youth who are disconnected from their family, peers, classmates, and teachers may be at increased risk of running away from home. Chapter 1 evaluates the extent to which child sexual, physical, and emotional abuse and neglect, domestic violence, school difficulties, and peer problems are determinants of running away from home.

In Chap. 2, the process of eloping from substitute care such as foster care is assessed. This chapter analyzes the institutional conditions and the demographic, social, psychological, and behavioral conditions that may increase at the probability that young people elope from substitute care settings.

Chapter 3 focuses on street youth's survival strategies associated with obtaining food while on the streets and the problems associated with food insecurity. This chapter assesses where young people on the streets get their food and their types of food and nutrient content.

In Chap. 4, the employment activities and other income sources of street young people are assessed. This chapter assesses various conditions such as community views toward runaway and homeless youth that may affect the extent to which these children and adolescents are able to engage in employment while on the streets.

The remaining 17 chapters analyzes the diverse experiences of street youth in the USA and other countries, focusing on such problems as physical victimization; sexual risks, including rape, sexually transmitted infections and human immune

virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome, and other health problems; adolescent pregnancy; sexual minorities; violent and delinquent behavior; suicidal behaviors; self-mutilation; and mortality rates. In addition, the remaining chapters highlight such issues as the school difficulties that young people encounter while on the streets, the role and impact of the police, courts, secure detention, and social service agencies in responding to runaways. Other chapters focus on interventions and policies that have been implemented to deal with the problems of runaway and homeless youth.

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