



November 13, 2020: Discussions About Homelessness

Dear CDS Community,

This week offered several learning opportunities for the adults in our community. On Tuesday, faculty and staff heard from several CDS experts about the recent research on COVID-19 and the best health practices in use in local care facilities. We used this as an opportunity to reflect on our own practices and how we can do even better, especially with the cold, wet season now upon us. Please remember that we will be eating outside, so this might be a good weekend to try on those raincoats and rain boots!

Last night, we were fortunate to host a renowned expert on homelessness for a Zoom presentation. Dr. Margot Kushel is a Professor of Medicine at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and the Director of the UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations. She also serves as Director of the Benioff Homelessness and Housing Initiative. Dr. Kushel shared her vast knowledge about the complex issue of homelessness. The discussion provided some great data on the cause of homelessness, the current status of homelessness in San Francisco, and solutions that have worked for other cities. If you missed the conversation, we will share a recording.

One question was about how to talk to your child about homelessness. Margot's answer provided some good grounding for us all.

She suggested that we reinforce the expectation that grown-ups are the only ones who talk to strangers and that sometimes it is important to note that someone's brain is not working right and they need help. An example of the language she offered is "I am sorry that person looks like that, it looks like they have an illness and are suffering." She also encouraged us all to make an effort to get to know and talk with those who are experiencing homelessness when they are not suffering from chaotic illness.

If you do notice someone in need of immediate help, you can call the following numbers:

- **For a crisis and immediate support:** Mobile Crisis Team: 415.970.4000
- **For general support and requests for assistance (not crisis):** Mental Health Services Access: 415.255.3737
- **Syringe Pickup Crew** (text photo & location): 415.810.1337
- **General support** - Homeless Outreach Team (HOT): 415.355.7401 or call 311 and request the HOT team

Another member of our community suggested [this opportunity](#) to share kindness with marginally housed or adults experiencing homelessness in the Tenderloin.

Warmly,
Shelly