

What is homelessness?

Homelessness is defined as a process of distance or rupture from the society marked by several dead ends and difficulties in a person's life course. It is manifested by a difficulty to obtain or maintain a stable, safe and adequate home. Homelessness may be experienced by anyone at some point in their life.

Homelessness on the North Shore

Homelessness is expressed differently on the North Shore than in large cities. It is less concentrated and less visible.

People experiencing homelessness may:

- Sporadically stay with acquaintances, friends and family members (couch surfing, i.e., moving from one couch to another)
- Sleep in their cars, in abandoned houses, in woodlots, under porches, in building lobbies or in containers, both in the summer and the winter
- Use shelters or emergency accommodation

Although, since shelters are often unavailable, they also have to use other strategies, regardless of the temperature or the time of day .



How to help people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness?

- By meeting their basic needs (food, clothing, etc.)
- By supporting them to solve difficult situations (loss of rent, need for transportation, etc.)
- By facilitating access to housing
- By improving employment-related programs
- By helping them improve their self-esteem
- By assisting them to facilitate their social integration
- By respecting them and not judging them
- By simply smiling at them or saying hello

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**Centre intégré
de santé
et de services sociaux
de la Côte-Nord**

Québec 



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Types of homelessness

Situational homelessness:

People who are momentarily homeless. They are the least visible ones: after an episode of homelessness, they find a new home. This is the most frequent type of homelessness.

Episodic homelessness:

People who come and go from housing to the street, i.e., the situation of homelessness repeats at somewhat regular intervals.

Chronic homelessness:

People who have been without a home for a long period. Chronic homelessness is the most visible one.



Possible consequences of homelessness

- Isolation
- Poverty
- Shortened life expectancy
- Prostitution
- Untreated health problems
- Addiction
- Criminality
- Social exclusion
- Loss of self-esteem
- Low citizen engagement



*Changing our
vision of
homelessness*



Risk factors for homelessness

- Mental health and psychological distress problems
- Diseases, physical health problems or intellectual disability
- Family conflicts
- Low education level
- Difficulties finding and keeping a job
- Addiction problems (drugs, alcohol, gambling, etc.)
- Financial problems or low income
- Legal problems
- Inadequate or depleted social network
- Discharge from an establishment (youth centre, detention centre, etc.)

