

## HOMELESS AWARENESS DISCUSSION GUIDE

This script is a multi-media presentation on chronic homelessness for use in classrooms and workshops. It is a great resource for educators who would like to talk about homelessness with their students, but don't know where to begin.

The presentation was originally delivered to Miami-Dade County Public School students and therefore focuses on homelessness specific to that community. However, the ideas presented can be applied to communities everywhere. If you host a presentation or workshop, don't forget to share your photos on our [Facebook page](#) or tag @homelessmiami on Instagram and Twitter. **The teacher's prompts are in yellow.**

We'd love to hear about your experience! Email [dani@m.network](mailto:dani@m.network) or [sydne@m.network](mailto:sydne@m.network) with questions.

**(PRINT OUT THE BELOW SCRIPT TO GET STARTED AND THEN LOAD THE VIDEOS TO PLAY IN THE ORDER LISTED HERE.)**

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Good morning (school/venue name).

My name is (name). Today I am here to speak with you about a tough issue that some members of our community face – an issue that's not going to go away anytime soon. It's something you will see long after you graduate high school. It may impact your neighborhood, a street corner you drive by or your place of business someday.

I'm talking about homelessness.

What can you do and how can you be part of helping the people in our community who work every day with those experiencing homelessness?

That's what we'll be discussing today. You will be surprised how closely this issue hits home.

Take a look.

## TEACHER PLAYS - [Superintendent Video](#)

Can you believe it? Superintendent Carvalho was homeless—and because he was homeless, he helped create a program called Project Up-START. Project Up-START’s goal is to make sure kids who are housing challenged or unaccompanied have what they need to make it through school.

You guys can volunteer to help students through PROJECT Up-START. We’ll tell you more about that shortly.

So, Superintendent Carvalho experienced transitional homelessness, which is VERY, VERY different from someone who is chronically homeless. Those who are chronically homeless are more of the stereotypical idea of homelessness—someone living on the streets year after year, or someone who does not have a job or income.

It’s the people you or your parents might be tempted to give money or food to.

Did you know that our community gives panhandlers and homeless some \$30 million in spare change a year? A dollar in a cup. A quarter in someone’s hand. It adds up and helps them stay on the street. But giving spare change is not the best way to help those who are chronically homeless.

## TEACHER PLAYS : [Panhandling Video](#)

Does this make you think twice about panhandlers? Of course, we can’t always know what they do with money they receive, but experts do say that giving food, money, even clothes, tents and blankets can really enable someone to stay on the streets – not get off the streets. And the

streets are dangerous! Let's take a look at what the statistics are for people who call the streets home.

TEACHER PLAYS : [Dangerous Streets Video](#)

Living on the streets IS hard and you want to help. But if we say, "don't give food, don't give money," then what *can* you do if you want to do something?

Well, here are some ideas...

TEACHER PLAYS : [Volunteer Video](#)

Are you guys getting the idea that there are things you can do too to be part of the solution to homelessness? Let's talk about what we might do?

TEACHER could lead discussion with students on ways they might be able to help homeless using their talents and interests. Consider allowing students to read the Chronicle Cards available on the Homeless Trust website. The cards are excellent as a jumping off point for discussions.