



**Indigenous Women Fleeing Domestic
Violence, Housing and Homelessness:
Scoping Review Consultation**
May 2 and 3, 2016



Policy Wise
for Children & Families



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Elder Jo-Ann Saddleback, who offered the opening and closing prayers at the community consultation in Edmonton, and guided conversations.

Consultation participants, who represented Aboriginal organizations, First Nations and Métis communities, community service organizations, academic institutions, and government.

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I. Background and Event Overview

The Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness (IAC) is a unique partnership between community leaders and all orders of government. It is tasked with providing transformational policy advice to the Government of Alberta, through the Ministry of Human Services, for the purposes of supporting the objectives of *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years*.

Alberta Human Services facilitated a partnership between the IAC and PolicyWise for Children & Families (PolicyWise) to develop and implement A Housing and Homelessness Research Strategy for Alberta (Felix-Mah, Adair, Abells & Hanson, 2014). In 2014, the IAC approved the strategy and identified **housing and homelessness issues experienced by Indigenous women¹ fleeing domestic violence** as a research priority.

PolicyWise gathered stakeholders on March 11, 2015 to discuss the state of the evidence and identify knowledge gaps and opportunities for strategic research investments to improve housing outcomes for Indigenous women who have experienced domestic violence. Following that first meeting, PolicyWise engaged in three pieces of research. Two projects supplemented current research projects already focused on the intersection of housing, homelessness and domestic violence : (1) second-stage shelter research by the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (2) seed funding of a research pilot on women's experiences of navigating the legal system in Alberta in relation to domestic violence, which built on a previous study on Residential Tenancies Issues of Victims of Domestic Violence by the Center for Public Legal Education Alberta. A third project was undertaken specifically focusing on Indigenous women: a scoping review of existing policy recommendations related to housing and homelessness as experienced by Indigenous women who have also experienced domestic violence.

The two consultations in May 2016 were held in part to report back to stakeholders on the work initiated by PolicyWise since the first meeting. The central purpose of the consultations was to present the preliminary findings of the scoping review on existing policy recommendations to improve housing outcomes for Indigenous women who have also experienced violence. The Executive Summary of this final report, which incorporates the findings from this consultation, is included in Appendix A. The final report is also available online at www.policywise.com.

A total of 45 individuals in Calgary and 40 individuals in Edmonton registered to participate in the consultations, representing Indigenous communities, women's shelters (on-reserve and off-reserve), universities, health organizations, family shelters, police, government, and community-based

¹ This report uses the terms 'Aboriginal' and 'Indigenous' with the recognition that while the terms are similar, they are not the same. 'Aboriginal' is a constitutionally defined term that includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people. The report more frequently uses the term 'Indigenous,' which is becoming internationally recognized as more inclusive, while also recognizing that individuals and communities will self-define their identities. However, in the consultations, participants used both terms and we have tried to remain faithful to their word choices in this report.

organizations in the housing and health sectors. A list of organizations represented in the discussion is provided in Appendix B.

Format of Consultations

Because the project focused on Indigenous women, the research project team set out to create a consultation process that would ensure the voices of Indigenous women were not only present, but foregrounded among the participants. The team took several steps to work toward this goal. The invitation was sent to a finite number of people, although invitees were encouraged to suggest additional names of people who could speak to the issue, and one team member reached out to Indigenous communities and organizations to verify contact information and extend personal invitations to attend. The invitation also clearly stated that people from Indigenous organizations and communities would be prioritized in registrations, should there be more interest than capacity (in the end, all who registered were able to attend). A grant from Alberta Innovates: Health Solutions provided financial support for hosting of these events and provided travel bursaries.

The organizers also took steps to ensure the event was grounded in ceremony. Elder Jo-Ann Saddleback offered prayer and smudging in the Edmonton consultation, and Elder Doreen Spence offered an opening prayer at the Calgary consultation. The Elders participated throughout the consultation, sharing their wisdom and guidance and closing our time together in prayer. The discussions were primarily held in a circle to emphasize the importance of relationship and to ensure all voices were heard.

Agenda for the Consultation

Tara Hanson and Roxanne Felix-Mah welcomed guests and provided an overview of the role of PolicyWise and context to set the day. Kate Woodman, with Catalyst Research & Development, acted as facilitator at each consultation. She provided an overview of the sectors represented by the stakeholders in the room, and then facilitated a circle introduction in which each participant said where they were from and what they were hoping to get from the consultation. Once everyone in the room had introduced themselves in the circle, there were two brief updates from:

- Jan Reimer (Edmonton)/ Carolyn Goard (Calgary) from the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters on the second stage shelter research
- Lois Gander (Edmonton only) from the Center for Public Legal Education Alberta on navigating the legal terrain research development

The remainder of the consultation focused on presenting and discussing the preliminary findings of the scoping review of existing policy recommendations addressing housing and homelessness in relation to Indigenous women who have been affected by domestic violence. The themes of the scoping review were presented by Dr. Deanna Yerichuk, Postdoctoral Fellow and lead researcher, and by Brittany Johnson, Research Assistant. The researchers provided details about the collection of sources included in the review, and provided an overview of key themes and policy recommendations. The presentation is included in Appendix C.

Following Deanna and Brittany's presentation, Kate Woodman facilitated discussions among the participants, guided by the following questions:

- What publicly available documents have been missed from the scoping review?
- Based on your experience, what important recommendations/analyses have not emerged from these documents?
- Which of the policy options do you identify as 'quick wins'? What policies, people or processes do you see as already occurring that we can build on?
- Identify recommendations that will make a difference, that are the uphill but necessary challenges that need to be addressed.

While the above questions guided conversations, the discussion did not align neatly to answer each individual question, and so the following section on what we heard is organized thematically for each of the two consultations.

II. What We Heard

During the consultations held in Edmonton and Calgary, Indigenous participants repeatedly emphasized the importance of relationship and the sacredness of working together, which includes having Indigenous women in leadership roles, joining together in ceremony, and incorporating modes of Indigenous relating and knowledge exchange. Relationships between organizations and communities are essential in order to see any necessary changes. In the words of an Edmonton participant: "If we haven't moved forward in the area of domestic violence, Indigenous women and homelessness, even after 10 years of policy development and recommendations, it's possible that we need to approach this from a place of ceremony [Indigenous]. Ceremony brings about relationship, which brings about accountability, which brings about action."



Summary of Edmonton Discussions

Elder Jo-Ann Saddleback offered the opening and closing prayer and helped to guide the Edmonton consultation. Along with smudging and prayer, she offered opening comments to guide conversations. She stressed that Indigenous women can no longer be seen as merely recipients of service anymore. Instead, Indigenous women need to be in charge of research and creating policies utilizing *their* knowledge. She pointed out that community-based research methods and ethics already exist in Indigenous communities. Understanding traditional knowledge is what makes housing policy and service provision ‘wholistic’—it means that all components serve to enhance Indigenous women’s ability to raise families. Elder Jo-Ann Saddleback talked about the importance of prayer, which is not just prayer but is a state of being, a way of moving through the world. She emphasized that these traditional knowledges are used to support the community and not just to enhance the knowledge of non-Aboriginal organizations. Relationships between organizations and communities are necessary for meaningful changes.

Culturally safe service provision.

Participants noted a gap in the existing policy recommendations in relation to women who don’t access supports and services. How can policies reach women who stay underground? Some participants worried about how certain terms are being defined: what is meant by wholistic approaches, cultural safety, or culturally appropriate services? Participants voiced concerns about the ideas of ‘safety’ and ‘access,’ noting that even if services are provided, they may not be provided in ways that are *culturally*

safe, so that Indigenous women may not come to women's shelters if those shelters do not understand the unique cultures and experiences of Indigenous women. Part of working toward cultural safety is to examine inherent power differentials and operate on the principle of 'doing no harm.'

One participant focused on the importance of the seven teachings and the core values of her Cree culture, stating that these need to be a central part of the work done with Aboriginal women. Another participant suggested incorporating leadership models based on traditional teachings that can empower the community. There is a need for more Aboriginal women working as brokers in shelters. Ensuring that non-Aboriginal people have thorough cultural training is another important part of providing culturally safe services. Elder Jo-Ann Saddleback suggested that some shelters need to learn to work with Elders, including learning appropriate protocols and cultural processes as well as providing appropriate honoraria, including but not limited to financial honouring.

Understanding women's experiences better in making policy decisions.

Several participants emphasized the need for more wide-spread recognition of how a lack of housing options increases the vulnerabilities of women. The policies about on-reserve home ownership were seen as relevant to Alberta contexts: one participant felt strongly that women need to have legal ownership of the house so that in incidents of domestic violence, men have to leave. Related, the reality in Alberta is that there is significant rural-urban migration of Indigenous persons, and this needs to be taken into account in policies affecting both contexts. Several participants urged policies to consider the impact of child welfare on the choices women make in trying to secure housing. Not only are many women dealing with long-term effects of growing up in the child welfare system, but they are afraid of losing their children to the system. One participant felt that early intervention has the greatest impact on the foundational beliefs of all cultures, and that early intervention efforts should support the entire family.

Working with/in Indigenous communities to develop policy.

Participants were centrally concerned with integrating relationship and ceremony into policy work in Indigenous communities in Alberta. Participants emphasized the importance of building and proceeding from within relationship. "How do we sit together and talk about these issues?" asked one participant, emphasizing that "we need to understand who we are before colonization and trauma." Not much has changed over the previous decade, which suggests a need to shift the approach altogether. One participant described an educational institution that after many meetings and lots of talk had not taken any meaningful action affecting Indigenous communities. When they began incorporating Indigenous ceremony, the dialogue and action plans transformed and they were able to produce meaningful change through building relationships. After explaining this, the participant suggested: "If we aren't moving things forward, maybe we need to meet and have a pipe ceremony and start there, use ceremony to build relationships." Ceremony is a foundation for relationships, she found, which leads to accountability and to change.

One participant noted that the Ministry of Indigenous Relations has two Indigenous women's advisory committees established: the Métis Women's Advisory Council and the First Nations Women's Advisory

Council (Inuit women have a seat on both councils). These are two existing mechanisms that could perhaps advise the implementation of Alberta’s homelessness plan, and possibly connect the work of the Interagency Council to other government initiatives affecting Indigenous communities in Alberta. Regardless of how policy gets implemented, the group felt strongly that the Alberta government must work with Indigenous women and their communities to create/develop policy and procedure, to have, as one participant framed it, “the proper information and knowledge to create ‘useable’ recommendations.”

Finally, others in the group felt that focusing only on policy is not enough—that policy can change quickly and constantly, and that working collectively in communities may be the place to focus efforts: “the real work is not so much with policy change or development. It’s the human heart work. Policy can impact [but] it’s not the only piece.”



Summary of Calgary Discussions

Elder Doreen Spence offered the opening prayer for the gathering in Calgary. She opened by naming the generations of governmental policies and structures that threatened the very survival of Indigenous people, and the urgent need to address issues of violence and homelessness. She then acknowledged and honoured the generations of Indigenous women who worked to preserve their cultures and protect families and communities. Elder Doreen Spence noted that she was a part of the meeting held the year before by PolicyWise, and she was pleased to see this gathering a year later, which indicates the strength and commitment in the room. She also highlighted that there have been many meetings and lots of talk but the time for action has come.

Addressing policies that perpetuate colonization.

Elder Doreen Spence's wisdom led into the discussions, which began with the central point that colonization is not in the past but continues to structure homelessness and violence experienced by Aboriginal people, along with so many other issues. Government legislation is at the heart of this colonization, and participants named The Indian Act, and the more recent Bill C-31. Another participant emphasized that patriarchy is a form of colonization, "one of the strongest tools of colonization." This relationship can be seen in contemporary Indigenous consultations, which often involve men and not women from Indigenous communities. Elder Doreen Spence observed that everyone was equal until colonization. One participant questioned whether the government was committed to meaningful change, asking "is there a will from the government? This has been a frustrating piece." The participant felt that there has been a lack of relationality with the Indigenous communities that these policy developments affect.

Need for a comprehensive culturally-sensitive strategy for services.

There needs to be a paradigm shift in service provision, in which "Indigenous women are seen as worthy of care," a shift related to society's historical and ongoing devaluation of Indigenous women, which is connected to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Participants talked about the pervasive discrimination that Indigenous tenants face from their landlords, and the difficulties encountered by Indigenous people in securing mortgages. A few participants felt that addressing racism in these specific circumstances requires a broad public education campaign. One participant noted that in 2005, the United Nations addressed the racism inherent in the policies of Canada and Australia, and since then, Australia has launched a successful anti-racism campaign. She expressed that this campaign would be a good example for Alberta to investigate.

One participant felt that the case management approach was not appropriate in Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal programming, as well as Aboriginal research, focuses on the collective rather than individuals. Indigenous approaches require community-based models that should include and respect Indigenous knowledge. There was a discussion about services located on-reserve or off-reserve. One participant voiced concerns about the lack of confidentiality on reserves, in which the local community members know when women seek services. There is also a significant problem of safety when perpetrators lurk outside the shelter. A participant raised the related issue that sometimes police on reserves do not honour court decisions regarding no-contact orders. Another participant spoke of the need for off-reserve shelters so that women could seek support in safe and confidential environments. However, another participant pointed out that some women want to be able to stay in their communities, and women should be able to choose whether they stay or go to get services. This requires a comprehensive strategy between locations, as well as comprehensive strategies developed in communities to determine what is needed to respond effectively to situations of violence and keep women in communities. There is a need for larger crisis teams on reserve.

Include men in family violence prevention work.

Participants in the Calgary consultation worried that a gender lens would separate boys and girls in ways that would not adequately bring healing to Indigenous communities. Several participants emphasized that addressing domestic violence requires working with men as well as with women. One example given was the RCMP Family Violence Response Initiative program, in which workers go with police on calls and start working with the abuser immediately, staying with him and creating a safety plan collaboratively. Participants firmly indicated that there are concrete examples of effective programs in Alberta that could be supported and scaled out. Another example given was work undertaken with men who have been incarcerated, in which they address their personal, family, and community shame. This approach both requires and creates community capacity as personal experience is linked to community experience and larger structures of colonization. Other programs mentioned were the Néya Napew Na Muton (“I Am a Kind Man”) initiative begun by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres,² as well as the Moosehide Campaign, which asks men and boys to wear moose hide swatches to show their support for the elimination of violence against Aboriginal women and to honour the women and girls in their lives.³

Address funding issues.

Participants were concerned not just about levels of funding but of the scope of funding. In particular, participants wanted to emphasize that long-term program funding is needed rather than short-term project funding. Programs with long-term funding have a greater chance of showing outcomes over time. In direct response to this, a participant noted that programs currently having long-term funding have a responsibility to advocate for long-term funding as a best practice.

Limitations of this particular research and report.

Finally, a few participants in the Calgary consultation pointed out that PolicyWise is not an Indigenous organization, and the lead researcher is not Indigenous. There is therefore a real possibility that the way in which the research and consultation reports are conducted and framed could perpetuate colonization. One example given was that a category of themes were presented as focusing on ‘individual women,’ and Indigenous communities focus on collectives rather than individuals.

² See <http://anfca.com/neya-napew-na-muton-i-am-a-kind-man/>

³ See <http://indigenous.alberta.ca/Moose-Hide-Campaign.cfm>

III. Ideas for Moving Forward

At the end of the consultations, participants were asked to use dot stickers to 'vote' on which existing policy recommendations are the most important to initiate. The participants in the Calgary session did not want to engage in the voting exercise, pointing out that all of the recommendations are intertwined and there is a need for action across the board. They were invited not only to vote but to provide additional comments and ideas on the pages, and overall the exercise helped identify which areas were seen as most urgent among participants. Noting that it was also important to identify areas of policy development not addressed in previous recommendations, participants also wrote additional comments to document nuances and approaches not listed in the recommendations.

The Edmonton participants indicated that they were most concerned with policy recommendations related to legislation and governance (31), although almost as keen for the government to work on policies related to service provision (28) and policies affecting women's experiences directly (19) with very little emphasis on the cross-cutting themes. Within policies affecting legislation and governance, participants most strongly focused on creating comprehensive, coordinated, and cross-jurisdictional strategies to eliminate homelessness/violence experienced by Indigenous women. They were also concerned with ensuring equitable funding to Indigenous and on-reserve shelters.

By contrast, the Calgary group focused mostly on policies related to service provision (30), and much less on policies related to legislation and governance (12), or policies affecting women's experiences directly (6). The Calgary participants were also concerned with the cross-cutting theme of intergenerational trauma (11) and wholistic approaches (8). Participants emphasized that addressing colonization means working with men, emphasizing that patriarchy is a form of colonization. Calgary participants also added an additional category: the importance of language as a part of developing culturally responsive services. Within the category of policies affecting service provision, Calgary participants most frequently voted for the Alberta government to invest in housing across the housing spectrum, a policy recommendation also strongly supported by the Edmonton participants. While the Edmonton participants wanted to see the development of meaningful cultural training for non-Indigenous people working with/for Indigenous communities, Calgary participants focused more on developing culturally responsive services, with an additional note that these services should include working with men.

For policies that affect women's experiences directly, Edmonton participants wanted the Alberta government to prioritize Indigenous women affected by domestic violence in housing policies, such as placing women at the top of the waitlist for social housing. Edmonton participants were also concerned with addressing issues of child welfare. Calgary participants tended not to focus on policies affecting women directly, but some participants noted that within issues specific to rural and remote communities, there needs to be increased capacity of policing service in rural and on-reserve communities. In addition, there needs to be a comprehensive strategy to increase capacity of on-reserve shelters while also having off-reserve shelters available.

What's missing?

The organizers invited participants to identify what was missing from the findings of the research, or from the discussions had throughout the consultation. One key idea was the need to recognize the continuing impacts of racism and patriarchy installed through settler colonialism, and enshrined in legislation, such as the Indian Act and Bill C31. These are not only historical issues, but rather continue to have strong and negative impacts on Indigenous communities in present day, within an intergenerational context of sustained racism, trauma, and discrimination.

Participants also specifically named the racial discrimination of landlords as a barrier for Indigenous women in finding rental housing for themselves and their families. The suggestion was made to connect with researchers Dr. Cheryl Currie and Dr. Yale Belanger, and also to examine the anti-racism public campaign launched by Australia. Participants emphasized the need for, and importance of, focusing on Indigenous-led research, and data that reflects Indigenous experience.

In terms of possible programs, participants named the importance of men's programs focusing on intergenerational trauma, naming the Safe Communities Initiative (SCIF) Family Violence Response Initiative on Siksika Health, in which men are involved in safety planning.

IV. Next steps

Not many people answered the question 'are we creating the space you need to address this issue' — only 13 of a total of 43 participants in Edmonton answered this, and 14 of 33 participants in Calgary. However, of those that responded, most placed this consultation at the 'Getting started' phase, with a few finding the event closer to ground zero and others indicating it is 'on the road'. The results suggest that these consultations are only just beginning to create the space needed to address the issue.

Participants did not want these consultations to be a one-off approach. They emphasized that they have experience, knowledge and commitment to making a positive impact in communities. In the short term, participants felt that continued work in this particular area needs to happen in partnership with Indigenous communities (rather than consulting then presenting back without Indigenous communities present). They also wanted to know what actions will be taken and how/when the group would reconvene. PolicyWise for Children & Families made a commitment to convene another gathering in a year. One participant pointed out that this particular piece of research is led by a non-Indigenous researcher and so the interpretation of the research, and of the consultations, is still colonized. Research and policy work must include Indigenous communities.

The next steps for this process are to

- Compile the consultation feedback into the final report of the scoping review

- Present the final report to the Interagency Council on Homelessness and work with them to provide advice to guide Alberta's Homelessness Plan
- Identify further areas of research to support effective policy development
- Seek funding to convene another gathering of participants in 2017

For more information on this initiative, please contact:

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Appendix A – Executive Summary of Scoping Review Report

The full copy of *Housing and Homelessness Policy Recommendations for Indigenous Women Affected by Domestic Violence: A Scoping Review* is available at www.policywise.com

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The Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness (IAC) is a unique partnership between community leaders and all orders of government. It is tasked with providing transformational policy recommendations on implementing *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years* (the 10 Year Plan) to the Government of Alberta's Ministry of Human Services.

Alberta Human Services facilitated a partnership between the IAC and PolicyWise for Children & Families (PolicyWise) to develop and implement A Housing and Homelessness Research Strategy (the Strategy) for Alberta (Felix-Mah, Adair, Abells & Hanson, 2014). In 2014, the IAC approved the Strategy and identified housing and homelessness issues experienced by Indigenous women fleeing domestic violence as a research priority.

This report summarizes the scoping review led by PolicyWise to examine policy recommendations made over the last ten years to address housing and homelessness for Indigenous⁴ women who have experienced domestic violence. Results from the community consultations, an important part of the methodology of this project, are also included.

“We can’t act on everything right away, but we need to start somewhere. This is part of continuing the conversation, relationship, and process.” – *Consultation Participant*

The Issue

Indigenous women experience disproportionately higher rates of both homelessness and domestic violence. Ample research has demonstrated that colonization and intergenerational trauma has significantly structured Aboriginal women's experiences of homelessness and domestic violence. Further, many sources point out that colonization brought gendered discrimination into Aboriginal communities, which means that family violence in Indigenous contexts cannot be viewed merely as a problem of a particular couple or of individual households, but should be understood as the community-level outcomes resulting from historical colonization policies. For example, The Indian Act has significantly and detrimentally shifted gender relations in many Indigenous communities, altering the family structure of FNMI (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) communities and enforcing a patriarchal European model onto a matriarchal or community-based structure of equality. Many of the policy recommendations found within the scoping review take into account the complexity of the social,

⁴ This report uses the terms 'Aboriginal' and 'Indigenous,' in part because both terms are used in sources. The authors recognize that while the terms are similar, they are not the same, and prefer the term 'Indigenous.' A more in-depth explanation on terminology is Section 1. Introduction.

historical, economic, and legislative issues that structure Indigenous women's experiences of homelessness and domestic violence.

Methodology

Scoping reviews are designed to rapidly map the known evidence in a defined research area. The researchers followed the six stages of the methodology, but also incorporated Two-Eyed Seeing, which integrates Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge. Beginning with the research question “What policy recommendations have been made in the existing documents to address housing and homelessness issues for Indigenous women experiencing violence in Canada?”, the researchers located 356 documents produced between 2006 and 2016, which they then narrowed to 56 documents to be included in the scoping review. Researchers prioritized documents produced by Indigenous groups, and included not just qualitative and quantitative research studies, but also policy studies, issue papers, fact sheets, briefs, and reports, among other kinds of publications. As part of the process, two consultations took place in early May 2016 in Edmonton and Calgary with 72 participants attending, including Aboriginal community members and organizations, service providers, and government representatives. The consultations shaped how the final research findings were organized and presented, and helped identify not only gaps in policy research, but priorities for future policy development in Alberta.

Summary of Key Findings

About the Publications. Over half of the sources were produced by non-governmental organizations (54%), and the remaining sources were split between government-produced documents (25%), and academic publications (21%). Over half (53%) were either Indigenous-led publications or had high levels of Indigenous involvement. The sector that produced the most sources on these intersecting issues was the sector working on Indigenous women's issues, although the housing/homeless sector and the Violence Against Women sector were both well represented. The vast majority of sources pertained to Canada, with 22 national publications, and 26 provincial/territorial publications. Subsequently, 42% of the sources focused on Canada's federal government and 35% focused on a provincial government, with a few focusing on either municipal or Indigenous governments.

Limits of this Study. A significant limit to the study was that the lead researcher is not Indigenous. While the project team took efforts to ensure the study was conducted in culturally sensitive ways and also designed the Edmonton and Calgary consultations to be culturally appropriate to Treaty 6 and Treaty 7 territories respectively, the final analysis of this research is being framed by a non-Indigenous researcher, or as stakeholders at the Calgary consultation pointed out, the interpretation of the data is colonized. While the scoping review is consequently framed as a way for the lead researcher, and PolicyWise, to understand the kinds of research and recommendations that have been put forward by Indigenous communities toward building respectful relationships that honour past work, the principles of Aboriginal Ownership, Control, Access, and Property (OCAP) for Aboriginal-focused research could only be partially achieved.⁵ The authors would like to underscore the additional point made at that consultation: any further research must have meaningful participation by Alberta's Indigenous communities. Another limit to the study was that many of the documents included in the analysis were

⁵ See <http://fnigc.ca/ocap.html> for more information about the First Nations Principles of OCAP, published by the First Nations Information Governance Centre.

themselves literature reviews. As a result, some report recommendations may appear in more than one document. However, repeated recommendations may suggest policy areas of higher priority.

Recommendations on Policy Approaches to Housing and Homelessness. Focusing on the intersection of Aboriginal women, homelessness, and domestic violence means that while some recommendations referred specifically to housing and homelessness, many recommendations looked at the larger contexts requiring attention before meaningful change can be made in housing for Aboriginal women. Prioritizing these complex issues that inform housing policy is in deference to the insistence that Indigenous communities have continuously made on adopting Wholistic⁶ approaches to approach policy development. Five key themes of this nature were evident across the sources.

1. Policy development should be approached through the frame of colonization and intergenerational trauma, which demands a complex analysis and comprehensive inter-sectoral solutions.
2. Indigenous women need to have central roles in development of public policy at all levels of governance, including Indigenous governing bodies. That involvement should come with appropriate financial resources and technical training.
3. Housing and homelessness policy development must use Wholistic approaches. Policymakers need to work across ministries and across jurisdictions, as well as with community stakeholders, particularly Aboriginal communities. Policies affecting service delivery also need to understand domestic violence as a community issue and approach healing in terms of body, mind, spirit and emotions.
4. Culturally sensitive policy development is necessary, which requires sustained and meaningful cultural sensitivity training for non-Aboriginal policy makers and service providers, and a commitment to culturally relevant gender-based analysis.
5. Financial investment is needed across the entire housing spectrum, including infrastructure, operations, and services.

Recommendations on Legislation and Governance: Sources called for reviews of federal and provincial policies to rectify legislation that continues to marginalize Indigenous women. Many sources emphasized that governments need to collaborate across ministries and across governments, and address jurisdictional issues. Many called for comprehensive strategies to address violence, poverty, and/or homelessness.

Recommendations on Service Provision: Sources wanted to see policy that emphasized the development of culturally responsive services, ideally provided by Aboriginal communities, but if not possible, then non-Aboriginal workers require intensive cultural training. Housing and shelter services need to collaborate with other kinds of services that address substance abuse, legal issues, child welfare

⁶ The conventional spelling of 'holistic' is eschewed in this report in favour of 'Wholistic,' following the argument made in the *Aboriginal Framework for Healing and Wellness Manual* produced by Awo Taan Healing Lodge (Bird, 2007), because the spelling and capitalization emphasizes "the whole person, whole families, and acknowledges the interconnectedness and impacts of all aspects of the individual's life and environment on their healing journey."

interactions, and prevent sexual exploitation. Policies for these various systems need to coordinate to benefit Indigenous women rather than marginalize them.

Recommendations on Policies Affecting Indigenous Women Directly: These particular recommendations target public policies that directly affect women in their efforts to secure safe and affordable housing. Some sources recommended prioritizing women fleeing violence in housing policy. Several reports highlighted the role of public policy to address racism women face in securing housing. Issues with child welfare emerged frequently, with sources recommending concerted efforts between housing authorities and child welfare agencies to ensure the systems work together to support Aboriginal women and their children. A set of recommendations focused on needs of Aboriginal women in rural locations, such as improving access to services and addressing issues of confidentiality. Another set of recommendations focused on urban contexts, such as ensuring housing was of adequate quality and in neighbourhoods that are safe for Aboriginal women and their children.

Policy Recommendations Specific to Housing/Homelessness: Most often, policy recommendations specific to housing were general calls for investments in shelters, transitional housing and permanent housing. A few documents specifically called for investments in culturally appropriate services or services provided by Aboriginal women. Specific to emergency shelters, several reports wanted to see the inequitable funding of on-reserve shelters rectified, and one Alberta report noted that Indigenous women tend to leave shelters early, which warrants further research. For housing supports, publications were divided as to whether Housing First should be pursued, with some advocating for Housing First strategies, while others cautioned that the model needs modifications and refinement to meet safety needs as well as housing needs. For social housing, some policy recommendations focused on the need to devise social housing policy keeping in mind Indigenous women fleeing violence. Possible policy options included prioritizing women on wait lists for social housing, and also ensuring that women do not lose their social housing in the event of domestic violence. Finally, several publications argued that subsidies for women to rent or own homes should be made a priority in policy. Several sources also noted the poor quality of existing housing stock and recommended policy development that would improve quality overall.

Feedback from Community Consultations: Priority Areas for Alberta Policy Development

Stakeholders recognize the need and urgency for policy that improves both housing and safety for Indigenous women. Consultation discussions emphasized the following five points:

- Policy should be developed with Aboriginal women, and their communities.
- Develop cross-sectoral and comprehensive strategies that prioritize Indigenous women affected by violence.
- Policy should focus on developing culturally-focused service provision, including in-depth, meaningful, and locally relevant cultural training for non-Aboriginal workers.
- Policy should support Wholistic services, which include men and encompass everything necessary to enhance Indigenous women's ability to raise their families, including prayer and ceremony.
- Develop policy to address the racism and discrimination of landlords.

Moving Forward

Through the review of publications and subsequent consultations, gaps in policy research were identified. The most important message is that policy work relevant to Indigenous communities must meaningfully include those communities in the *development* of policy or research and not only as recipients of that policy or research.

Further research is needed to provide evidence on the effectiveness of various housing options. Little research has focused specifically on Housing First for Indigenous women fleeing domestic violence. Further research on the possibilities and challenges of the model is clearly needed, as well as testing particular modifications that might provide permanent housing for Indigenous women and families that is not only affordable, but safe and culturally appropriate.

There were wide-spread calls for increased funding; however, little research has been done on which particular investments have the greatest impact. This research could begin by identifying innovative programs already operating in Alberta communities that engage in culturally respectful Wholistic work in supporting the housing needs of Indigenous women. Only a few recommendations targeted Indigenous governing bodies, such as band councils and Métis settlements, and no research was found on the kinds of policy approaches that are being developed and implemented in these local contexts.

Finally, there are opportunities to monitor the outcomes of other provincial strategies that are collaborative, inter-sectional, and/or cross-jurisdictional, such as the ambitious plan of the Government of Ontario to eliminate violence against Aboriginal women. Further, there may be existing mechanisms within the Government of Alberta that could be leveraged to build the cross-ministerial work, such as the First Nations Women's Economic Security Council and the Métis Women's Economic Security Council, which both advise the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and cross-ministry working groups.

Homelessness and domestic violence in the lives of Indigenous women are complex social issues. Indigenous women are taking on leadership roles in healing their communities and addressing the wellbeing of women, their families, and their communities. There is hope that this research will contribute to building and strengthening relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders in Alberta to work collaboratively to develop and implement housing policy that will make a positive impact in the lives of Alberta's Indigenous women, their families, and their communities.

Appendix B – List of Organizations Represented in Consultations


Registered Organizations at Edmonton Consultation (May 3, 2016)

Organization
Aboriginal Counseling Services Association of Alberta
Alberta Council of Women's Shelters
Alberta Health Services
Alberta Indigenous Relations
Athabasca Tribal Council Child & Family Services
Catalyst Research and Development Inc.
Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta
City of Edmonton
City of Grande Prairie
Creating Hope Society of Alberta
Edmonton Family Violence Centre
Edmonton Police Service
Enoch Wellness Centre
First Nations Education Initiatives
Government of Alberta
Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women
Kids Kottage Foundation
Lurana Shelter Society
MacEwan University
Native Counselling Services of Alberta
PolicyWise for Children & Families
Samson Cree Nation
Sucker Creek Women's Emergency Shelter
University of Alberta

Registered Organizations at Calgary Consultation (May 4, 2016)

Organization
Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, Calgary Homelessness Foundation
Alberta Council of Women's Shelters
Alberta Health Services
Awo Taan Healing Lodge
Brenda Strafford Society for the Prevention of Domestic Violence
Calgary Homeless Foundation
Catalyst Research and Development Inc.
Children's Cottage Society
Calgary Counselling Centre
Community Safety Initiative
Discovery House Family Violence Prevention Society
Government of Alberta
HomeFront
Native Counselling Services of Alberta
Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee
PolicyWise for Children & Families
Rowan House Society
Safe Harbour Society
Service Canada
The SHARP Foundation
Vibrant Communities Calgary
YWCA
YWCA Lethbridge and District
University of Alberta
University of Calgary
Discovery House

Appendix C – Powerpoint Presentation at Consultation



ALBERTA CENTRE FOR
CHILD, FAMILY
& COMMUNITY
RESEARCH

Scoping Review of Existing Policy Recommendations on Homelessness and Aboriginal Women Experiencing Domestic Violence

May 3 & 4, 2016

Presented by:
Deanna Yerichuk
Postdoctoral Research Fellow

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1

Purpose

To provide evidence to inform recommendations on the implementation of Alberta's 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.

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2

Methodology: Scoping Review

- Arksey and O'Malley (2005)
- Scoping reviews rapidly map the known evidence in a defined research area, but also synthesize materials from multiple sources
- Commitment to 'Two-Eyed Seeing' (Rowan *et al* 2005) to foreground Indigenous knowledge in published material

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3

Scoping Review: 6 Stages

Stage 1 Identify research question

"What policy recommendations have emerged from the existing literature to address housing and homelessness issues for Aboriginal women experiencing violence in Canada?"

Stage 2 Identify relevant studies

356 studies from academic, government and non-governmental organizations

Stage 3 Study selection

56 studies included in review

Stage 4 Chart data

Stage 5 Collate, summarize & report results

Stage 6 Stakeholder consultation

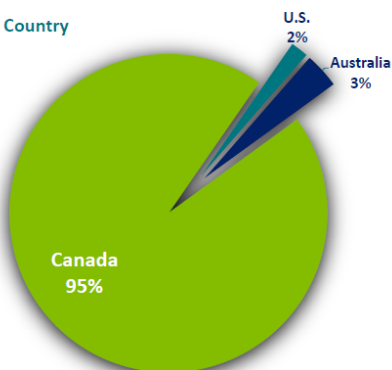
1 in Edmonton and 1 in Calgary

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4

Geographic Location of Sources

By Country



Country	Percentage
Canada	95%
Australia	3%
U.S.	2%

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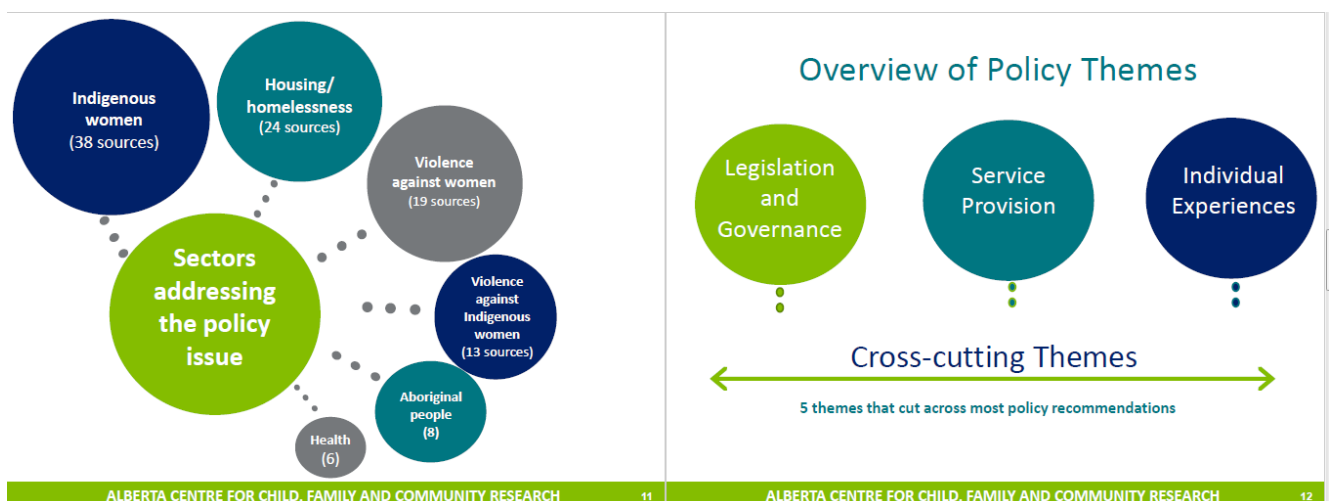
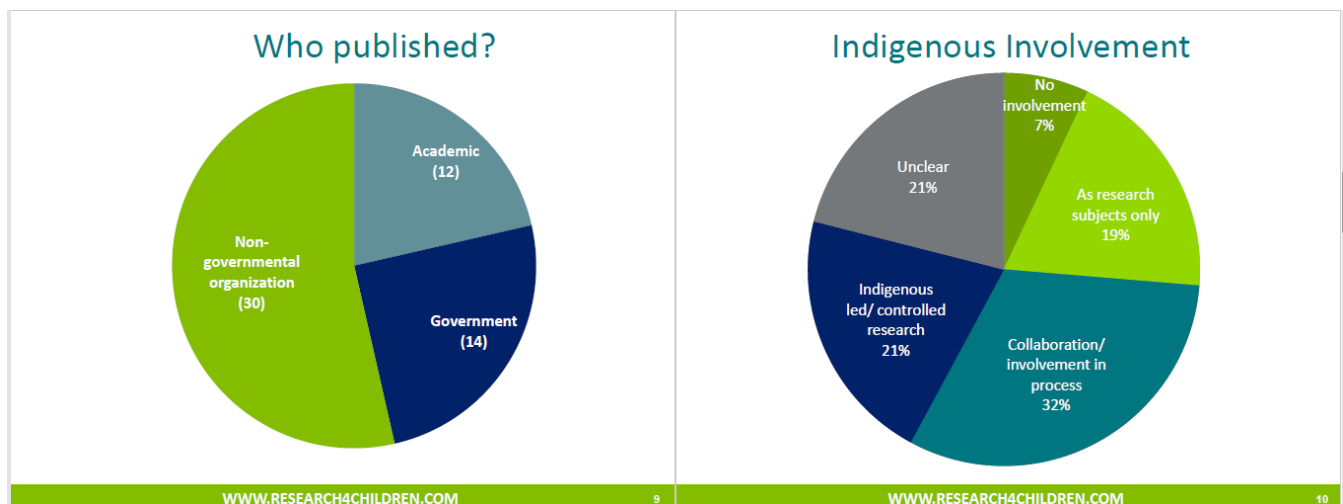
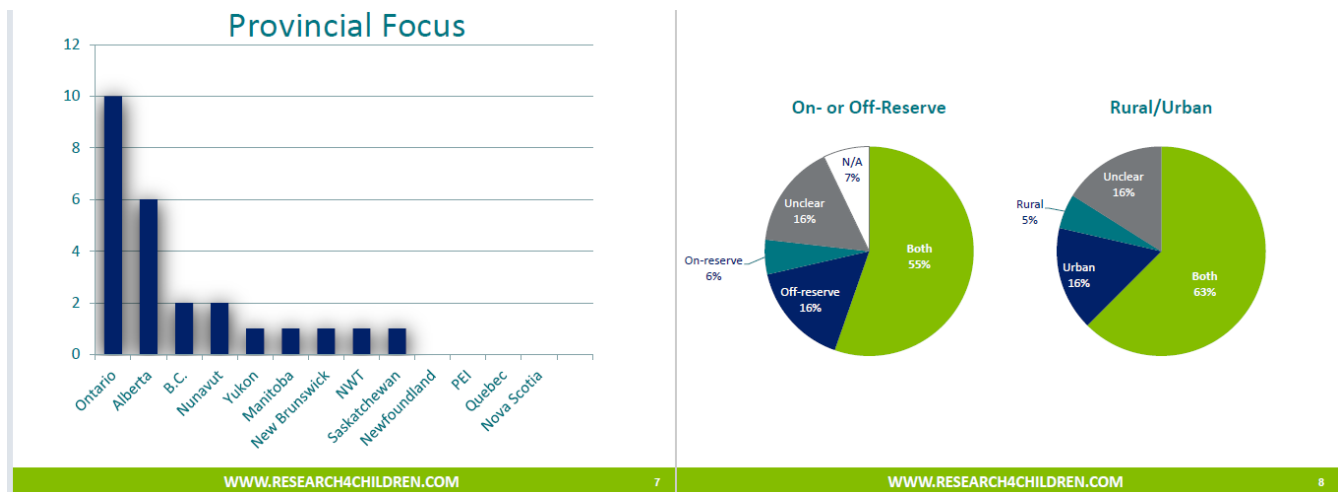
5

Geographic Focus in Canadian Sources

- 22 nationally focused sources
- 26 focused on a specific province/territory
- 5 covered more than one province/territory

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6



Overview of Policy Recommendations

Cross-cutting Themes

1. Recognize colonization and historical trauma
2. Funding: more and equitable
3. Central policy-making role for Aboriginal communities/women
4. (W)holistic approaches
5. Culturally responsive policy development

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Overview of Policy Themes

Legislation and Governance

- Review of legislation and policy to rectify discrimination against Aboriginal women
- Comprehensive, coordinated, and cross-jurisdictional strategies to eliminate homelessness/violence
- Address jurisdictional issues
- Ensure equitable funding
- Policy needs culturally relevant and gender-based research and evaluation
- Collaborate and establish mechanisms for oversight

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Overview of Policy Themes

Service Provision

- Invest in housing across the spectrum (infrastructure, operations, wholistic services)
- Develop mechanisms to oversee housing allocation and shelter services locally
- Develop culturally-responsive services
- Meaningful cultural training for non-Aboriginal people working with/for Aboriginal communities

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Overview of Policy Themes

Individual Experiences

- Prioritize (Aboriginal) women affected by domestic violence in housing policies
- Address issues of child welfare
- Address issues specific to rural and remote communities (e.g. transportation; confidentiality)
- Address issues specific to urban contexts (e.g. forced migration; location; housing quality)

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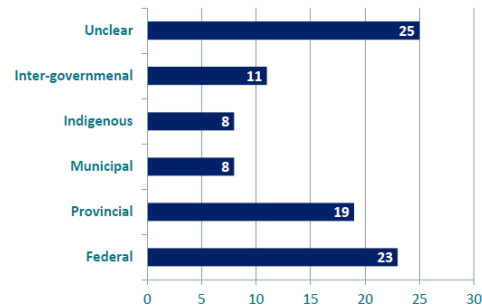
Divergent Recommendations

- Services in rural/remote/small communities
 - Tension between having services locally available and protecting safety and confidentiality of women
- Housing First approach
 - Some: an effective strategy to house Aboriginal women immediately
 - Others: HF needs to be adapted to be effective and should not replace second-stage shelters

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Target Government for Recommendations



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Appendix D: Hand-out of sources provided to consultation participants



Sources for Working with/in Aboriginal Communities in Policy and Service Provision

Compiled by Brittany Johnson, May 3, 2016

Indigenous Perspectives on Conducting Policy Research

First Nations Information Governance Centre. (2005). *Developing a Cultural Framework (RHS)*. Akwesasne, ON. http://fnigc.ca/sites/default/files/ENpdf/RHS_General/developing-a-cultural-framework.pdf

The source focuses on health research, particular describing the indigenous methodologies used for the First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (RHS). The document begins with overview of what they term 'Indigenous intelligence,' and how they use Indigenous intelligence within dominant linear worldviews. The document then describes the holistic model embedded in Indigenous intelligence, such as including body, mind, heart, and spirit, as well as focusing on connections between individuals, family, community, and culture.

Kenny, C. (2004). *A holistic framework for Aboriginal policy research*. Ottawa, ON: Status of Women Canada. Retrieved from <http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.687103/publication.html>

This framework offers an approach to gender-based Aboriginal policy, with background on both Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous women. The source discusses the concept of holistic Indigenous research, emphasizing the importance of historical context. It also describes how specific research methods can be approached from an Indigenous perspective. The document includes an annotated bibliography and examples of appropriate ethical research processes.

Native Women's Association of Canada. (2007). *Culturally relevant gender-based analysis: an issue paper*. Ottawa, ON. Retrieved from <http://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2007-NWAC-Culturally-Relevant-Gender-Based-Analysis-An-Issue-Paper.pdf>

An issue paper designed to highlight the effects of gender discrimination against First Nations, Inuit and Métis women, and then examines the federal gender-based analysis legislative, policy and program implementation. The paper concludes with a suggested model and recommendations to implement an effective culturally relevant gender-based analysis.

Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, Ontario Women's Directorate, & Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. (2013). *Making a difference: ending violence against aboriginal women, October 2013*. Toronto, ON: Ontario Women's Directorate, Government of Ontario. Retrieved from http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/owd/english/ending-violence/ending_violence_against_aboriginal_women_2013.shtml

From Ontario's Joint Working Group to end violence against Aboriginal women, led jointly by the Ontario Women's Directorate, the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, and the Aboriginal and Ministry Relationships Branch (Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs). The report provides an overview of the framework developed jointly in 2007 by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres and the Ontario Native Women's Association (citation available in the list of sources in the scoping review). The report begins with quotes from elders, and then describes intergenerational trauma, racialization and sexualization of women, and violence against Indigenous women. The remainder of the report describes what the Joint Working Group did in particular in order to end human trafficking and violence against Indigenous women and girls. Provides policy recommendations and also is a good example of policy development across multiple sectors with Aboriginal communities in lead roles.

Stout, M. D., & Kipling, G. D. (1998). *Aboriginal women in Canada: strategic directions for policy development*. Ottawa, ON: Status of Women Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/SW21-20-1998E.pdf>

Although published in 1998, this literature review on policy issues in relation to Indigenous women remains relevant, along with the statistics provided. There are useful definitions of key terms, as well as some discussion on sexism/racism as they pertain to Indigenous women specifically. The source moves between a focus on individual women but also how they fall into the collective, which is a key area of understanding in Indigenous knowledge frameworks and, they argue, should be part of methodologies pertaining to Indigenous persons.

Culturally-Relevant Service Provision

Bird, C. (2007). *Aboriginal framework for healing and wellness manual*. Calgary, AB: Awo-Taan Healing Lodge Society. Retrieved from <http://awotaan.org/assets/Page-Attachments/Aboriginal-Frammework-Awo-Taan-Manual-FINAL-May-30-200.pdf>

The framework begins right off with guiding principles, which include elders and Spirit. The manual discusses the Awo Taan Native Women's Shelter, which provides shelter for those who suffer violence and abuse. The model developed is "wholistic and spiritual based" and "prefers a strengths-based approach to working with whole families and the community." Four main sections include overview of family violence, examination of healing/wellness conceptualizations, the assessment wheel, and understanding the Medicine Wheel in practice; this manual serves as a training tool for new staff

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples. (2015). *The Miykiwan Toolkit*. Ottawa, ON. Retrieved from <http://abo-peoples.org/all-project-list/violence-prevention/>

The toolkit consists of three books and 11 fact sheets that is an excellent resource for teaching, learning, and understanding. *Miykiwan* is Cree, and means "coming home" or "home in a good/safe way," and the toolkit is grounded in Cree teachings. The toolkit is for off-reserve Aboriginal families to build resilience and strength, promoting healthier living – which includes a violence-free home/community. The toolkit also provides presenters/group leaders information on how to have a discussion about the various types of violence and how to live your life in a good way. There are spaces provided for writing out thoughts, and discussion questions for a group/circle setting.

Government of Canada, D. of J. (2012). *Compendium of promising practices to reduce violence and increase safety of Aboriginal women in Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/comp-recu/>

Provides a list of current resources and practices currently available for Indigenous women, including services for mental health, physical and other abuse, outreach for sex trade workers, substance abuse, residential school healing, healing/renewal of family roles and responsibilities, parental support, reintegration of offenders, alternatives to gangs, justice services, and housing for survivors of violence. Historical context is provided alongside current plans and services. Use of the Medicine Wheel to emphasize the interrelatedness of the issues – must be viewed as a whole and healed as a whole. The idea is that it is a living document that people can access in order to find a program that can be adapted to assist in communities.

Harper, A. (2006). *Ending violence in aboriginal communities: best practices in aboriginal shelters and communities*. Ottawa, ON: National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence. Retrieved from <http://54.186.211.6/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/NACAFV-EN-Best-Practices.pdf>

This study looked at 12 shelters across Canada and their best practices when dealing with family violence for Aboriginal women; most were in Indigenous communities, but those that were not served a primarily Indigenous population. Each shelter is discussed in terms of best practice to give a more general idea of how this varies and what works best. They discuss underfunding and minimal staff training due to this and how it affects services, as well as legal and other barriers. They discuss needs for safety and security as well as ensuring appropriate staffing levels and administration. One thing I found interesting is that they discuss the importance of community in the shelters, such as celebrating client/children birthdays; they emphasize the importance of community connections and involvement in each step of the development and implementation of shelter programming and services. The biggest challenge to overcome is underfunding

Mccallum, K., & Isaac, D. (2011). *Feeling home: culturally-responsive approaches to Aboriginal homelessness*. Vancouver, BC: Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia (SPRAC BC) and the Centre for Native Policy and Research (CNPR). Retrieved from <http://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/feeling-home-culturally-responsive-approaches-aboriginal-homelessness>

The goal of this source is to increase knowledge on best practices for culturally responsive approaches to Indigenous homelessness. The project undertook a literature review on theory and practice, interviews and case studies. They discuss “homelessness,” stating that there is no “one” definition, noting in particular “spiritual homelessness” which is “a state arising from separation from traditional land, family and kinship networks” (8); this is an essential aspect of Indigenous homelessness, and the authors have grounded this in discussions of the sixties scoop and residential schools as part of intergenerational trauma. The authors provide statistics on homelessness and Aboriginal persons, and discuss housing systems in place as well as barriers/social costs of being homeless and existing services.

Van Berkum, A., & Oudshoorn, A. (2015). *Best practice guideline for ending women's and girl's homelessness*. London, ON: Women's Community House. Retrieved from http://ywcacanada.ca/data/research_docs/00000347.pdf

This text is a guideline for best practices surrounding women/girls and homelessness, and it does discuss hidden homelessness as well. They discuss trafficking, LGBTQ2S, and Indigenous women/girls as areas that uniquely effect women's experiences with homelessness (examples). Definitions are provided, as well as information on housing and trauma informed care. “Common” barriers and needs are addressed. While not specific to Indigenous women, it does provide a rather intensive and well-researched look at homelessness specific to women and girls.