

***Rough Sleepers* by Tracy Kidder**

Rough Sleepers by Tracy Kidder takes the reader directly into the lives of those living on the streets of Boston and the doctor who has devoted his life to caring for this group of individuals. “Rough sleepers” is the title given to unhoused, homeless people who live mostly outdoors, avoiding shelters and help from charities or family.

Dr. Jim Connell, a Harvard Medical School graduate, had offers for other avenues in medicine, but early in his medical career he became involved with a group that provided medical care for homeless patients in the Boston area. At first, this was to be a quest, a learning mission of sorts, but Dr. Connell found himself becoming deeply dedicated to the needs of the people he met and found he wanted to stay.

What did staying look like for Dr. Connell? The program started with a federally funded grant that was expanded to include clinics, some of which were set up in hotels that provided cheap housing options. Mobile street teams were added, through which Dr. Connell and a community of nurses and social workers provided food, medicine and other basic needs, while encouraging patients to find additional medical treatment and explore housing options.

The book explores both the bigger and unsolved issues of homelessness and mental illness while providing the faces and stories Dr. Connell and his team worked with through the 35 years covered by Kidder in *Rough Sleepers*.