



Generational Poverty Training

Key Points

- Generational Poverty and Situational Poverty are different.
- An individual brings with him/her the hidden rules of the class in which he/she was raised.
- Schools and businesses operation from middle class norms and use the hidden rules of middle class
- For our teen moms to be successful, we must understand their hidden rules and teach the rules that will make them successful at school, work and in the community.
- We can neither excuse persons from poverty, nor scold them for not knowing the rules.
- In order to move from poverty to middle class or from middle class to wealth, an individual may be required to give up relationships (at least for a time) for achievement.
- Relationships are the key to success in moving from Generational Poverty to Middle Class.

Does the teen mom you serve come from Generational Poverty?

- ✓ Get mad and quit job/work, if they do not like their boss or teacher. The emphasis is on the current feeling, not the long term ramifications.
- ✓ Will work hard if they like you.
- ✓ Does not use conflict-resolution skills, preferring to settle issues in verbal or physical assaults.
- ✓ Exhibit possessiveness about the people they really like.
- ✓ Are very disorganized, frequently lose papers, don't have signatures, etc.
- ✓ Bring many reasons why something is missing, or the paper is gone, etc.
- ✓ Only see part of what is on a page.
- ✓ Can't seem to get started (no procedural self-talk)
- ✓ Mother, Grandmother, Aunts on Government aid, ex: Food Stamps, TANF...
- ✓ Will let family members or friends "borrow" money before paying for their own bills or purchasing needs.
- ✓ Large amount of family members living in a small space.
- ✓ Will run late or miss appointments due to family or friend's emergencies.
- ✓ Spends money on entertainment before paying bills or purchasing needs.
- ✓ Lacks support from family for moving forward with her education.
- ✓ Does not have a checking account.

Examples of Patterns Found in Families in Generational Poverty:

- **Importance of personality:** Since money is not brought to the setting, the person's individual personality is important. The ability to entertain, tell stories, and have a sense of humor is highly valued.
- **Significance of Entertainment:** When survival is a priority, having entertainment brings respite.
- **Importance of Relationships:** It is not uncommon for one to have favorites, and relationships become important to survival.
- **Matriarchal Structure:** The mother has the most powerful position if she functions as caretaker.
- **Survival Orientation:** The discussion of academic topics is not prized. Discussion center around people and relationships. Jobs are about making enough money to survive, not about a career.
- **Identity Tied to Rescuer/Martyr Role for Women:** A "good" woman is expected to take care of and rescue her man and her children as needed.
- **Ownership of People:** People are possessions. There is a great deal of fear and comment about leaving the culture.
- **Polarized thinking:** Options are not examined. Everything is one way or another. "I quit." "I can't do it."
- **Time:** Time occurs in the present. The future does not exist except as a word. Time is flexible and not measured. Time is often assigned on the basis of emotional significance and not the actual measured time.
- **Lack of Order/Organization:** Many homes are unkempt and cluttered. Devices for organization don't exist.
- **Lives in the Moment/ Does Not Consider Future Ramifications:** Being proactive, setting goals, planning ahead does not exist. Most actions that occur are reactive and in the moment; future implications of present actions are not considered.