



PAN-CANADIAN VOICE
FOR WOMEN'S HOUSING
A SYMPOSIUM



PARLONS
FEMMES ET LOGEMENT
UN SYMPOSIUM PANCANADIEN

Sept 14th & 15th, 2017

Pan Canadian Voice for Women's Housing 2017 Symposium

Discussion Paper drafted from flip chart notes by Dharra Budicha, Edited by Janice Abbott, Formatted by Fei Wang, Atira Women's Resource Society

Advisory Circle

Janice Abbott	Atira Women's Resource Society
Rose Mary Cooper	Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
Julia Hardy	Regina Immigrant Women's Centre
Kaummajuk Holly Jarrett	Lived Experience Advisory Council, CAEH
Helene Langevin	Maison Simonne-Monet-Chartrand
Jennifer Lord	Native Women's Association of Canada
Lise Martin	ShelterSafe/Women's Shelters Canada
Miia Suokonautio	YWCA Halifax

Steering Committee

Janice Abbott	Atira Women's Resource Society
Rose Mary Cooper	Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
Janet Gwilliam	Employment and Social Development Canada
Mana Herel	Status of Women Canada
Shannon Hurley	Public Health Agency of Canada
Helene Langevin	Maison Simonne-Monet-Chartrand
Lise Martin	Women's Shelters Canada
Nina Romas	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Neelu Sachdev	Regina Immigrant Women's Centre
Miia Suokonautio	YWCA Halifax

Facilitator

Dominique Denny

Symposium Participants

Janice Abbott	Atira Women's Resource Society
Annetta Armstrong	Native Women's Transition Centre
Grainne Barthe	North Coast Transition Society
Mebrat Beyene	WISH Drop-in Centre and Society
Michele Biss	Canada Without Poverty
Liz Brown	Violence Against Women, Services Elgin County
Rose Mary Cooper	Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
Vicky Chief	Minwaashin Lodge Aboriginal Women's Support Centre
Linda Day	Aboriginal Mother Centre
Anne Dector	YWCA Canada
Lori Deets	Moose Jaw Transition House / Moose Jaw Family Services
Terry Duguid	Parliamentary Secretary, Status of Women Canada
Amanda Deseure	Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
Lorie English	West Central Women's Centre
Susan Enuaraq	Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada
Dana Rose Granofsky	National Housing Collaborative
Amanda Grant	Tungasuvvingat Inuit
Maura Gowans	Atira Women's Resource Society
Lynne Groulx	Native Women's Association of Canada
Julia Hardy	Regina Immigrant Women's Centre
Arlene Heche	Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness
Holly Jarrett	Lived Experience Advisory Council (LEAC)
Karine-Myrgranie Jean-François	DAWN Canada
Jennifer Johnstone	Central City Foundation
Jessica Keating	Libra House
Alice Kendall	Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
Helene Langevin	Maison Simonne Monet-Chartrand
Tracey MacEwan	Yukon Women's Transition Home Society
Angela MacDougall	Battered Women's Support Services
Lise Martin	Women's Shelters Canada
Manon Monastesse	Fédération des Maisons d'hébergement pour femmes (FMHF)
Emily Paradis	University of Toronto - Faculty of Social Work
Deidre Pike	Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton
Shahnaz Rahman	West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund for Women
Dianne Rogers	Baffin Regional Agvvik Society, YWCA Agvvik Nunavut
Leila Sarangi	Women's Habitat of Etobicoke
Paulette Senior	Canadian Women's Foundation
Evan Siddall	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Elisapee Sheutiapik	Qullit Nunavut Status of Women
Michele Silvestre	Regina Immigrant Women's Centre
Jewelles Smith	Council of Canadians with Disabilities
Carla Staresina	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Debbie Stewart	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Miia Suokonautio	YWCA Halifax
Effie Vlachoyannacos	Maytree Foundation
Christine A Walsh	University of Calgary - Faculty of Social Work
Dolly Williams	Preston Area Housing Fund
Fiona Williams	Liberty Lane
Catherine Wilson	YWCA Yellowknife; Sedigha Gefari, Regina Immigrant Women Centre



Key Issues, Gaps, Barriers


Introduction

In October 2016, the women's community made a request to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to support a national conversation amongst women's organizations about women's housing, a request that was immediately supported and ultimately funded by CMHC, Status of Women Canada (SWC) and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). The conversation, branded A Pan-Canadian Voice for Women's Housing, took place in Toronto on September 14th and 15th, 2017 and included a diverse group of more than 50 women from every province and territory and representing First Nations, Métis and Inuit women's organizations, immigrant and refugee women's organizations, the black and women of colour communities, the women's disability community, the lived-experience community, the academic community, shelters, transition houses, women's

centres and advocacy organizations and on day two, government representatives including politicians, senior leadership, policy makers and program staff. Women who participated expressed sheer delight at the opportunity, after more than 10 long years, of being in a room together focused solely on issues that affect women and their children and in this instance, housing. The two-day symposium was split into two parts, with day one for community women and agencies only and government officials invited in on day two, to listen. Women were able to identify together gaps and barriers facing women with respect to housing and to put forward ideas for solutions, without having to make specific recommendations. Together this community of women recognized the need to keep the conversation going and to repeat the symposium in 2018. On day two, Evan Siddall, President and CEO of CMHC, made five commitments:

1. To fund a second annual gathering of women, under the Pan Canadian Voice for Women's Housing banner, with a goal to fund annual gatherings.
2. To make the dialogue ongoing, perhaps through an online platform.
3. To include and support shelters and victims of family violence in the National Housing Strategy.
4. To work with and promote an intersectional lens to Indigenous housing and to work with INAC on the Indigenous housing strategy.
5. To subject CMHC's own policies and practices to a gender-based review, to be conducted internally and through an intersectional lens.

Below is a summary of the conversation as taken from flip chart notes, which are appended at the end of this document. This is not a research document and represents only the stories, experiences and conversations of women involved in the work of housing women, and women and children.



“ Housing is not a privilege or a commodity – it is a basic human right. ”

Systematic Barriers

The greatest barriers to safe, sustainable, inclusive and affordable housing lie within the political system women must navigate in order to obtain such housing. Federal, provincial, and municipal policy makers do not work collectively, leading to conflicting bylaws and regulations, unsupportive and unsupported policies, and poor coordination of government funds.

Laws and regulations are insensitive to women's lived experiences. Unlike the UN, the federal government's definition of homelessness does not include women and children living in homes of violence or shelters/ transition houses. The regulations on lengths of stay - from six weeks to six months in shelters and transition homes – are not nearly enough time for women. Women with kids do not receive support. Women are forced to declare common law in order to live with opposite sex roommates. Children over five years old cannot share rooms if they are of different genders. A lack of ID prevents access to services; in Ottawa, for instance, this can prevent First Nations, Métis and Inuit women from accessing First Nations, Métis and Inuit services.

Mothers who lose housing, lose their children, creating a cycle where women cannot get their children back without housing, but cannot get housing without their children, as most housing and facilities cater to women who have children in their care. In cases of violence against women in relationships, judges will often order women to leave their abusive partner forcing her to choose between having a home and having her children

apprehended. The onus to leave is never on the abuser. Child welfare apprehension is a significant and disproportionate issue for First Nations, Métis and Inuit women.

Women also face many barriers in receiving housing and rent supplements: they cannot incur arrears, are often waiting for long periods of time for apartments, and are prioritized on length of shelter stay (i.e. those who are identified as vulnerable and not necessarily actively seeking housing). The Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) and other prioritization tools create barriers and exclusions, such as frequent reassessments, workers skirting the tool in an effort to prevent barriers to intake; SPDAT creating “high barrier” services, housing providers in Ottawa for example, asking workers and women for their SPDAT scores and subsequently causing discriminations in housing; and housing providers lacking supports to house those referred who have high needs.

Market housing is also based on private ownership and investment, where corporate interests, such as priority on return on investment rather than creating homes, complicate matters further and puts renters and therefore women and children disproportionately at risk and in precarious housing.

In addition, there is little to no market housing that is accessible for women with disAbilities and programs that work to create access to market housing (rent supplements, for example) disadvantage women with disAbilities.

Women with disAbilities experience a disproportionate amount of violence and abuse and often accept substandard and or unsafe housing as they have limited housing options. High medical expenses exacerbate this problem.

There is very little accessible subsidised housing and shelters are rarely truly accessible. In Regina, for example, there are no accessible shelters. One exception is partially (wheelchair) accessible but not designed for many women with disAbilities, or for women who are older, as they did not consider and install items like support bars or accessible countertops, there is no braille signage or alarms that are visible for women with hearing impairments, and no thought to ensuring the premises are allergen free.

Women with disAbilities forced to live in institutions (care homes, assisted living, hospitals, etc.) because they have no other options, are also homeless, although rarely considered or counted as homeless.

Lack of Resources

Organizations do not have the resources to properly advocate for and assist women. This lack of funding means there is little ability to document housing and homelessness, fewer staff available to support women, few resources to ensure the safety and security of women, and services stretched thin in attempts to incorporate best practices.

Lack of Flexibility

As it exists, the current framework in housing for women proves to be incredibly static. Little autonomy exists for service providers to be flexible in the services they provide and with little to no room for change in current policy structures, there are no options to tailor responses and services to women's needs.

Lack of Inclusivity and Intersectionality

In developing policies and strategies for women's housing, women - particularly those with lived experience - do not have a seat at the table. No policy framework created by women with experience exists, and conversations and consultations are heavily flawed, exclusive, and rarely participant centered.

“ Market housing tends not to be accessible and so programs that work to create access to market housing disadvantage women with disAbilities. ”



Current approaches to housing for women are also not intersectional and are consequently not informed by women's experiences and the devastating impacts of physical violence, colonization, sexism, misogyny, trauma, struggles with mental wellness, struggles with substance use and addiction, racism and discrimination, transphobia, ableism, ageism, and other forms of oppression/identity markers.

Lack of empowerment/lack of support for mothering

There is a dearth in empowerment, encouragement and support in current approaches to women's housing and services. When requesting space, women are obliged to relay their stories repeatedly, leading to re-traumatization. Treatment facilities and women's detoxes are currently sterile and non-supportive. There is a lack of real support for women who are in poverty or are going through sudden changes in circumstances. Family supports for women are few and far between. There is also a significant lack of support to keep women and children together; social workers/ child protection workers are often young, poorly trained and are not prepared, able, and/or willing to help mothers keep their children.

Non-Inclusive Housing

A wide-spectrum, low-barrier approach to women's housing is severely lacking. Many shelters are not adapted for women with disabilities, addictions, or fleeing violence. For instance, all shelters in Winnipeg are co-ed and as a result, women's beds are not used or are under used for women's fear of gender-based violence. There is a lack of second stage and third stage housing and long-term supportive social housing. There is also a profound invisibility of women's sexuality (policies not allowing guests, for example) and older women in housing.

“ Mothers who lose housing, lose their children, creating a cycle where women cannot get their children back without housing, but cannot get housing without their children. ”

Approaches to women's housing are also flawed in their exclusion of several demographics. Many younger women and girls are unable to access housing and single women are often left behind, as most women's housing is set up for women with children. Additionally, there are gaps in service provision for young women ageing out of the foster care system.

Safety and Location

Issues of location and safety are especially pertinent to women's housing. Women in remote, small, and rural communities face unique challenges in the lack of available transportation, isolation due to moving away from communities, and scattered housing that prevents the creation of communities that can support mental wellness and mobility. Security-wise, not only are women's shelters easily located due to a lack of privacy, but housing that fails to take into consideration women's safety - in particular, that of older women - subjects women to more harm.





Solutions

Housing is not a privilege or a commodity – it is a basic human right. It must be legally recognized as such and reflected in housing strategies and policies going forward. The federal government must also adhere to the UN conventions it signed on to; in particular, the UN convention on The Right to Adequate Housing and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) Article 23.

Approaches to women’s housing must incorporate a gender-specific lens. All levels of government need to practice accountability by working together to solve the contradictory policies that created homelessness. All levels of government need to increase funding to existing programs and facilities working to meet the spectrum of women’s needs, as well as dedicate funds in the national housing strategy to women and girls. Rent supplements must be increased and housing assurance needs to happen more quickly. Pilot programs (e.g. time-limited rent subsidy programs) need to be eliminated in favour of commitments to ongoing funding for programs. In addition to funding, addressing systemic causes of homelessness is necessary. The marginalization of and discrimination against First Nations, Métis and Inuit women trying to attain housing, for example, as well as the criminalization of women fleeing abuse, must end.

“ As a group, we are inclusive and know the solutions – we simply need systems to be behind us and policy makers to work with us in order to provide safe, affordable, and accessible housing for women in Canada. ”

All stakeholders need to be a part of consultations and discussions. Women with lived experience must be included in panel and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women require clear roles in all levels of decision-making. The inclusion of shelter workers and those with lived experience in the development of policies, programs, and services is necessary. Measurable targets in policies must be informed by the expertise of community members and groups.

Women have rights to safe, affordable, appropriate and inclusive housing. The provision of safe housing for CAS women and the creation of second-stage transitional housing and expansion of third-stage long term/indeterminate housing, portable housing benefits, and housing with no/low barriers are all necessary. For First Nations, Métis and Inuit women, culturally-sensitive housing with appropriate regulations and accommodations that are administered by First Nations, Métis and Inuit women is a right under UNDRIP Article 23 (<http://rights.culturalsurvival.org/undrip-article-23-right-development>). Healing and treatment centres should be included in women’s housing. Mandated cultural sensitivity training for landholders to combat discrimination, and staff training in harm reduction and cultural sensitivity must be in place. A multi-generational approach to housing women must

incorporate addiction services and mental health care access, women's healing, and support for women to mother their children.

A flexible, women-centered approach to housing is also necessary. This requires aligning with the UN's definition of homelessness (<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Housing/homelessness.pdf>) and ensuring the national housing strategy includes women living in precarious, insecure, and violent living conditions. It also means developing trusting relationships with service providers to allow them to deliver programs they know work, and meet women's needs.

Lastly, there is a need for an independent Pan-Canadian Women's advocacy and advisory voice that has power, is funded, coordinated, and protected. Mechanisms for women-owned co-ops and non-profit housing should be in place. Possible initiatives range from delivering services with governmental partners, collaborating with other movements, and establishing regional coordinators for women's housing planning. Collaborations must respond to single women experiencing homelessness, conducting local research for a real count of women who don't fit the federal definition of homelessness, and publishing reports.





Discussion

We are a group of diverse women who envision safe, affordable, and accessible housing for every woman in Canada. As a Pan-Canadian voice for women in housing, we must ensure we are inclusive; that there are women with lived experience, housing expertise, women of colour, immigrant and refugee women, and First Nations, Métis and Inuit women at the forefront of our work, as well as young women, women who are older, women who are disabled, LBTTIQQ2S women and women who experience other forms of oppression.

Meeting annually will allow us to collectively hold meaningful, concrete discussions followed with commitments for the next year. We are many voices with a common interest in the rights and well-being of women, the driving force of our message is that women's housing is a right. We need to focus on taking action, advocacy, and finding comprehensive ways of supporting women who are traumatized, and advancing UNDRIP Article 23 as a fundamental human right and a treaty right.

“ Meeting annually will allow us to collectively hold meaningful, concrete discussions followed with commitments for the next year. ”

At this stage in our development, we are focusing on deepening the conversation we've started as opposed to making recommendations. We do not want to create another infrastructure, but to ground ourselves in community, looking to strengthen women, to give up/make space for the voices of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women on this stolen land, to include and give up/make space for the voices of black women, women of colour, immigrant and refugee women, women with disAbilities, LBTTIQQ2S, young women, women who are older, to give up/make space for the voices of women with lived experience, and produce a principled, clear structure of advocacy. We need to work with our partners to push policy while simultaneously building women's collective power and addressing root causes of barriers to women's housing.

We need governments to listen in order to cultivate change and to provide the funding that will turn these solutions into realities. As a group, we are inclusive and we know the solutions – we simply need systems to be behind us and policy makers to work with us in order to provide safe, affordable, and accessible housing for women in Canada.

September 14th Conversations – Flip Chart Notes Transcribed

Key Issues, Gaps and Barriers

- A**
- Nothing about us, without us
 - » First Nations, Métis, Inuit need clear role in all levels of decision making
 - Organizations do not have the resources to properly advocate and assist
 - Lack of priority and urgency in response to crisis
 - Lack of autonomy for service providers to be flexible in services, lack of flexibility in structures
 - No ability to document housing and homelessness
 - Policy development is flawed and not participant centred
 - United Nation (UN) definition of homelessness is more inclusive to security, federal definition is too narrow
 - Government run housing creates red tape
 - Transitional housing does not fall under residential tenancy act
 - » Recognize they are landlords
 - Lack of culturally appropriate housing
 - Lack of focus on safety and housing – inappropriate housing can make you more unsafe
 - Rent supplements and poverty
 - Need intersectional approach to housing because of hidden homelessness
 - Lack of research
 - Trauma-informed
 - PTSD and mental health outcomes from colonization
 - #1 link to homelessness is trauma
 - Inability to access housing for younger women and girls
 - Questions
 - » Is intersectional data available?
 - » Is there a more vulnerable age group of women and girls to homelessness?
- B**
- Gaps and Barriers
 - Social assistance systems work against women e.g. earning deduction
 - Federal and provincial bylaws work against each other
 - Foundational / root: addictions and trauma and violence and poverty at the bottom of it all
 - Trauma informed care lacking
 - *Women face barriers to instilling their boys and men in particular the family traditions and values to help face the impact of the trauma poverty
 - Not able to empower them to become human beings – respectful foundations
 - Advocacy gets too bogged down I can't go one more time to fight for that \$300
 - No empowerment /support like there was
 - Lack of funding means service that is not best practice like single staffing e.g. no women allowed who are using
 - Definition of homelessness
 - » 6 months of 3x in a year doesn't fit - women "NOT HOMELESS ENOUGH" for housing first
 - » Doesn't commodify women staying in violent situations
 - Funding limitations to provide support staff for women
 - *Need to pay staff more so they receive living wage so they aren't homeless
 - Tic costs \$ to train
 - Loving, nurturing primary care facility for safe women's detox – treatments currently sterile and non-supportive
 - *Help people feel part of the community even when they're housed
 - » And found this Homeless Partnering Strategy (HPS)!!
 - Something to do like singing women in Hamilton that help women build community outside of institution
 - Women with kids don't get support except Children's Aid Society (CAS)
 - If she loses family allowance she loses housing and then cant get reunited with kids
 - Mental health e.g. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) counselling wait time 3-6 years
 - Single women left behind – most set up for women & children
 - No women's only shelter in Winnipeg – all co-ed and women's beds don't get filled because of violence – Violence Against Women (VVA) beds wont get used for single women
 - Federal funders don't acknowledge full spectrum of housing e.g. transitional housing not valued!
 - No flexible options responding to women's needs
 - Each jurisdiction own rules
 - Isolation and transportation especially in the north – rural
 - Supports lacking especially accessible and affordable
 - Regulations on length of stay 6 weeks – 6 months NOT enough time
 - Policy Gaps
 - Manitoba
 - Social assistance – woman has to convince them there was domestic violence in order to qualify for support – Stupid policies
 - Forced to declare common law in order to live in opposite sex roommate
 - LACK OF 1ST VOICE EMPHASIS
 - Hamilton example of research and what women want
 - Disabled women in institutions are homeless and need to be counted

- C
 - Low barrier shelters and services
 - Funding
 - Change in protocol around women VAW survivors on refusing first housing offered – shouldn't come off list – women need to be able to decide on suitability.
 - Can't set up Indigenous & Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) appointments until after 15th of the month; cheques are late – folks lose housing Yukon; Yukon government anytime therefore unequal access.
 - Social assistance \$\$ too low
 - Underfunding-federal- of territorial governments and services per capita creates gaps
 - No privacy for women's shelters; can be located
 - Lack of first step place to go to move toward sustainable, affordable, safe housing.
 - Many barriers to receiving housing/rent supplement
 - » Prioritization tool
 - » can't have arrears
 - » Long wait for apartment
 - » Women identified as vulnerable.
 - » Prioritized on length of shelter stay; not necessarily actively seeking housing
 - Arrears policy of public housing providers
 - Lack of long time supportive affordable housing
 - SPDAT and other prioritization tools create barriers and exclusions.
 - Time limits on shelter stays
 - Market rent housing does not provide accessible housing ; programs that work to create access to market housing disadvantage women with disabilities (i.e. housing first - Mental Health)
 - Scattered site housing prevents creation of community that supports on mental health and mobility
 - Lack of shelters adapted for women with disabilities
 - Lack of low barrier shelters
 - Lose housing ; women lose children.
 - Lack of security of tenure in condo rentals
 - Lack of ID prevents access to services – cannot match Aboriginal women and Aboriginal services (Ottawa)
 - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT)
 - » Missing Canadian Indigenous content understanding
 - » Begins relationship with invasive question (barrier to access)
 - » Frequent reassessment (3 mos)
 - » Workers skirting to prevent barrier to "intake" SPDAT creates "high barrier" service
 - » Housing providers in Ottawa asking for SPDAT scores; causing discrimination in housing
 - » Housing providers lacking supports to house those referred with high needs
 - » Lack of supported community-based safe affordable housing for women
 - Social housing is not automatically supportive housing
 - Statistics for homeless do not count women in shelters
 - Gap: access to doctors
 - Child protection – judges order women to leave man or they will take children – should order men to leave
 - In QC provincial government holding shelter enhancement \$\$ and not releasing to shelters
 - Lack of transportation for women
 - Better access to education to move toward a good job and change life
 - Access to legal aid
 - Access to translation and interpretation
 - QC shelters turn away 8,000 per year
 - Child welfare apprehension major issue for First Nation and Inuit communities
 - Inuit women have to fly out leads to homelessness
 - Cycle: can't get children back without housing, can't get housing without children
 - Need more second stage housing
 - Pink – sticker cards:
 - Transgendered "self identifying woman"
 - Women telling story over and over when requesting space
 - Women need to have treatment to have children returned to their car and there are no treatment beds
 - Women at risk because of the judicial system
 - Statistics without women in shelters are not right
 - Mental health
 - DPJ
 - 22m federal government promise CMHC to ???
 - Second stage housing facilities
 - Lack of transportation
 - Access to education
 - » Access to aide???

- D**
- Affordable housing
 - Adequate, appropriate and safe
 - Housing is a right
 - Unique challenges of remote and small communities
 - 30% affordability not realistic for women, especially women with children/large families
 - Lack of accessible housing
 - Law: children over 5 years cannot share room if different gender
 - Lack of low barrier housing
 - “No pet” policies
 - Women losing custody of their children because of inadequate housing/ family courts give negative assessments
 - Lack of gov’t \$ coordination
 - Time-limited supports for women do not work for many
 - Lack of real supports for women during sudden changes in circumstances
 - Lack of homeless prevention – Housing First – women don’t meet definition of “chronic homeless”
 - Gaps in service provision for young people aging out of care
 - Lack of support to keep women and children together- lack of supports for women to mother their children
 - Obsessed with counting homeless – but most counts do not properly account for women
 - Lack of family supports for women
 - Social workers are only child protection workers (young/ poorly trained) – not prepared/able/willing to help mothers to keep children
 - Need to understand trauma is ongoing and many services and systems re-traumatize
 - Lack of resources to keep spaces/services safe for women + staff + volunteers but don’t want so many “staff” that institutionalizes women
 - Racism and poverty – opens door to gov’t intervention in women’s lives
 - Denial of racism/discrimination in Canada
 - Communities, women are over-resourced – we already have the numbers/stats/research – our expertise is not seen as valid – overly onerous/bureaucratic reporting requirements
 - Short term subsidies – not enough \$
 - All levels of government don’t work together
 - Couch surfing
- E**
- Gender inequality
 - Mental health and addiction
 - Child care
 - Problem – housing based on private ownership and investment
 - Woman part of problem development
 - Safe affordable housing
 - Government to be held accountable
 - Poverty
 - Support people who are in poverty – low income jobs but no support
 - Barriers to employment i.e. childcare
 - Government accountability and lack of coordination
 - Moving away from community not in systems
 - Have to find ways to prevention but have spectrum
 - Government to be held accountable
 - Funding – indigenous affairs opened up to health authorities, school boards, etc
 - Women are excluded from strategy
 - Not enough consequences for abuse of women
 - Violence against women has to be enforcement of laws
 - Wicked problem – cannot get out major is poverty » Needs political will
 - Teach people to act, within the system at support
 - Government won’t give info
 - Stop the research
 - Housing first and other systems are an industry
 - Context – baked infused colonization stratification
 - Voicelessness and not invited to the conversation
 - Community based devastation of criminalization of women who self-defend racialized
 - Issue: MMIA and girls is still a huge problem even though an inquiry is supposed to be addressing it
 - Child apprehension system causes trauma and rips family apart
 - Infrastructures put into bureaucratic level not into community
 - Govern invested in having people poor
 - Corporation are adding to the problem i.e. Irving Corp in NS.
- F**
- Not enough safe affordable housing
 - » Not a spectrum of safe and affordable housing
 - » No housing
 - » No home = no subsidy`
 - » Shelters lack of space
 - If living in shelter considered not homeless or / and including couch surfing
 - » Wait list cycles
 - » Policies sectorial and not in a family world view
 - » Mothers not able to access child tax credit (refugee) consider giving their children up so that X can benefit Child Tax Credit (CTC)
 - » Shelter and transition homes – have fixed timelines who can stay and when
 - » NO POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR WOMENS HOUSING CREATED BY WOMEN WITH EXPERIENCE
 - » There isn’t safe housing to older women
 - » Addicted women are not eligible to stay at shelters due to their addiction
 - » Consultations are not validated by participants at federal, provincial, territorial (FPT) levels
 - » Housing for women is not a charity, IT’S A WOMAN’S RIGHT
 - Women have been stigmatized. No \$ for funding

- G**
- Separate/independent voice for women that has power – protected
 - Partner with us for delivery (gov't partners)
 - Protect existing organizations (charitable status – barriers)
 - Who will be seated on advocacy panel
 - People with lived experiences participating in body/panel
 - Lived experience – first voice is key
 - Take risks
 - Amazing voices/clarify
 - Housing policy reproduces model of patriarchy – good woman/bad woman
 - Charity lens – should be grateful! – tiny bits = enough
 - Why privilege and not right?
 - Invisibility of women's sexuality in housing
 - Profound invisibility of older women
 - Safe housing for LBTTQ2S
 - Land "war" in East Preston – Halifax area
 - Role of gov't in keeping women down
 - Come together more – maritime/Atlantic are small and isolated
 - Don't speak for us – ask me what I need
 - Rent control solution
 - How to deal with government – today supportive what about in future
 - More money (Quebec) for shelters, for spectrum of needs
 - Add to statistics – women in shelters (VAW) not counted
- I**
- Solutions
 - All housing build with universal design
 - National Accessibility and Accommodation Survey on DAWN Canada site to assess/audit current units available
 - Define Gender Based Violence (GBA) for the government and ask for demonstration of HOW it is doing this in policy development and funding decision – have women look at the process.
 - Have community based responses to housing and homelessness – including rural /urban / small town realities
 - Require lived experience advisory in the development of programs and services
 - » Value this experiences by paying for it
 - Mechanisms for women's owned housing coops, non-profit housing, etc
 - Make money available for ongoing operating costs for housing that is being built
 - Create a protection mechanism for transitional housing through Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) or similar
 - Flexible, person centred approach to housing
 - Trusting relationships with service providers to allow them to deliver programs that they know work
 - Hire women to do the building maintenance of women's housing stock
 - Rent supplements model after Halifax model
 - Bring federal, provincial, municipal policy makers together to find workarounds for bottle necks and contradictory policies that created homelessness
 - Consider the impact of women's relationships with child care (parent, grandparent, etc) in housing
 - Multi-generational housing
- H**
- Uphold UN recommendations for Indigenous women to be hired to provide legal info to other indigenous women
 - Women's owned, co-op housing
 - More transitional housing
 - Safety as a priority in housing
 - Respect UN convention on adequate housing from 2009
 - Implement UNDRIP article 23
 - Older women
 - » Second stage – transition houses
 - » Gender audit on homeless housing
 - » 2nd stage – 3rd stage housing
 - » Rent control for all housing
 - Address systemic causes to homelessness in addition to funding
 - Plain language conversations on housing
 - Ongoing discussion and strategizing
 - Regulation and surveillance of supporting housing
 - National indigenous housing strategy in addition to national strategy
 - Gender-specific lens
 - Culturally-specific housing and culturally sensitive regulations and accommodations
 - Staff training in harm reduction and cultural sensitivity
 - Bringing shelter workers into housing policy
 - Systemic issue – context historic discrimination
 - Regular dialogue with gov't
 - Regulation surveillance
 - Specific national indigenous housing strategy/ immigrant/refugee
 - Gendered lens on housing
 - Successful legal cases around housing
 - The UN definition includes persons who, because they inhabit inadequate dwellings, are in serious danger of being thrown into the streets
 - » Our strategy must include precarious, insecure, violent living conditions
 - Criminalization of indigenous women trying to attain housing
 - Criminalization of women fleeing abuse
 - Housing registry education
 - Gender analysis into reports
 - Creation of second-stage transitional housing to open beds in shelters
 - Third stage, permanent housing must be expanded
 - Mandated cultural sensitivity training for landlords to combat discrimination
 - Rent control for all housing
 - Rent supplements are inadequate and do not address causes of homelessness
 - Housing assurance needs to come through faster
 - Women and children in VAW homes/shelters are homeless according to UN definition which says you are homeless when you live in an environment where there is no security
 - » Living in homes of violence or shelters included

- J**
- Women must be supported to mother their children
 - Rent control
 - No more “pilot” programs without ongoing \$\$ e.g. Time limited rent subsidy programs
 - Ensure housing strategies always consider and incorporate addictions services and mental health care access
 - For housing strategy (From housing strategy) ?
 - Measureable targets informed by expertise of community groups.
 - Reduce/remove capital gains exemptions for principal residence and direct revenues to safe, affordable, appropriate & accessible housing for women
 - Make women visible – recognize women’s precarious housing as homelessness, women who do the work are made invisible by the system/processes of reporting, funding, etc.
 - Flip the spending model (Portugal model) 90% prevention and treatment 10% enforcement.

- L**
- Solutions
 - For Indigenous women: more culturally-appropriate housing for Indigenous women, administered by Indigenous women (article 23 UNDRIP) EXAMPLE – WINONA’S PLACE
 - SHORT TERM
 - » Low barrier shelters
 - » Wet houses
 - LONG TERM
 - » Low barrier housing
 - » Healing and treatment centres for women including Indigenous healing centres
 - » Increase funding to existing programs
 - » Legal recognition of the right to housing
 - » Dedicated funds in the national housing strategy for women and girls
 - » Indigenous women and girls
 - Ideas government could fund that are already successful
 - Each region/large city could have a coordinator of a women’s housing planning collaborative responding to single women experiencing homelessness. Successful in Hamilton and founded through HPS. See Deirdre Pike for more
 - Local research – do your own point-in-time count of women to ensure you get more real count of hidden women who don’t fit the definition of homelessness
 - Putting a report together with recommendations from Women’s Housing Planning Cooperative for single women beds, meant over \$1m to beds

- K**
- Human rights principles to make strategy based in rights
 - » Make explicit reference to human rights
 - » Consult women with lived experience in every step
 - » Commit to principles of non discrimination and equality
 - » Set goals specific for women
 - » Engage with all levels of government
 - » Monitor progress according to strategy
 - » Establish internal and external mechanisms of monitoring and review - measurable.
 - Right to safe housing
 - Born out of and driven by community – inclusive, cultural, safe
 - Includes economic model that empowers community i.e. Land Trust and other options
 - Define community, bureaucracy should not do
 - Housing as a human right
 - First Nations land use
 - Self sustain
 - Portable housing benefit for women
 - Critique housing first
 - Community based responses
 - Taxing capital gains
 - Homeownership – shelters, transitional housing – housing
 - Look at other successful strategies in other countries (e.g. South Africa, Scandinavian (but flawed because of indigenous rights)
 - Incorporate the healing journey
 - Women should not be discharged into homelessness
 - Multi-generational approach/not just income
 - Adhere to conventions that Canada has already signed onto
 - Rethink Canada’s backed/infused value system from housing as a commodity to housing as a human right
 - Pan Canadian women’s input and path to government accountable
 - A voice for Pan Canadian women’s housing - how does the national housing strategy fit our programs?
 - Some of the success stories
 - » Solutions what are the key levers to ensure the right to safe affordable, appropriate housing for women and women’s safety? To the right to housing for women?
 - » Ideas of what government could fund- What do you need?
 - » Short term long term – 0 labeled
 - » Strategy for women
 - » Housing is a human right
 - » Equality and non-discrimination – current models don’t work for women.
 - ◇ Cultural safety
 - ◇ Inclusive
 - ◇ Community-based
 - ◇ Economic models – land trusts ownership.
 - Community based responses
 - Mobilizing women in communities to find responses to their concerns.
 - Pan Canadian voice for women’s housing - Advocacy
 - Pan Canadian community based response and Maritimes we need to come together
 - Prevention and immediate responses
 - Want something concrete from this, i.e. beginning of strategy resolutions
 - Housing is a human right
 - Inclusion of people with lived experience
 - Committing to the equality and non-discrimination
 - As signatories to the xyz UN declaration...

- M
 - Housing for women without rules needs to be considered, a right regardless of criteria
 - Validate consultations by stakeholders
 - No barriers to women / no policy limitations
 - Inter-departmental / Regional / community holistic approached
 - Safety is a community response
 - No housing increases risks to death
 - Solutions
 - Housing for women needs be considered a right regardless of criteria
 - Short term:
 - Clearing house for information
 - Public collective statement
 - National housing strategy to address colonialism, racism, sexism, homophobia
 - Independent women's advisory voice- funded, coordinated, work with other movements
 - Build housing. 22 billion \$ investment across country from 2017 – 2021. 4 years
 - Use inside and outside game
 - » Market stats and narrative powerful voices of women of experience
 - » Not okay for one more women to die
 - » Not okay for women to live in infested homes
 - » Accountability for government to measure movement in housing for women

Pan-Canadian Voice for Women in Housing – Discussion

WHY / VISION

- Safe, Affordable, Accessible Housing; rent control; taxation (money reinvesting in social housing);
- Urgency to ensure we have many and cohesive voices –
 - » How will CMHC ensure an intersectional gender lens applied to/embedded in the NHS when discussing housing and homelessness
- Require a Inclusive and Diverse group of women
- No woman is ever turned away
- Ensure there are women with lived experience expertise, Indigenous women involved
- In particular for vulnerable people
- Not just about gov't – many issues with service providers
- We are a voice for the mothers/families, not for children
- Women's housing as a right
- Annual coming together to hold a meaningful conversation – have concrete discussions, commitments for next year, what has occurred in the current year
- No one is immune – involve all in discussions
- UNDRIP Article 23 – fundamental human right, treaty right, and more -- reconciliation means action
- Comprehensive way of preventing / supporting traumatized women – action is lacking.
- Focus on action
- Importance of coming together – work in communities – where do we go with this, how do we move to action
- Ensure we are not starting fresh each time we come together, the information is brought forward
- Land rights – build affordable housing for women – lets look at all the women we have in this room and come together
- An important note that this is our first gathering as women in this work and that is the value. Lets not rush to try to make recommendations. Let's focus on this group and on continuing/deepening the conversation we started. We are not ready to make recommendations yet.
- At this stage of our development, with the various crises facing women – the only way to move forward is clear advocacy – no one is making space for women in this country – there is no point to a report – we need to make strong commitments that are about systemic advocacy. The time is now. This is not about creating another infrastructure – it is about getting clear principle statements – this table is national and committed/ grounded in community looking to strengthen the community of women – to be on stolen land, the thought about efforts to create space for Indigenous people – this is real. Canada eliminated black people – NS has more generations – lets create a principled, straight forward structure of advocacy
- The body will need to work with our partners who push policy (inside game) – but a national body needs an outside game of building womens collective power – root causes (capitalism, colonialism) – need to make the demands
- Statements of truth that led us to this urgent situation – there is an inside / outside game
- There are not safe homes for women and children everywhere, for senior women – emergency shelters have to turn women away every day – they are not seen, they are not safe – we do not have enough housing. It is a fundamental human right. This is the reality. We need to stand up and show that this is happening – and we need government to stand up to make change.
- There are Aboriginal organizations – and staff – who are working with Aboriginal and Indigenous women – making change – hard to represent all these women – issues across the country are different and that is why approaches are different, and women are different/ diverse.
- We need someone in GOV'T to listen to us to make change, to provide the funding to make these solutions possible. As a group, we are inclusive; we know the solutions; we need the systems to be behind us/ work together to assist this

WHAT NEXT?

- To be discussed tomorrow morning.