“She always came back and the same thing would happen”: Breaking the Cycle

A Report on the Housing Crisis for Métis Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People Experiencing Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence

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For Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak – Women of the Métis Nation

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1. Executive Summary

The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) writes that "abuse in the home has pushed 61% of young females who are homeless onto the streets."[1] Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA + people are often erased in existing studies, data, and information pertaining to the links between domestic and intimate partner violence, and housing. In light of this, this report builds from work we undertook to produce Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak's (LFMO) 2022 report "'My ancestors would be proud of us: Métis Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People's Housing Histories, Experiences, Struggles, and Perspectives." In the report we addressed the housing situation of Métis people who self-identify as women and/or as 2SLGBTQQIA+ living today within Canada. In our report, one of the primary concerns we flagged is that Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people reported experiencing significant intimate partner violence that greatly impacted their housing situation at various points through the course of their lives. As ONWA notes, Indigenous women experience a vicious cycle wherein they "often migrate to urban centres to escape violence and poverty and become victims of Canada's race, class and sex discrimination."[2]

This report addresses the housing situation of Métis people who self-identify as women and/or as 2SLGBTQQIA+ living today within Canada who have endured domestic and intimate partner violence, but greater emphasis on the latter. We know from available statistics that Métis who self-identify as women are more likely to be subjected to intimate partner violence than non-Indigenous women are. While there are no available statistics on Métis Two-Spirit and/or LGBTQQIA+ experiences of intimate partner violence in relation to housing experiences, the wider impacts of gendered violence be seen in statistical information related to public and private security that separately reveal that both Métis and 2SLGBTIQQIA+ people experience high rates of childhood abuse (both physical and sexual) and later sexual abuse.[3] Given that organizations geared towards addressing homelessness and/or housing precarity do not compile information regarding Métis-specific experiences, there has as well been a gap in qualitative information regarding Métis women and gender diverse people's realities.

We do know, however, from existing research on the wider matter of Métis housing, that Métis have experienced negative impacts with respect to housing stability and security arising from colonization directly and manifested in the form of impoverishment, houselessness, and unsafe/insecure housing, as discussed in our 2022 report. The experiences of the Métis Nation with respect to land dispossession and displacement from our homes because of Canada's development as a nation cannot be decoupled from the lived experiences of Métis today. In the context of this report, it cannot be decoupled from the introduction of racism and of sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, and classism into the lives of Métis Nation people. For Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, as this report discusses, these experiences have been particularly harmful. As LFMO has written elsewhere, Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ face "a unique form of marginalization and discrimination; first, as Indigenous peoples; second, as Métis—the 'invisible' among Aboriginal people; and third, as women." To understand the housing situation of Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who have survived domestic violence it is

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[1] Ontario Native Women's Association. (2018) Indigenous Women, Intimate Partner Violence and Housing. *Learning Network Newsletter Issue 25*. London, Ontario: Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children. ISBN # 978-1-988412-19-1

[2] Ibid.

[3] Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0167-01. Self-reported physical and sexual abuse during childhood. https://doi.org/10.25318/3510016701-eng

important to recognize that systemic marginalization and colonization, threaded throughout with entrenched sexism have provided fractured foundations upon which people live their lives. While Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ survivors of intimate partner violence show incredible resilience and strength in navigating their housing situations, it is still crucial that programs created by/for Métis people account for the unique forms of marginalization faced by women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people leaving situations of intimate partner violence. This report therefore critically analyzes the experiences of Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ survivors of intimate partner violence with respect to housing and includes a series of recommendations based on extensive review of historical, archival, survey, and interview-based data.

1. Résumé

L'Association des femmes autochtones de l'Ontario (ONWA) écrit que 61 % des jeunes femmes en situation d'itinérance le sont en raison de violences subies à la maison[1] (en anglais seulement). Les femmes et les membres de la communauté 2ELGBTQIA+ de la Nation métisse sont souvent « effacés » des études, des données et des renseignements existants sur les liens entre la violence familiale et conjugale et le logement. En tenant compte de cette situation, ce rapport s'appuie sur le travail que nous avons entrepris pour produire le rapport de 2022 des Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak intitulé *Mes ancêtres seraient fiers de nous : Un rapport sur les histoires, les expériences, les difficultés et les perspectives en matière de logement des femmes et des personnes 2ELGBTQQIA+ métisses*. Dans ce rapport, nous nous sommes penchés sur les conditions de logement des personnes métisses vivant actuellement au Canada qui s'identifient comme femmes ou membres de la communauté 2ELGBTQIA+. L'une des principales préoccupations signalées dans notre rapport était que les femmes et les membres de la communauté 2ELGBTQIA+ de la Nation métisse ont déclaré avoir subi de la violence conjugale qui a eu une grande incidence sur leur situation de logement à divers moments de leur vie. Comme le souligne l'ONWA, les femmes autochtones vivent dans un cercle vicieux : elles migrent souvent vers les centres urbains pour échapper à la violence et à la pauvreté et elles deviennent victimes de la discrimination raciale, sociale et sexuelle au Canada[2] (en anglais seulement).

Le présent rapport porte sur les conditions de logement des personnes métisses vivant actuellement au Canada qui s'identifient comme femmes ou membres de la communauté 2ELGBTQIA+ et qui ont subi de la violence familiale et conjugale, mais plus particulièrement cette dernière. Les statistiques disponibles montrent que les personnes métisses qui s'identifient comme femmes sont plus susceptibles d'être victimes de violence conjugale que les femmes non autochtones. Bien qu'il n'existe pas de statistiques disponibles sur les épisodes de violence conjugale vécues par les personnes bispirituelles et les membres de la communauté LGBTQIA+ de la Nation métisse en relation avec leur situation de logement, les répercussions plus larges de la violence fondée sur le sexe sont présentées dans des données statistiques liées à l'Enquête sur la sécurité dans les espaces publics et privés. Ces données révèlent séparément des taux élevés de violence (physique et sexuelle) chez les personnes métisses et les membres de la communauté 2ELGBTQIA+ pendant leur enfance et, par la suite, de violence sexuelle[3]. Étant donné que les organismes de lutte contre l'itinérance ou la précarité du logement ne compilent pas de renseignements au sujet des expériences des personnes métisses en particulier, il y a également eu des lacunes quant aux données qualitatives sur la réalité des femmes métisses et des personnes diversifiées sur le plan du genre.

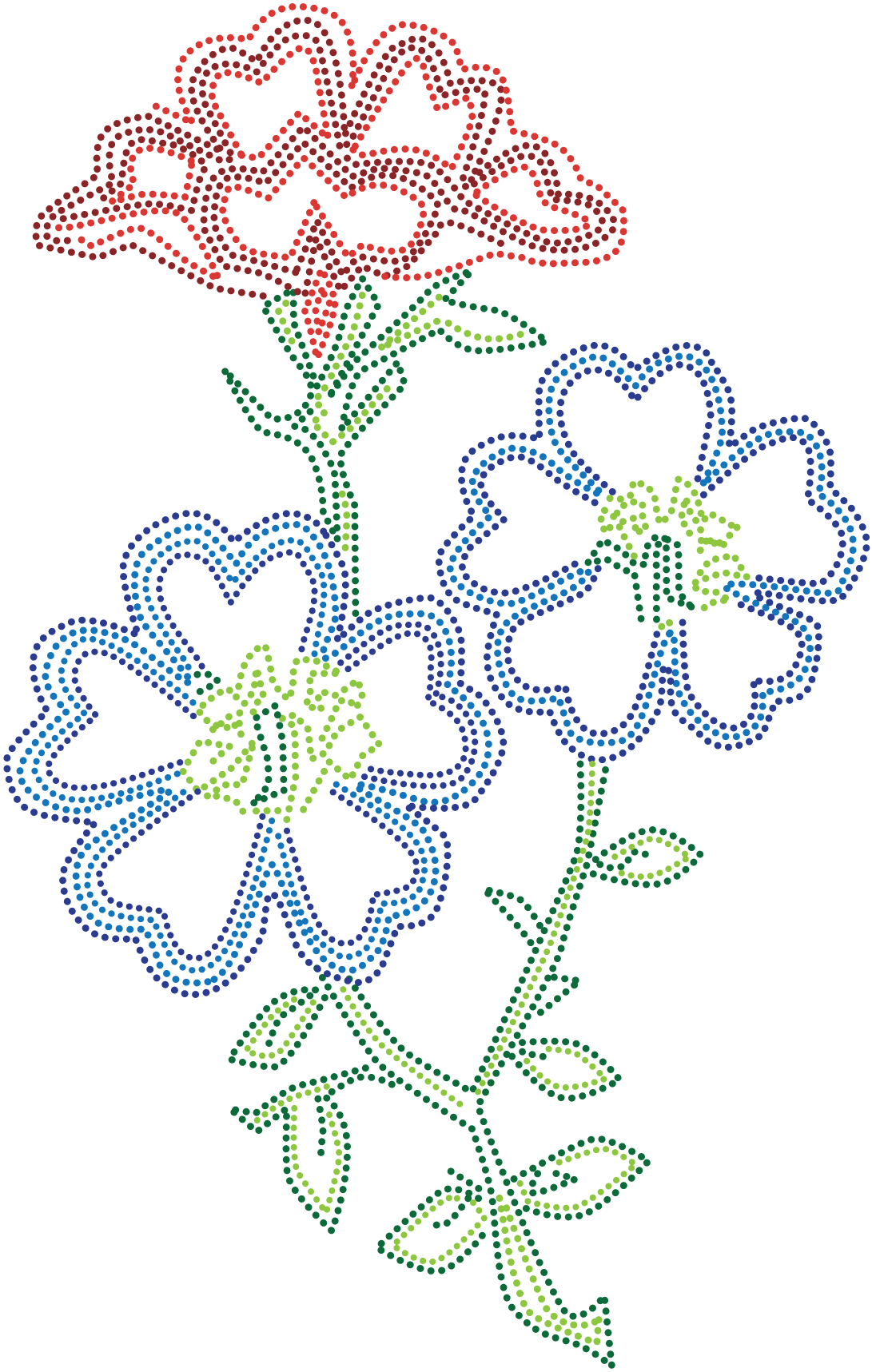
Les recherches actuelles sur la question plus large du logement des personnes métisses nous ont appris que celles-ci ont subi des effets négatifs en matière de stabilité et de sécurité du logement découlant directement de la colonisation. Ces effets se sont manifestés sous la forme d'un appauvrissement, d'itinérance et de logements non sécuritaires, comme il en est question dans notre rapport de 2022. Ce

[1] Association des femmes autochtones de l'Ontario. *Indigenous Women, Intimate Partner Violence & Housing.* Learning Network, infolettre numéro 25, 2018. London, Ontario. Centre de recherche et d'éducation sur la violence envers les femmes et les enfants. ISBN Nº 978-1-988412-19-1.

[2] *Ibid*.

[3] Statistique Canada. Tableau 35-10-0167-01. Agressions physiques et sexuelles autodéclarées survenues pendant l'enfance. https://doi.org/10.25318/3510016701-fra

que la Nation métisse a vécu en ce qui concerne la dépossession des terres et le déplacement en raison du développement du Canada en tant que nation ne peut être dissocié des expériences que les personnes métisses vivent aujourd'hui. Dans le contexte du présent rapport, ces traumatismes ne peuvent être dissociés de l'introduction du racisme et du sexisme, de l'homophobie, de la transphobie, de la discrimination fondée sur la capacité physique et le classisme dans la vie des membres de la Nation métisse. Pour les femmes métisses et les personnes 2ELGBTQIA+, comme l'indique le présent rapport, ces expériences ont été particulièrement néfastes. Comme Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak l'ont écrit ailleurs, les femmes métisses et les membres de la communauté 2ELGBTQIA+ font face à une forme unique de marginalisation et de discrimination : d'abord, en tant qu'Autochtones, ensuite en tant que personnes métisses – la frange « invisible » parmi les Autochtones – et finalement, en tant que femmes. Pour comprendre les conditions de logement des femmes métisses et des membres de la communauté 2ELGBTQIA+ ayant survécu à la violence familiale, il est important de reconnaître que la marginalisation et la colonisation systémiques, combinées à un sexisme enraciné et persistant, ont brisé les fondations sur lesquelles les gens vivent leur vie. Même si les femmes et les personnes de la communauté 2ELGBTQIA+ de la Nation métisse qui sont des survivantes de violence conjugale font preuve d'une résilience et d'une force incroyables pour s'adapter à leur situation de logement, il est toujours essentiel que les programmes créés par et pour les personnes métisses tiennent compte des formes uniques de marginalisation auxquelles sont confrontées les femmes et les personnes 2ELGBTQIA+ qui quittent des situations de violence conjugale. Ce rapport analyse donc de façon critique l'expérience des femmes métisses et des membres de la communauté 2ELGBTQIA+ survivantes de violence conjugale en matière de logement. Il comprend une série de recommandations fondées sur un examen approfondi des données historiques, d'archives, de sondages et d'entrevues.



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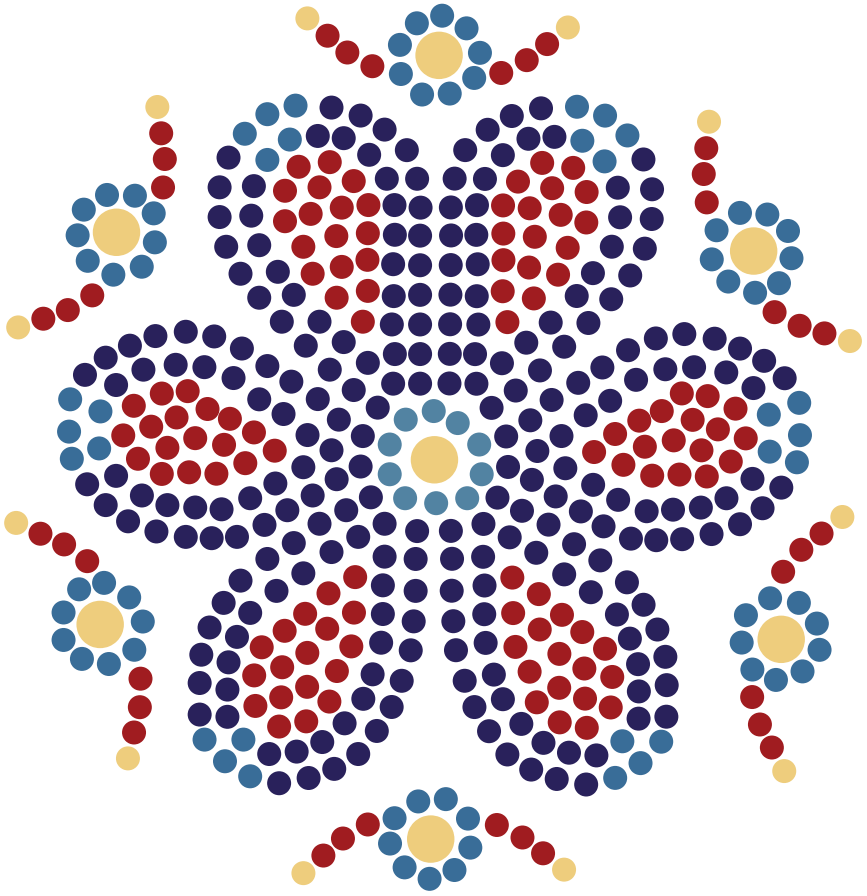

1. Executive Summary

The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) writes that "abuse in the home has pushed 61% of young females who are homeless onto the streets."[1] Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA + people are often erased in existing studies, data, and information pertaining to the links between domestic and intimate partner violence, and housing. In light of this, this report builds from work we undertook to produce Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak's (LFMO) 2022 report "'My ancestors would be proud of us: Métis Women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People's Housing Histories, Experiences, Struggles, and Perspectives." In the report we addressed the housing situation of Métis people who self-identify as women and/or as 2SLGBTQQIA+ living today within Canada. In our report, one of the primary concerns we flagged is that Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people reported experiencing significant intimate partner violence that greatly impacted their housing situation at various points through the course of their lives. As ONWA notes, Indigenous women experience a vicious cycle wherein they "often migrate to urban centres to escape violence and poverty and become victims of Canada's race, class and sex discrimination.[2]

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2. Introduction

Across Canada there is increased understanding and recognition of the impacts of systems of land dispossession such as the Scrip system and the federal government's failure to honour the terms of the Manitoba Treaty (also known as the Manitoba Act of 1870), leading to the later development of Métis shanties and Métis road allowance communities. The housing and living conditions for Métis in shanty towns, road allowance communities, and other urban and rural impoverished communities was stark. There is growing awareness as to Métis peoples' experience and struggles with respect to securing safe and affordable housing. In part the emergent attentiveness comes from the work undertaken by Statistics Canada to gauge the housing situation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit more broadly, in particularly via the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, but it is also directly linked to the advocacy work of our own Métis people. Métis have taken great strides to shed light on the history of displacement and dispossession as our nation has experienced. Over the past 70 years, Métis people have become increasingly urbanized, driven into urban centres after waves of processes of displacement that left Métis as an Indigenous people without a land base.[4] As such the Métis National Council (MNC) in its 2015 report titled "Benchmarking Métis Economic and Social Development" identified housing as one of the key indicators of Métis well-being.[5]

While greater awareness of the struggles Métis people face with respect to housing security is notable, there is often the tendency to speak of Métis people as a collective, eschewing a more focused discussion of the Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples experiences. As Emma LaRocque writes in a report for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, in November 1992 the Women of the Métis Naiton of Alberta, organized an historic conference near Edmonton dealing specifically with sexual violence against Métis women. The interest shown by Métis women from across Canada was overwhelming. The stories shared by the 150 or so conference participants indicated that Métis women, no less than Indian women from reserves, have been suffering enormously - and silently - from violence, including rape and child sexual abuse.[6]

The significance of this cannot be understated, as it marks the first time Métis women's experiences of sexually-based violence were the focus of such a large gathering of women. The relevation that Métis women experience sexual violence at rates comparable to that of First Nations women on reserves, is crucial to any understanding of the experiences of Métis women owing to sexist marginalization. In light of the focus of this report, it is crucial given that LFMO's Métis-specific gender-based analysis of the housing situation, in particular, reveals that Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people face significant challenges with respect to securing safe and affordable housing, a direct result of the intersecting layers of oppression

4 Thomas, Jasmin. *Benchmarking métis economic and social development*. No. 2015-07. Centre for the Study of Living Standards, 2015. 11.

5 Ibid.

6 LaRocque, pg. 73.

Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples experience on the basis of colonialism, racism, sexism, gendered discrimination, homophobia, and transphobia. The report herein therefore addresses the situation of Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples in the context of housing.

Readers will note that at times the Report suffers from notable gaps in the discussion of 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's experiences. Wherein Métis-specific data and reports have been available, they have been included, however it bears mentioning that the situation for 2SLGBTQQIA+ identified Métis people remains woefully underexamined. As is consistent in other studies regarding Indigenous experiences, research focused on 2SLGBTQQIA+ experiences lack a distinctions-based approach with notable gaps in focus on Métis experiences and lived reality. There are few statistics, if any, that speak directly to Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's experiences with respect to housing, houselessness, and housing precarity and reflects an urgent need for future study. As will be discussed, at least some of this is attributable to the fact that pre-existing research has taken a pan-Indigenous (or pan-Aboriginal) approach. To that, Indigenous-focused data collection methods have not historically utilized a distinct category of self-identification for 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. With respect to the 2011 National Household Survey, wherein respondents could identify in accordance with their claimed Indigenous affiliations (i.e. First Nations, Métis, Inuit, etc.), they were only presented with "male" or "female" with no option akin to 2SLGBTQQIA+ who for those who may not exist within the sexed binary presented to them.[7] The discrimination here is immediately apparent, as respondents were given multiple options for self-identification within the category of Aboriginal. It bears mentioning that the forthcoming release of Indigenous-focused and housing-related data in September 2022, may have more to add to this analysis, as the Canadian Census for 2021 worked to address the past anti-2SLGBTQQIA+ approach of census-taking.[8]

Further to this, one of the greatest limitations in understanding the experiences of Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ peoples with respect to housing and homelessness, is the relative lack of focused data. While some statistical information is available arising from recent census reporting (the 2011 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, the 2017 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, and the 2016 Canadian Census) there is a greater deal of work to be done. Further, wherein data can be extracted based on Métis self-identification within the aforementioned survey data sets, categories based on self-identification as Métis may not be accurately reflective of the Métis experience itself.[9]

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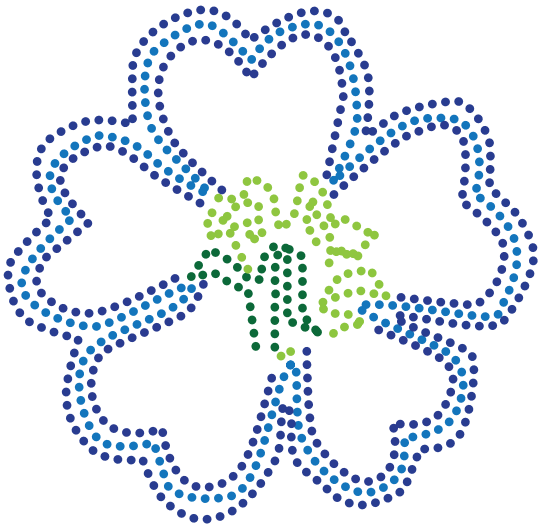
7 See Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-011-X2011028.

8 Gemmill, Angela. "New gender questions in 2021 census 'a good start,' transgender, non-binary advocates say." CBC News. 7 May 2021. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/gender-questions-2021-census-sudbury-1.6017153

9 See Chris Andersen's discussion on the problems created by the racialization of Métis in the Canadian Census and issues around the problems of self-identification in Andersen, Chris. "From nation to population: the racialization of 'Métis' in the Canadian census." *Nations and Nationalism* 14, no. 2 (2008): 347-368; see also Andersen, Chris. "The colonialism of Canada's Métis health population dynamics: caught between bad data and no data at all." *Journal of Population Research* 33, no. 1 (2016): 67-82; Andersen, Chris. "The colonialism of Canada's Métis health population dynamics: caught between bad data and no data at all." *Journal of Population Research* 33, no. 1 (2016): 67-82; Andersen, Chris. *Métis: Race, recognition, and the struggle for Indigenous peoplehood*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014; Gaudry, Adam, and Darryl Leroux. "White settler revisionism and making Métis everywhere: The evocation of Métissage in Quebec and Nova Scotia." *Critical Ethnic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2017): 116-142; Leroux, Darryl. "'We've been here for 2,000 years': White settlers,

In addition to this other studies data generalizes and combines the experiences of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit into categories of either "Aboriginal" or "Indigenous." This leads to the invisibilization of the distinct experiences of Métis.[10] Further to this end, few focused studies exist as to the situation of Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+. In fact, currently available statistics, while they can be extracted and evaluated on the basis of self-identification as Métis and through a binary gender lens, there continue to be constraints, as mentioned, on 2SLGBTQQIA+ data.

What we can glean from available research makes it clear that there are distinct differences informed by both the Métis experience with colonization and with, for Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, intersecting experiences with racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia (among other things). This has led to disparities in employment rates; health and wellness and access to healthcare; interpersonal, familial, and domestic violence; and education. Critically and taken together these have come to have profound impacts on Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's ability to access and keep safe, secure, and affordable housing. The Report begins by outlining the methodological approach to data collection. Next, we offer a focused discussion on the links between Métis people's experiences with colonialism and the sexist and gendered impacts on/for Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. We then chart the long-term impacts of ongoing structures of colonialism before moving into a review of existing quantitative data. Then the Report moves to discuss the qualitative research undertaken, evaluating the results of interviews with Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ participants in light of pre-existing data and against the backdrop of Métis history. Lastly, we offer recommendations to address issues raised within this Report.



Native American DNA and the phenomenon of indigenization." *Social studies of science* 48, no. 1 (2018): 80-100; Leroux, Darryl. *Distorted descent: White claims to Indigenous* identity. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2019.

10 See Andersen 2008, 2014. See also Patrick, Caryl. (2014). Aboriginal Homelessness in Canada: A Literature Review. Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press; Thistle 2017; Native Women's Association of Canada 2019.

3. Methodology

1.1 A Métis Approach to Gender-Based Analysis

This report takes a distinctions-based approach that also prioritizes a gender-based analysis framework. A Métis-specific GBA+ analysis centers Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in the research while also being attentive to impacts on/for those identifying as Métis men. It also addresses the multiple layers of oppression and positionality of people in considering the impacts of policies and initiatives that impact them.[11] Yet in the context of researching and writing about Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, it is also important to note that engaging in a holistic analysis that takes the family as a collective unit is *also* a lens that is attentive to gender. Gender-based analysis does not mean an absence of the discussion of the collective, but rather an attention to when/where/how differential outcomes may be attributable to sexist discrimination and marginalization. As Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are also involved in raising the next generation of those who identify as Métis men, GBA+ in Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) research is itself holistic.

1.2 Data Collection Procedure

For this study the researchers deployed a gender-based analytical lens centering the experiences of Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. We used a mixed method approach that involved the use of a survey, conversational interviews, document analysis and literature reviews. Over the course of six months, we conducted semi structured in-depth interviews with Métis women and members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. Both authors recruited Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people via social media and through connecting with our pre- existing networks. We also used snowballing methods which included asking people we interviewed to share our information with other Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people willing to speak to us. Using this approach, we interviewed 6 total participants from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario. Each interview lasted approximately 1 hour and were conducted via telephone or Zoom video call. We added substantial historical information to help frame our interview data and to help readers understand how historical oppression and ongoing structural violence has contributed to the issues raised in this report with respect to culturally grounded, respectful, accessible of individuals dealing with housing issues and domestic violence.

We also conducted engagement sessions with approximately 20 participants across 4 provinces, employing a "kitchen table" approach wherein we spent substantive time with participants, sharing food, and collaborating on active cultural co-creation in the form of craftworking. Engagement sessions last approximately 6 hours. Our interviews were transcribed verbatim and through NVivo Transcription. We then used Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software package to organize interviews and create "themes" or patterns across our aggregate data. Using this approach, we compiled a series of key findings which we describe in detail in our findings section. This method of analyzing ethnographic data follows the process described in Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw.[12]

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11 Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak. « Métis Specific Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) Tool. 2019. https://metiswomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Metis-Specific-GBA-Tool.pdf.

12 Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). Writing ethnographic fieldnotes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

1.3 Quantitative Data

This section describes findings based on a large-scale survey we conducted. We distributed this survey via multiple social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Reddit and through our independent networks. This survey included 22 closed open and close ended questions. We collected 740 responses using various social media platforms. The information collected via the survey gives us a broader picture and understanding of where individuals are coming from and where the Métis community is currently residing. This survey also gives us a broader understanding of how many domestic violence is affecting Métis women's access to housing. Additionally, the survey provides other key portions of demographic information. We include small charts in this section to describe key information collected during this survey.

4. Historical Context: The Gendered Impacts of Colonization and Dispossession

Historically, Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people wer epart of an egalitarian society where their contributions were valued and their participation in their communities was essential to its existence.[13] Métis historian Ron Bourgeault writes:

> *[The] nuclear family functioned as an integral part of the collective society, and as such it was not an individual unit of production as within class society. Since women held mutual decision-making powers with men within the collective society, they were not economically or socially bound or dependent upon men within the family. Although household management within the family was exercised perhaps mostly by women due to varied expressions of the division of labour by sex, it was an integral part of the collective society as a whole and was not deemed to be of less or more importance than any other work.*[14]

In highlighting egalitarianism, this should not be taken to mean that Métis communities were void of violence against women. As LaRocque writes, many of the "original Indian legends," some of which were inherited by the Métis via our maternal relations, "point to the pre-existence of male violence against women," and that we should not assume "that matriarchies necessarily prevented men from exhibiting oppressive behaviour toward women. There were individuals who acted against the best ideals of their cultures."[15] What is distinct, however, is that there were mechanisms within families and communities to address gender-based violence, as is discussed in our section summarizing the conversations arising from within our engagement sessions.

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13 Women of hte Métis Nation. (2008). "Policy Paper on Violence Against Métis Women." Ottawa: Women of the Métis Nation. https://ruor.uottawa.ca/bitstream/10393/30600/1/WMNViolenCePaper.pdf

14 Ibid.

15 LaRocque, 75.

Still, however, violence against Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in particular, was exacerbated and accelerated with the arrival of the church to Métis communities, along with the development of the fur trade: "internal social relations among people were altered, inequalities were created between women and men, and unequal external relations were created between Indians and Europeans."[16] Métis women, along with other Indigenous women, would experience "further subjugation…in their dependent relationship within the family."[17] Bourgeault asserts that the inequalities created had a profoundly disruptive impact on Métis family life, that would become a breeding ground for intimate partner violence. The debasement of Métis women and gender diverse people as a result of the introduction of the church and the reordering of economic and social relations via the fur trade, provided a foundation upon which intimate partner violence would begin to expand within Métis families. They shifted women's roles from those of equal partners to dependents *on* the men in their lives. LaRocque writes that "Aboriginal men have internalized white male devaluation of women."[18] While Métis women, of course, maintained their own internal sense of independence, living conditions became heavily tied to their relationships with male family members. This was compounded by the importation of Eurocentric ideas about women as property, rather than as people, with women as the legal property of their male relatives. The changes introduced via the fur trade were compounded with the entrenchment of Canadian colonial policy.

From its inception, the Canadian state has set a foundation of anti-Métis racism and sexism upon which Métis women and gender diverse people would come to experience multilayered forms of displacement and dispossession. As we have reported elsewhere (LFMO 2022), Métis women experienced sexual violence at the time of the arrival of Red River Expeditionary Force (RREF) members to the Red River area, intent on displacing and driving out the Métis Nation.[19] The threat of sexual violence – and violence widely, including the threat of the murder of their husbands, children, parents, themselves, and their extended kin – made the Red River area, a deeply unsafe and unstable place for Métis women to live. The Saint Paul, Minnesota paper the *Daily Pioneer* reported that prior to January 4, 1871, RREF soldiers Patrick Morrissey, Richard Wilson, David Hamilton, and Robert Jamieson, along with Corporal James Hayes and one Corporal O'Neil forced their way into the home of Toussaint Vaudry and "propositioned the women inside."[20] Let us be clear. The violent entry into the home and the "proposition" at gunpoint can only be interpreted as an overt threat to the safety and well-being of the Métis women and girls in the home. When Vaudry and Joseph McDougall managed to successfully drive the soldiers from the house, they "returned with reinforcements and severely beat both men – Vaudry's injuries were considered critical."[21] Violent gangs of soldiers continued harassing and assaulting the Métis community. Archival records likewise show that on May 4, 1871, Private Evans of the RREF was arrested for raping Marie La Rivière.[22] A gender-based analytical lens compels us to recognize that it is important to note that in such instances Métis women and girls experienced a distinct form of harassment that would render them unsafe

16 Bourgeault, Ron G. "The Indian, the Métis and the fur trade class, sexism and racism in the transition from "Communism" to Capitalism." *Studies in Political Economy* 12, no. 1 (1983): 50. See also LaRocque, 75.

17 Bourgeault, 66. Although Bourgeault refers to "Indians" he includes Métis (as "half breed Indians") within his analytical framework, and here clarifies that wherever he refers to "native" he is speaking inclusively of both Métis and "Half-breed" as well.

18 LaRocque, 75.

19 Barkwell 2017, 11; see also LFMO 2019, 22.

20 See Barkwell, Lawrence. (2017). "The Reign of Terror Against the Métis of Red River." Winnipeg: Louis Riel Institute. https://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/149078.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid, 8. See also Shore, Frederick. (1991). "The Canadians and the Métis: The Recreation of Manitoba, 1858-1872." Ph.D. dissertation. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba. 251.

in their own homes. With the degradation of Métis women and violent displacement of Métis families, intimate partner violence was exacerbated as the social structuring of Métis families was significantly altered.

5. Review of Literature and Existing Data

Indigenous women deal with a high prevalence of domestic and intimate partner violence within our communities.[23] According to current research in the area, Indigenous women in Canada in the country are at a much higher risk of experiencing violence compared to non-Indigenous women.[24] As Legal Aid Saskatchewan outlines, drawing on the work of Doris and Irene Poelzer, with Métis women living in Northern Saskatchewan in the early-mid 1980s, women who leave environments of domestic violence may find themselves and/or their children houseless of facing housing insecurity. The Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan notes that women living in Northern Saskatchewan face extreme housing shortages. The Metis women surveyed in Poelzer's study confirmed this - they stated that the lack of availability of homes, in addition to the unacceptable quality of government-constructed residences have an effect on family living in terms of the moods, attitudes and relationships of individuals, and these dynamics compound the pre-existing stress arising from housing difficulties.[25]

According to Poelzer and Poelzer, the women they interviewed distinguished between being in a "good" marriage and a "bad" marriage, a "bad" marriage being one wherein "the woman... gets hurt more than the man."[26] One Métis woman reflected on the vicious cycle of intimate partner violence: "Most of the time what happens is that they go back to their husbands...and she just gets the same treatment and still keeps on. It is just a merry-go-round."[27] At least some of this arises because, the interviewees discuss, women are dependent on men. Many of the interviewees reflect on this and the distinct reasons they perceive their partner's abusing them, with jealousy, resentment, and the impacts of drinking being the most prominent.[28] Women reported witnessing and experiencing severe physical and mental harm at the hands of their partners. At Poelzer and Poelzer note, however, "many of these women who suffered beatings simply resigned themselves to what they believed was their lot in life."[29] We can see immediately here the implication on housing issues for Métis women - if they are unsafe in their home environments, and yet have nowhere else to turn, they will return to the merry-go-round. One Métis woman recounted to Poelzer and Poelzer that part of why she stayed was also because of what she saw early on in life with her own mother:

> *...My mother never did that no matter how she was beaten up, eh. I was brought up like that...my mother would walk out for three or four months at a time but she always came back and the same thing would happen over and over.*[30]

23 (Doyle, 2022).
24 (Brownridge, 2008).
25 "Discrimination Against Metis Women in Northern Saskatchewan." 2023. Legal Aid Saskatchewan. https://gladue.usask.ca/node/2849
26 Poelzer and Poelzer, 47.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid 50.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid 51.

Some Métis women are never able to get off. Some Métis women never survive the ride at all. As Poelzer and Poelzer note, they have often been socialized to accept Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), carry "traditional attitudes about the indissolubility of the marriage," or stay because of children and other family nearby. In this context, lack of access to safe and secure housing for Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experience domestic and intimate partner violence is *a matter of life and death*. The fact that Poelzer and Poelzer noted that Métis women in Northern Saskatchewan experience high rates of intimate partner violence *and* an ongoing housing crisis nearly 40 years ago, and that very little has changed or made substantive inroads to address this, is unconscionable.

The nexus of domestic and intimate partner violence and housing are directly correlated with the impacts of colonization and forced assimilation has contributed as root causes of violence against Indigenous women.[31] Despite some institutional victories by Indigenous movements in the recent past, and changing attitudes that Poelzer and Poelzer note, where Métis women are remembering to stand up for themselves, we know that levels of intimate partner violence across all Indigenous communities remain disproportionately high.[32] Current work in the area suggests that there is a complex interplay between colonization, historical trauma, and ongoing socio-economic factors, that contribute to the elevated risk of violence among Indigenous women. One of the largest possible root causes of violence within Indigenous families is systematic and institutional racism. The Royal Commission on Indigenous Peoples (RCAP) report highlights that "sustained and fostered by a racist social environment that promulgates demeaning stereotypes of Indigenous women and men and seeks to diminish their value as human beings and their right to be treated with dignity."[33] This in turn permits communities and impacts treatment within and among people and families, in some cases leading to increases in violence. Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, like other Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, are often pushed out of their family homes and communities and into cities, where they encounter a wide range of systemic barriers.[34]

1.1 Defining Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence

The Department of Justice Canada (2013) defines family violence as "when someone uses abusive behaviour to control and/or harm a member of their family, or someone with whom they have an intimate relationship," which can include physical, emotional, sexual or finance abuse or neglect.[35] When family violence occurs, it 'invades' the entire community, not just the family who are experiencing it.[36] According to the Department of Justice Canada (2013), there are five types of family violence in Canada; physical, sexual, emotional, economic or financial abuse, and neglect. While not all five types of family violence outlined by the Department of Justice Canada will be reviewed here, it is necessary to provide a brief description of each type of family violence. Physical abuse is any type of physical force that is used to harm another person including confinement, hitting, and punching or slapping.[37] Sexual abuse includes unwanted sexual advances or activity between partners and any sexual activity or advances with a minor.[38] Emotional abuse puts a person's sense of self at risk through verbal attacks, social isolation from

31 Mont et al., 2017).
32 (Goulet et al., 2021). See also Poelzer and Poelzer 51.
33 RCAP 1996c, p. 57.
34 Women of hte Métis Nation. (2008). "Policy Paper on Violence Against Métis Women." Ottawa: Women of the Métis Nation. https://ruor.uottawa.ca/bitstream/10393/30600/1/WMNViolenCePaper.pdf
35 Department of Justice 2013, 1.
36 (Royal Commission on Indigenous Peoples, 1996b).
37 (Department of Justice Canada, 2013).
38 (Department of Justice Canada, 2013).

friends and/or family, intimidation, stalking, terrorizing, or exposing a child to violence.[39] Economic or financial abuse withholds, manipulates, denies, prevents, or defrauds someone of money, food, or medical treatment.[40] Finally, there is neglect, which is failing to provide the necessities of life or not providing comfort and love to a child.[41] According to the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) intimate partner violence is specifically defined as violence that "includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats of physical or sexual violence, stalking, and emotional or psychological abuse by a current or former intimate partner."[42] Several types of abuse may be combined to create greater stress in the situation, and provide further control over the victim, additionally; incidents may be isolated or persistent and ongoing.[43]

Janice Ristock, Art Zoccole, Lisa Passante, and Jonathon Potskin note that as of 2019, there have been no published studies specifically focused on what they refer to as "relationship violence" (intimate partner violence) within the Indigenous 2SLGBTQQIA+ people community within a Canadian context.[44] In Ristock et al's interviews and focus groups in Winnipeg and Vancouver, they spoke with 10 participants who identified as Métis and 2SLGBTQQIA+. They quote a Métis woman who identifies as lesbian and Two Spirit in Vancouver: "I've definitely been in relationships that have been abusive, one being emotionally – it really goes hand in hand – abusive, which was escalating towards the end and I got out, just because I couldn't take it anymore."[45] This participant immediately notes that intimate partner violence and housing are directly connected for Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. In order to survive, they had to flee their violent home situation. They had to leave. As Ristock et al note, however, most of the Indigenous participants they spoke with did not actively seek out services that would aid them. Ristock et al state that this correlates with other, limited research that reveals that those in "same-sex/gender partner violence" dynamics do not access services. They report that it is because participants feel that they need "culturally-specific resources that would have helped them transition from Aboriginal communities to the city and that would acknowledge their identities as both Indigenous and gender diverse within specific histories of cultural loss and trauma."[46] Ristock et al also make a vital intervention, noting that in only speaking about intimate partner violence, as though it is exists in isolation from the trauma of colonization and multi-layered violence that Indigenous people experience, we cannot understand the full picture: "Experiences of violence are clearly not neatly separated or contained within intimate relationships but are informed by and co-exist with experiences of violence in the street, and in communities, as well as through structural and state violence."[47]

Ristock et al's participants also reflected on the marginalization they experience *within* their own communities: "it's sad, but some, not most, but some Aboriginal people are

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39 (Department of Justice Canada, 2013).

40 (Department of Justice Canada, 2013).

41 Department of Justice Canada, 2013).

42 Ontario Native Women's Association. (2018) Indigenous Women, Intimate Partner Violence and Housing. *Learning Network Newsletter Issue 25*. London, Ontario: Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children. ISBN # 978-1-988412-19-1

43 (Mustard, 2002, 2006; Mustard & McCain, 1999; Perry & Marcellus, 1997; Teicher, 2002)

44 Ristock, Janice, Art Zoccole, Lisa Passante, and Jonathon Potskin. "Impacts of colonization on Indigenous Two-Spirit/LGBTQ Canadians' experiences of migration, mobility and relationship violence." *Sexualities* 22, no. 5-6 (2019): 767-784.

45 Ibid, 775.

46 Ibid, 775-776.

47 Ibid, 777.

also homophobic. They're not supportive of Two-Spirit people. (Métis, bisexual, female, 18, Winnipeg)."[48] This also compounds the struggle facing Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ people with respect to housing. As one of Ristock et al's interviewee's highlights,

> *There seems to be like a lot of problems with affordable housing. Yeah, cause I know like people who appear as a visible minority, especially when they're Aboriginal, like if they sound Aboriginal on the phone, they don't get the call back . . . [Also] like I know a lot of landlords get really upset if they figure out that, like those two roommates aren't roommates, you know. (Métis, Two-Spirit, bisexual, queer, female, 20s, Winnipeg).*[49]

While there are no existing focused studies on Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's experiences with intimate partner violence, nor any that takes housing as a key focus of study, what we can glean from these brief snapshots is that Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are often rendered invisible in both policy and practice. At the same time, however, the interviewees Ristock et al spoke with provide important insight into the need for culturally responsive services that are *also* built from the ground up with a stated commitment to Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

1.2 Existing Statistics

It is important to note, as we continue towards discussing statistical data, that Indigenous family violence statistics may be underreported. The Royal Commission on Indigenous Peoples (1996c) found that among Indigenous communities, there are a number of reasons that family violence may not be reported or underreported. They outline that such statistics may be underreported due to: attitude of the family about reporting; low self-esteem that the abuse is justified; a fear that any children in the home will be taken by child welfare agencies; not wishing to have a spouse or family member criminally charged; fearing a loss of income, and; having a lack of trust in the justice system.[50] The size of the Indigenous community may further complicate or prevent reporting of family violence. As Statistics Canada (2001a) found, Indigenous people have higher levels of dissatisfaction with police performance. Moreover, those reporting family violence may be related to police and are ashamed or afraid of the consequences of reporting. In addition to these reasons, some Indigenous people may be less inclined to report domestic violence as there are few women's shelters or places for the abused to go to after the release of the perpetrator.[51] In most communities, the abuser returns to the family home where the cycle may continue or there becomes a strained relationship.[52]

The federal government began gathering data at a national level with the Violence Against Women survey (1993) and has continued by using the General Social Survey (GSS). From the available data it is clear that domestic and intimate partner violence disproportionately affects Indigenous women. The 2004 GSS revealed that Indigenous women "experience spousal violence from either a current or previous marital or common-law partner at a rate that is three times higher than that for non-Aboriginal women, nationally."[53] The

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48 Ibid, 778.

49 Ibid, 779.

50 Ibid. See also A Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women." Ontario Native Women's Association and Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres. (2007). https://www.oaith.ca/assets/files/Publications/Strategic_Framework_Aboriginal_Women.pdf.

51 (LaRocque, 1994).

52 (LaRocque, 1994; Ross, 2006, 2009).

53 "A Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women." Ontario Native Women's Association and Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres. (2007). https://www.oaith.ca/assets/files/Publications/Strategic_Framework_Aboriginal_Women.pdf.

Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), affirms these statistics, revealing that Indigenous women are three times more likely to experience domestic violence than non-Indigenous women.[54] Tutty et al (2020) examine domestic abuse across all groups of Indigenous women. They find that while Indigenous women are only 4% of the female population in Canada, they make up 10% of all women abused. According to their study, this means that Indigenous women are two and a half times more likely to suffer domestic abuse. Yet another study by the Canadian Center for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (CCJCSS) within Statistics Canada, found that Indigenous women were six times more likely to be victims of spousal violence than non-Indigenous women in Canada (Statistics Canada 2021). Research conducted by Amnesty International likewise found that Indigenous women in Canada are five times more likely to die as a result of violence compared to non-Indigenous women, with a proportion of these deaths attributed to intimate partner violence (Brownridge, 2008). As we previously noted (LMFO 2019):

> *The severity of violence that Indigenous women experience is greater than that of non-Indigenous women. Indigenous female victims are more likely to fear for their lives as a result of spousal violence (52% versus 31% of non-Indigenous female victims). Indigenous women also reported the most severe forms of violence, including being sexually assaulted, beaten, choked, or threatened with a gun or a knife.*[55]

The experiences of Indigenous women with domestic and intimate partner violence and abuse in Canada are deeply rooted in the historical and ongoing effects of colonization, intergenerational trauma, economic disadvantage, health disparities, and the violent assertion of white supremacy.

With respect to Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people specifically, there is limited literature directly related to our experiences with respect to intimate partner violence, and even less in relation to statistical data. While LFMO has previously reported on Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's experiences, the available data has been limited. In the 2018 Survey of Safety in Public and Private spaces, 54.9% of Métis women reported experiencing physical or sexual assault since the age of 15.[56] This is a rate comparable to First Nations (58.1%) and significantly higher than that reported by Inuit women (35%). In the same survey, 26% of Métis women reported experiencing sexual violence from an intimate partner, a rate higher than for First Nations respondents (18%), and more than double the reported rate for non-Indigenous women (11%).[57]

63% of those who self-identified as Métis women reported experience psychological abuse from an intimate partner.[58] This is substantially higher in comparison to non-Indigenous women (42%) and also higher than what was reported by First Nations women (57%).[59]

54 Ibid.

55 Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak. (2019). "Métis Perspectives of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and LGBTQ2S+ People." Ottawa: Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak. https://metiswomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/LFMO-MMIWG-Report.pdf

56 Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0168-01. Self-reported violent victimization among Indigenous people.

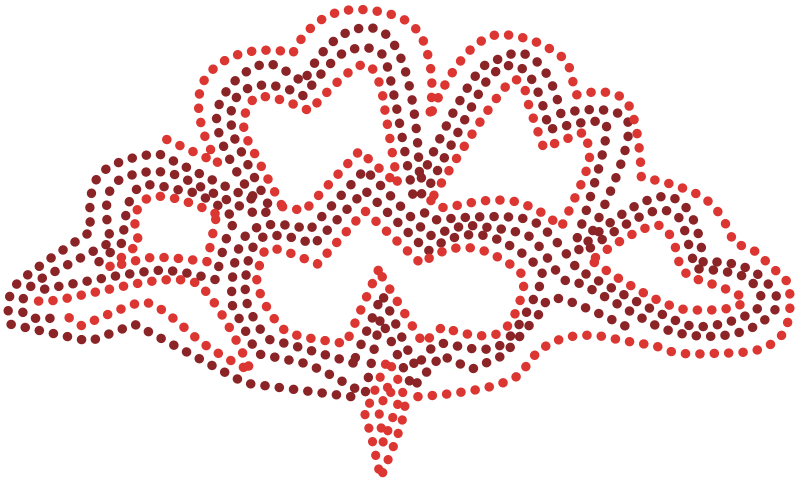
57 Heidinger, Loanna. "Intimate partner violence: Experiences of first nations, Métis and Inuit women in Canada, 2018." *Juristat: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics* (2021): 6.

58 Ibid 4.

59 Ibid.

Statistics show that Métis women are also more than twice as likely as non-Indigenous women to experience IPV in their lifetime (46% vs. 22% respectively).[60]

If we look to the 2018 Gender Statistics (GS) released in January 2023 regarding IPV since the age of 15 and in the 12 months preceding the survey, with a narrowed focus on Indigenous women living in prairie provinces (as represented by a significant part of LFMO's mandate), we can see that Métis women report experience intimate partner violence since the age of 15 at rates higher than both the First Nations and non-Indigenous populations (63.2% for Métis vs. 60.9% for First Nations and 46% for non-Indigenous women, respectively).[61] Métis women also reported experiencing recent IPV (within the preceding 12 months) at rates higher than First Nations women and non-Indigenous women. Métis women reported recent IPV at a rate of approximately 19.7%, while First Nations women reported at 14.4%, and non-Indigenous women at 13%.[62] In acknowledging that there are of course limitations to such studies (i.e. robust participant), what we can see is that of the Métis respondents, a notably higher proportion report experience a lifetime of IPV. And yet we are often entirely invisibilized in the struggle to address IPV. While these recently released statistics begin to give us measurable data that corresponds with what we have heard from our women, there are no existing statistics that supply a Métis GBA+ analytical lens to questions of intimate partner violence and housing. There are also none that allow us to specifically contextualize a Métis 2SLGBTQQIA+ experience with respect to IPV and housing. This makes the statistics generated in this report even more significant, to which we now turn our attention.



60 Ibid 5.

61 Statistics Canada. Table 35-10-0205-01. Intimate partner violence, since age 15 and in the past 12 months, by selected characteristics of victim. The statistics available for BC were considered too unreliable to be published in when narrowed down specifically to our purposes here.

62 Ibid.

6. Survey Data

1.1 Respondent Biodata

Out of the 740 survey respondents we narrowed down to, most people (98.51%) surveyed identify as cisgender [Table 1]. Three, however, did identify as nonbinary or 2Spirit (0.68%). Most respondents identified were born and lived in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia in almost equal parts [Table 2]. People surveyed fell between a broad range of ages. 34% were between the ages of 25-34 and 32% were between the ages of 35-44. 32% were between the ages of 45-54 and Less that 1% were between 18-24 or over 55.

Table 1: What is your gender identity?

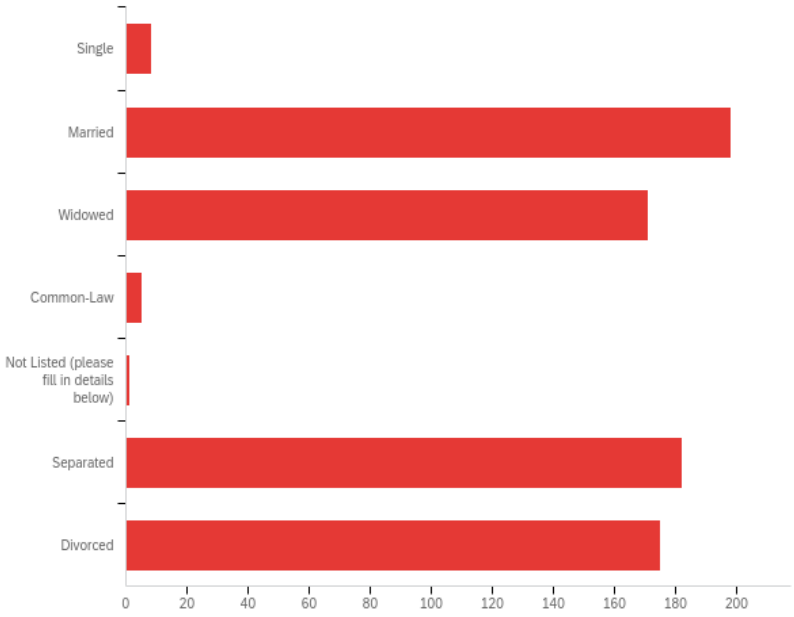
	Answer	%	Count
1	Woman	98.51%	729
2	Two Spirit	0.68%	5
3	Transgender	0.14%	1
4	Gender Identity Not Listed	0.41%	3
5	Non-Binary or Non-Conforming	0.14%	1
6	Indigiqueer	0.14%	1
	Total	**100%**	**740**

Table 2: Where in the Métis Nation Homeland were you born?

	Answer	%	Count
1	Alberta	20.27%	150
2	Saskatchewan	18.51%	137
3	British Columbia	19.32%	143
4	Ontario	21.62%	160
5	Manitoba	20.00%	148
6	Born outside homeland	0.27%	2
	Total	**100%**	**740**

Approximately 28% of all respondents were married. 25% were separated and 24% were legally divorced. 23% were widowed and only approximately 1% were single at the time of this survey [Table 3].

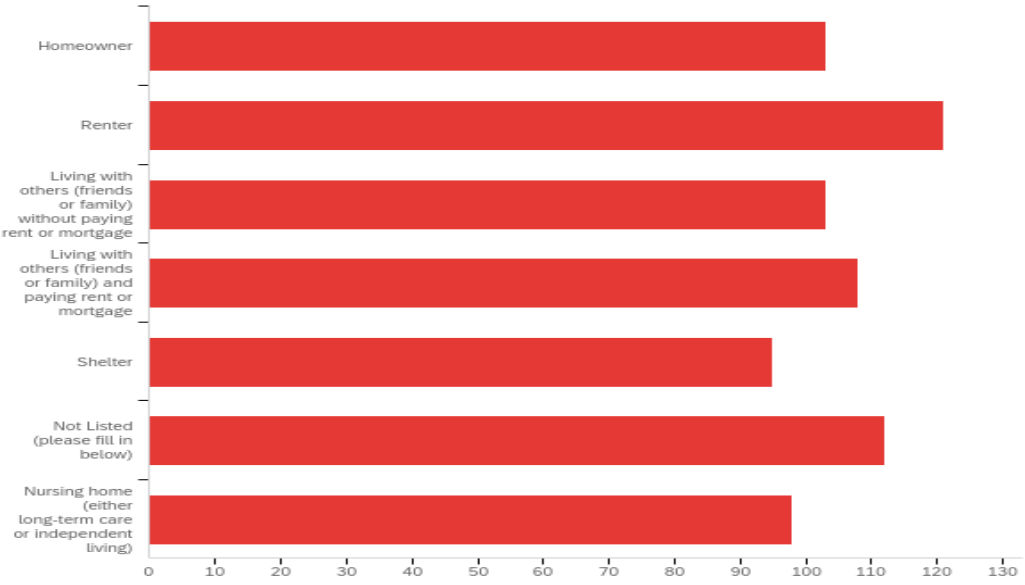
Table 3: What is your marital status?



1.2 Current Living Situations

We asked respondents "If you are currently housed, what is your situation right now?" We received a various array of responses. 16.35% were renting a space and approximately 15% choose not to answer this question. About 15% were living friends or family members while paying rent or contributing to a mortgage. 14% were living with friends or family but not contributing to rent or a mortgage payment. 14% were homeowners and 12.84% are living in shelters. Finally, about 13% of respondents were living in a nursing home, long term care facility or independent living centre [Table 4]

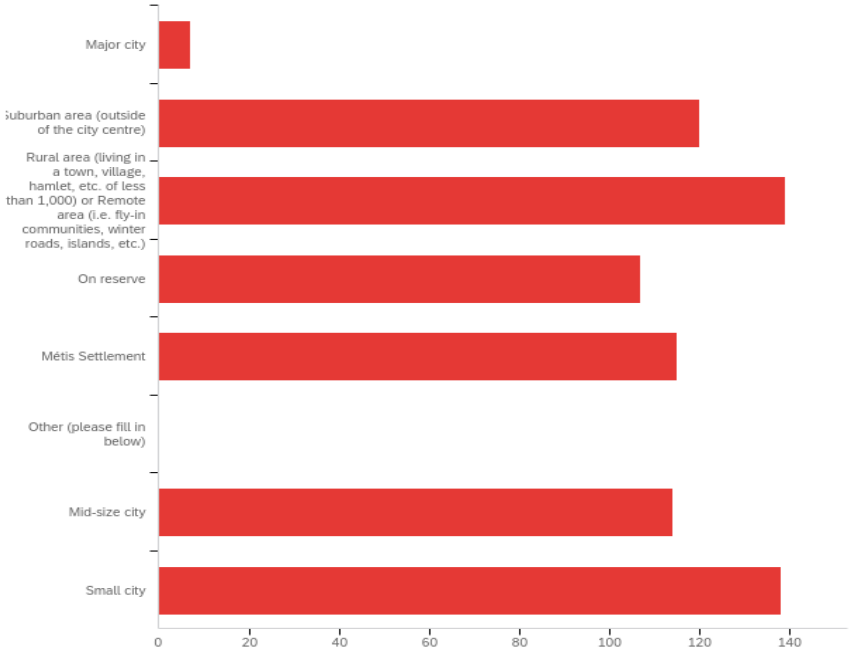
Table 4: If you are currently housed, what is your situation right now?



Most of the people surveyed reported living in a rural area or town (18.78%). This was followed closely by respondents who lived in small cities (18.65%) and in suburban areas surrounding large metropolitan hubs (16.22%). 15% reported living in mid-size cities across

the country. Finally, 15.54% reported living on Métis settlements and another 14.46% live on reserve [Table 5].

Table 5: Where do you live in your province?



This survey also gave us insights into the type of housing Métis women were able to access. For example, 15.54% live in an apartment and 15.27% live in a detached home. 14.05% live in a townhouse or rowhouse. 13.78% live in a duplex or some type of semi-detached home. The same amount of people live in a condominium. 13.38% of people live in a trailer and 14.59% choose not to answer this question [Table 6].

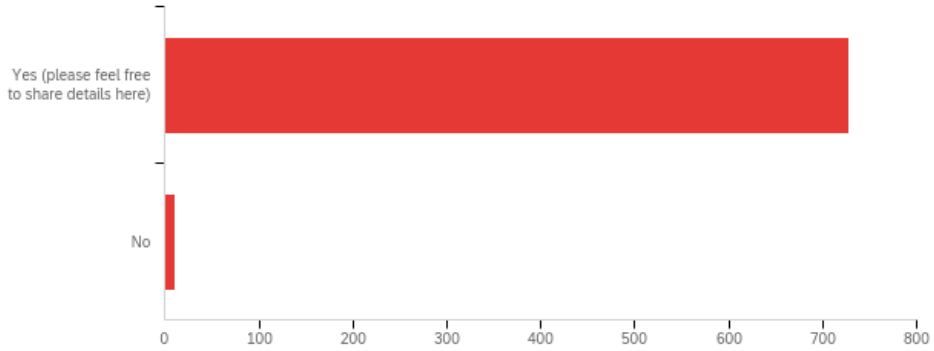
Table 6: What kind of housing do you live in, if applicable?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Detached Home	15.27%	113
2	Semi-Detached/Duplex	13.78%	102
3	Townhouse/Rowhouse	14.05%	104
4	Apartment	15.54%	115
5	Condominium	13.38%	99
6	Trailer	13.38%	99
7	Not Listed	14.59%	108
	Total	**100%**	**740**

1.3 Housing Challenges and Insights

When we asked the question "Have you had challenges securing housing?" 98.51% responded "yes." [Table 7].

Table 7: Have you had challenges securing housing?



Many respondents also shared other challenges and concerns regarding accessing housing and dealing with issues of domestic violence. The following three excerpts summarize the sentiments of most people who supplied additional comments:

> *High rent and inadequate accommodations. Living in a 1 bedroom with my kid after fleeing domestic / family violence. Can only afford a 2 bedroom in unsafe areas. (Anonymous)*

> *We left our house per court order after being assaulted. There were no shelters accepting women and children (on Christmas 2020). We fled to Ontario and have not been able to secure adequate housing since. There is no rental market here. Waitlists for Indigenous subsidized housing are years long. Our house is substandard. (Anonymous)*

> *It is always extremely challenging locating a place to stay that is affordable even on a higher wage. Renovictions are rampant where I live, and so even rental agreements feel insecure, as landlords will find any reason to evict so they can dramatically increase the price of rentals. As anti-2SLGTQQIA+ hate becomes more acceptable in the public, housing is even more unstable. Every money-motivated renoviction puts me at risk of homelessness because the people who have power can easily hide their homophobia. (Anonymous)*

The first respondent discusses her experiences with attempting to find housing after fleeing domestic violence. They could only afford a one-bedroom apartment for themselves and their two children. While larger accommodations were located in unsafe portions of the city that she lived in or where out of reach economically. The second respondent discusses her experiences fleeing assault. She noted that there were no shelters accepting women with children when they left on Christmas Day. After fleeing to Ontario from another province they have been unable to access secure housing. The second respondent also notes that there was list for Indigenous based housing and affordable housing that was years long. The final respondent discussed the experiences of 2SLGTQQIA+ community. They noted the combination of anti 2SLGTQQIA+ sentiment and "renovictions" makes the process of dealing with domestic violence even more difficult and the possibility of experiencing homelessness increasingly real. These comments correspond with the results of the survey. 98.38% of the people survey stated that domestic and family violence had impacted their housing situation. 1.49 % answered no and only 1 person did

not answer this question [Table 8]. Respondents also shared additional comments related to this issue.

Table 8: Has domestic and/or familial violence impacted your housing situation?

#	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes	98.38%	728
2	No	1.49%	11
3	I choose not to answer	0.14%	1
	Total	**100%**	**740**

Unfortunately, my housing situation has been severely impacted by the ongoing abuse I have endured from my family members (Anonymous)

Yes, the physical violence I endured from my adult children has made it impossible for me to continue living with them (Anonymous)

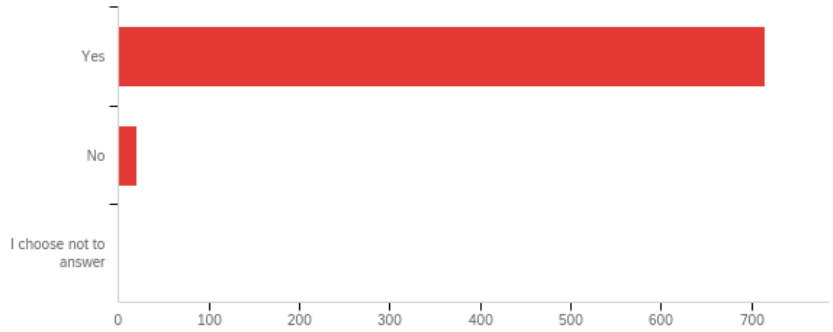
Yes, the fear of violence from my partner has made it challenging for me to find a safe and secure place to live (Anonymous)

Sadly, the emotional and verbal abuse I suffered from my partner has made it difficult for me to trust anyone enough to share a home (Anonymous)

Yes, sadly, my housing has been compromised by domestic violence (Anonymous)

The five short narratives provided here an added dimension to our understanding of Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's, experiences of intimate partner violence and domestic violence, and issues with housing. These comments also shed light on the nuances and multiple challenges respondents met when negotiating housing and familial abuse. The first two excerpts discuss violence perpetrated at the hands of adult family members. While a small amount of work has been done in this area, it is a topic that needs further investigation. The following three excerpts discuss more "typical" forms of domestic violence. The last three respondents both discuss how experiencing verbal and physical violence has made it difficult for them to find housing. Related to this 97% of respondents noted that they were concerned they would have to return to their abuser to secure stable housing [Table 9].

Table 9: Are you worried you will have to return to your abusive situation as a result of a need for housing stability?



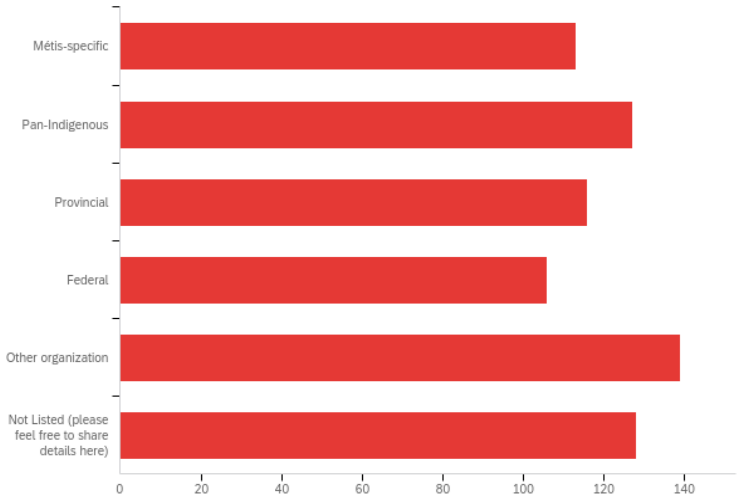
1.4 Accessing Programs and Support

This survey also provides insight into the housing supports needed for Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. 97% of respondents noted that they needed access to housing supports but were not receiving them at the time. They noted the immense need for secure long-term housing and secure long-term housing that allowed women to bring children and pets. Respondents also shared the need for secure access into shelters and the need for kind and compassionate staff. They also noted that childcare services were needed, along with victim supports as well as drug and alcohol rehabilitation. Finally, respondents felt that shelters needed to provide a safe environment where women could speak to other women about their experiences with violence. Finally respondents noted that educational and employment supports were also key in recovering from violence in the home. 97% mentioned having accessed some type of housing support at the time they took this survey Similarly, 97% had also accessed some type of Métis specific or Indigenous based housing. This included being placed on housing waitlist, not actually accessing some type of secure housing [Table 10]. However, they also mentioned these housing supports being inadequate. Respondents tried to access a variety of housing supports. 19% used private organizations or resources provided by non-governmental agencies. 17% accessed housing supports from Pan-Indigenous organizations. That is organizations that supplied supports to all Indigenous peoples across Canada. Approximately 16% accessed provincial supports in their respective locations. 16% used Métis specific resources for their housing needs. Approximately 15% used some type of federal housing program or support while approximately 18% used a different housing support or none at all [Table 11].

Table 10: Have you ever used any Métis or other Indigenous based, organizational, provincial or federal programs to find housing?

	Answer	%	Count
1	Yes (please feel free to share details here)	96.89%	717
2	No	2.70%	20
3	I choose not to answer	0.41%	3
	Total	**100%**	**740**

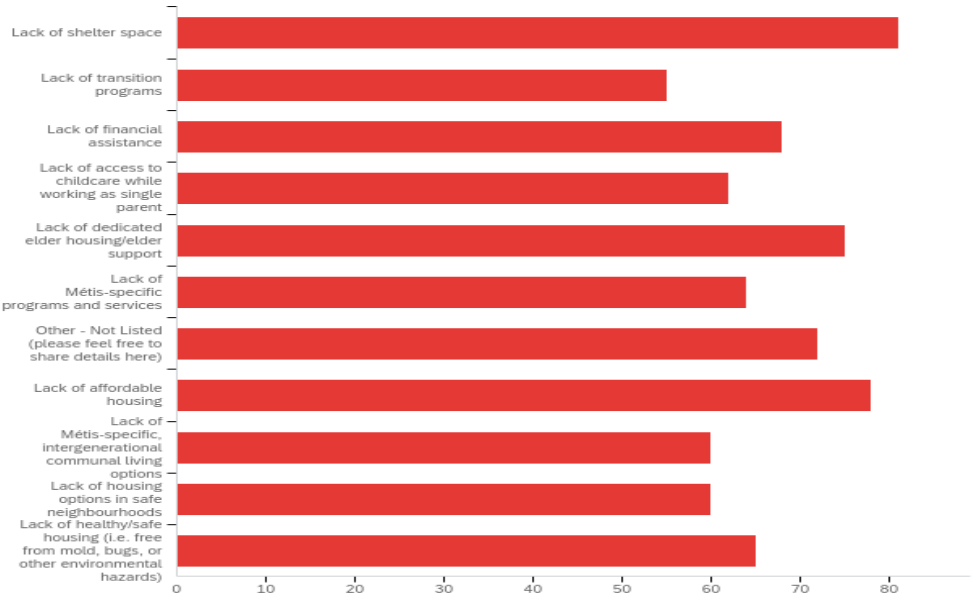
Table 11: Which kind of programming did you access?



1.5 Ideal Way of Living

This survey gave key insight into the specific needs of Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA + people in relation to housing and domestic and/or familial violence and abuse. 11% of respondents noted that there is a general lack of shelter space for women experiencing domestic abuse. Another 11% believe there is a general lack of affordable housing available for women experiencing these challenges. Approximately 10% a lack of dedicated elder housing and related supports. 9% noted a general lack of financial assistance and 8% reported a lack of access to childcare for working parents experiencing abuse. Another 8% felt there was a lack of housing options in safe neighborhoods. 8% believed there was a Lack of Métis-specific, intergenerational communal living options and 9% stated that there was a lack of Métis-specific programs and services for women experiencing domestic abuse and family violence. 9% stated that there was a lack of healthy and safe housing free of mold, bugs and other environmental hazards. Approximately 10% did not provide an answer to this question [Table 12].

Table 12: What is the most urgent concern for Métis women and 2SLGBTQIA + people in relation to housing and domestic and/or familial violence and abuse?



7. Interview Data

Information from our qualitative research findings provided a dynamic inside look into the experiences of Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and their issues with intimate partner violence, familial violence, and housing. Respondents made a series of specific suggestions for how to help Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experiencing violence. Respondents discussed that they needed affordable childcare options to support working mothers and LGBTQQIA+ parents experiencing violence. Respondents also indicated that it was important to implement mandatory training on consent and healthy relationships in schools in order to reduce the amount of people becoming victimizers in the future. Creating safe spaces for 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals to seek support and community and expanding access to legal aid for Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals facing housing discrimination was also key for the people surveyed. Another major theme was the need to expanding access to emergency shelters and transitional housing for survivors of domestic violence. This coupled with increasing funding for 2SLGBTQQIA+ housing initiatives and affordable housing options for all and ensuring access to safe and affordable housing for survivors of domestic violence. Respondents also felt strongly that organizations helping these individuals needed to expand access to mental health services for Métis women and LGBTQIA+ individuals. Finally, respondents believed we needed to strengthen laws against revenge porn and non-consensual intimate image sharing.

Respondents also shared what ideal housing situation would be like for them. Along the same lines, many of the people we spoke to give insight into what housing programs and options they felt were important. The most overwhelming theme was their belief that Métis specific housing should be available exclusively to them. When Métis-designated housing was opened to other Indigenous peoples, some Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA + people sat on long wait lists and/or were never able to access housing that they perceived as intended for them. As we saw with our interviews during our earlier report (LFMO 2022), they noted facing hostility from First Nations people in pan-Indigenous housing spaces for not being "brown enough." Many of the people we spoke with discussed experience discrimination when trying to access housing support from other non-Métis Indigenous organizations. They cited a general inability to access Indigenous based housing or affordable housing as a rationale for wanting this type of support. The people we interviewed also felt this housing should subsidized, well-maintained, safe, and easy to access. A number of participants also felt that there needed to be down payment aid for them to purchase a home. Finally, those who we spoke to felt that they should have access to short term as well as long term housing. This was particularly important to women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people that had experienced domestic abuse and were fleeing violence at home. We summarize the main housing needs and requests in the section below.

1.1 Childhood Experiences

The people we interviewed all struggled with housing as children and a many of them cited moving often, living in poverty, and being evicted by landlords on a regular basis. For the people we spoke to challenges with housing began during their childhood:

> *Um, I always lived, um, in like low, low, uh, low income. I come from poverty...Um, and I lived in non-indigenous housing and I lived in native housing. Um, so I've never had a house before. It'd be, be nice to have a house one day. That's my goal. (Savannah)*

Yeah, it's just like I grew up, you know...like not really poverty, but it felt like it in a way. Dad worked, you know, three jobs and had abuse growing up and I ended up in an abusive relationship (Sorina)

...[I was] on and off on the streets when I was younger... I'm just mostly like couch surfing, stuff like that...Yeah, couch surfing, you know, even homeless shelters, everything, you name it. (Natalie)

Participants Savannah, Sorina, and Natalie all discuss the challenges they had with housing during their childhood. Each one of these participants offers a different contour to our understanding of the childhoods of the people we spoke and how they could potentially contribute to experiences intimate partner violence and housing issues in the future. All participants discussed growing up in poverty and with little access to resources. Natalie specifically, spent a long part of her childhood with no permanent shelter. Savannah and her family were able to access some Indigenous based housing. However, she saw trivial difference between Indigenous based housing or other homes since neither helped her escape the challenges of growing up poor.

The challenges our respondents experienced as children continued into their adulthood. Those that we spoke to all noted they have struggled with housing as adults. The challenges with housing were exacerbated when they began to confront issues of intimate partner violence and family violence in the home. Other research in this area shows a strong correlation between experiencing poverty and violence as a child and having that continue into adulthood[63]:

...My mom's family experienced it and I would say that that probably went in a ways to influencing the kind of men they ended up with and I guess eventually divorced, but it's kind of like you had to choose a stable man to like earn a stable housing situation. Seemed to be the idea at the time whether or not he was always a good man. And I don't know, like in, in regards to me, like, I think like I've just had the knack of being drawn to the wrong kind of people who like exploit me being hardworking, you know? like being drawn to like the narcissistic types. (Carmen)

So I was homeless for a period of time. I went back and forth between Winnipeg and a little bit of time in Thunder Bay and I was homeless there for a long time until, um, until I went back to school...I didn't have anything...I went from being homeless to hidden homeless where I was sleeping on people's couches and things like that. So homeless. Homeless for probably two years. Yeah. Um, but really rough for about six months there. And luckily for me it was in wintertime when it was really, really bad, when it was really, really bad is when my friend, uh, she got me a ticket on a Greyhound bus and um, I made my way to her place and I stayed there over winter. (Diana)

63 Evans & Kim, 2012):

Given the exorbitant cost of living many women experienced a series of housing challenges as adults. Carmen, for example, has decided to live "off the grid" in the equivalent of what is supposed to be a summer cabin:

> *I live Off the grid...I have electricity, whatever. I don't have running water yet, but I have a lake right there. And yeah, there's no, there's nowhere here. Like, you know, I left, I was trying to pay like 1400 plus utilities and I can't afford that. I'm only on Ontario Works right now. (Carmen)*

Her home has no running water, insulation, and lacks most modern amenities. She does have limited electrical power and a lake where she can access freshwater walking distance from her home. Diana, like other respondents, experienced challenges securing housing as an adult. After a dispute with her partner, she lost her home and experienced multiple years of housing and security. During this time, she rotated between living with friends living in the streets and living in homeless shelters.

1.2 Intimate Partner Violence and Housing

Domestic violence exacerbated the challenges associated with finding housing for the people we interviewed. Our respondents noted the finding housing was already an issue giving high cost of living, limited inventory and the inability to access a space that was large enough for themselves and their family. Accessing housing that was located in safe areas was also a large challenge. By and large, domestic violence and family-based violence made securing and keeping housing and nearly impossible task.

> *Um, my first husband used to beat me and I was pregnant with my son...My second one. Um, pretty much hoarded me out for the only satisfaction and threatened me with kids with everything. And then the third one, assault knife, swear. (Sorina)*

> *I was assaulted. ...And (still) having to deal with. If you don't do that (what he wants) , (he says) I'm gonna call this, I'm gonna do this on you call child family services...it's just the abuse is still there. (Amanda)*

> *So I was with my partner in Alberta, um, and in 2019, I, he started hearing some things and, uh, eventually he had a meltdown, a break, like a, you know, emotional breakdown of sort, or a mental breakdown mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, in which he, um, assaulted me in front of the children. So he was removed from the home. Um, and while he was removing, removed from the home, I paid for the house and everything, I had a no contact order against him. Um, eventually it ended up going to court. I asked for him to get anger management, um, in order to see the children again, to which the judge said that "have you not tortured him enough by not letting him see the kids?". And, uh, the judge said, "no, he doesn't need anger management." He took a one weekend course that is good enough in the eyes of the court. Uh, and so in November of 2020, he forcibly confined me and the house refused to leave, refused to allow me*

to leave until I accepted his, uh, wedding proposal. I was not given a choice. I was told, "We are getting married, you don't have a say you're a woman." (Diana)

Here both respondents discussed the challenges they experienced related to housing and domestic violence. Describes the multiple times she was assaulted by her husbands. She was married three separate times and every partner perpetrated domestic abuse. Most of these instances happening in front of their children. Our partners also regularly threatened her children as well. Amanda sheds light on another facet of domestic violence. When she left her husband, he regularly threatened to call government agencies to report her from mistreatment of their children if she did not do what he asked. The constant threat of losing her children became a new form of abuse as she describes. Diana reported her husband for assaulting her and he was temporarily arrested. After completing a one-week anger management course he was allowed to be free and see their children. The Alberta based judge accused her of torturing her old partner and allowed him to see their kids without supervision. Eventually her ex-husband broke into their home and kept her hostage until she agreed to marry him reminding her regularly that she had no rights as a woman and that she had to do what he said. This gender-based violence is typical for the woman we spoke to and those included in our larger survey. It also demonstrates how domestic violence can exacerbate housing issues.

1.3 Access to Housing Support

Additionally, the respondents indicated in their interviews that there was no access to supports specifically for Métis women or 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, or Indigenous re-sources more broadly. There were even less supports for those facing issues related to domestic violence.

I could apply for Metis housing for us, but how long would it take for us to get it on?...it's still a struggle because you're paying for everything else. And then you're paying for food, which is very expensive and, you know, hydro 600 a month, you're looking at freaking everything else. It just adds up...And so that's where the organization helps with groceries every month. And you know, they've accepted the whole family obviously for other benefits, it's just me and my children. But you know, there's not a lot of support here besides like our (Sorina)

Like we're just, you know, and the housing is so bad. We have homeless everywhere. There's drugs everywhere. Town is not really safe. Like it's, it's a bad situation up here. Um, so accessing supports with housing would be basically applying for the MNO. I can't, I, I myself cannot get anything else because the fact that I make more than, you know, 20 grand a year. (Amanda)

Uh, I've talked to them before and it doesn't seem like there's anything available. Like it feels like, it seems like everything's full, like any resources that are available in BC they weren't able to offer me any options. Um, in terms of like available housing. Um, like the most they could do was say like, here's a rental supplement that's temporary. But they weren't able to say

like, here's a housing place where there's some allotment where you could apply or anything like that. (Sam)

Respondents noted that they were able to access small pockets of funding to purchase groceries or at times school supplies for their children. However, these pockets of money were difficult to access and information on how to access them were oftentimes not publicly available. As a whole our respondents noted but they were not able to access any supports that were specific to the Métis community or large Indigenous based programs. Respondents described that the small supports available were oftentimes not enough secure safe housing. People like Amanda were effectively living in poverty but made too much money to receive Indigenous based housing. Other respondents like Sorina also discussed how Métis face housing never seemed to have any reliable units.

The woman and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we spoke with described accessing housing supports as being nearly impossible. This sentiment applied to both indigenous based supports and supports being provided by nonprofit organizations and entities affiliated with various levels of government. On the rare occasion our respondents were able to access resources they largely fell short of being able to provide substantive safe and affordable housing. This was exacerbated when they were dealing with domestic violence issues. They there was almost no resources available to secure housing for women, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and their children, fleeing domestic violence or family-based violence.

I know there are some, but the wait lists are crazy. I don't, you know, I have to like go to the food bank for support and I go to the MNO for support. And you know, I was just, it was just a lot. There's not much for a lot of support besides the hash house or going to counseling or things like that. Still, still deal with the domestic part for the last four years. It's not physical anymore. It's just emotional, phys, physical and, um, mental and some financial as well, which makes it hard as well. I know I'm probably throwing you questions all over the place...and I don't qualify for (provincial) help. (Amanda)

And then, um, so I reached out to Metis Nation and the woman that works there, she's actually the main coordinator of the housing program. I'm pretty sure her name's Jane. She told me she would have a five bedroom for me, but then she didn't even get back to me. Like I had to find my own housing. And then they helped me with a damage deposit...But it was a, a gentleman that actually got that money approved to help me get my damage deposit. So yeah, it's been tough for me. Housing's really tough in Edmonton. (Natalie)

Respondents noted that most housing was only available through various waitlists. These lists have backlogs that extended for multiple years. Even when respondents were able to secure their names on one of these various queues, they felt little hope that they would ever secure housing using this approach. Our respondents also noted the favoritism came into play when accessing housing resources. The woman we spoke to noted that unless you had a friend or family member working in one of the housing offices you were unlikely to be ever granted space. This is exacerbated the already complicated process of securing housing while dealing with issues of domestic violence. On the whole women

felt accessing housing when experiencing domestic violence was nearly impossible and always emotionally and psychologically draining.

1.4 Identification of Housing Support Needed

Given the multiple challenges or respondents face they were able to provide keen insights and suggestions for the housing supports needed for the survivors of domestic violence. One of the overarching themes was the need to find safe housing for women and children experiencing domestic violence. Below our respondents share what they feel is most important regarding this issue.

> *I think having more homes or apartments or housing complex, you know, is really good right now in respect, respect to women. LGBTQ+ individuals in housing, you know, they may not, you know, they get, they get domestic abuse as well. They get it from girlfriends, boyfriends. Um, they get abuse from the town, the people, right. Like cuz you're different and some people just don't, they're not with the times anymore. And like being in a counseling situation, like I understand what they go through and how they feel.*
> *(Amanda)*

> *Feel safe and not be scared of men. And how do I, not just men, women too, because women can be domestic, can be, uh, there's domestic that goes on with women too. Women, uh, like violent women against women, um, girls against girls, like, you know. Um, but yeah, there's, there's, there's some support for everything else for like, you know, food programs and clothing and school and stuff, but nothing for domestic violence and housing. (Sandy)*

> *Um, you know the rules, they give you awful room. You know, they need, they need more support, you know, and better rooms where they feel comfortable and people that they can talk to. You know, here I had nobody in that house back, you know? (Sorina)*

There were several major themes that emerged from the research we conducted. Respondents felt that it was absolutely integral the people experiencing domestic violence have a space available where they feel safe. Currently, based on our interviews and engagement sessions women did not feel they had access to a safe space when fleeing domestic violence. Our respondents also felt that they needed access to better rooms and more shelter space in general. They noted the shelter space that was available was oftentimes grim and unkempt and seemed worse than the places they were living before. Additionally, our respondents believed that there needed to be more mental health, educational and medical support for women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people fleeing domestic violence. They also described how there was not enough monetary support available for women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to get back on their feet when fleeing violence. Our respondents also noted that there were almost no shelters where they could take children safely. Oftentimes they felt that if they took their children to a shelter they would be apprehended by authorities. Amanda aptly notes that there needs to be more housing and supports for members of 2SLGBTQQIA+ community.

People included in these interviews advocated for Métis specific housing and housing supports especially for those encountering intimate partner violence and family-based abuse. Specifically, the woman and 2SLGTQQIA+ people we spoke to advocated for intimate partner violence supports specifically for the Métis community. They also advocated for cohesive Métis housing with wraparound supports where they can regularly access Métis teachings and other culturally specific programming. Given the unique history of the Métis Nation, those we spoke with oftentimes felt as if they were not able to successfully access broad, pan-Indigenous based services, but simultaneously experienced racism perpetrated by white Canadians.

> *Um, they need support and programming and stuff for domestic violence. Um, and for Metis, because I think Métis, as a Métis person, I kind of feel like I don't, I don't know where I belong. Like, I know who I am, you know, I know, I know this is who I am, but I feel like I don't, I feel like I don't fit in sometimes...it just sometimes feels like I'm being left out because of my skin tone or because I'm Métis. Because...non-Indigenous and some Indigenous people are very racist towards...There's racism. Racism. It doesn't even matter. Even your own kind... Natives against natives, non-natives against non-natives. (Sandy)*

> *Um, I would've liked to have been able to stay. Ideally in my own home, that would've been nice...If the judge would've said, "well, yeah, you know, you should be able to stay at the home with her children" instead of giving me limited notice to vacate my premises. Right... So I would've liked that support in place to help me stay in my house. I would've loved to have counseling services for myself and my children set up ideally from the Métis perspective (Diana)*

> *Would just say like maybe if there was more support groups, more education, more like counseling and such available, (about the culture) you know, would make such a difference. You know, like learning more about self-value and learning more about, you know, Métis people that you can go to in regards to this and learn how to heal from it...from that kind of trauma. (Sabrina)*

The narratives here provide various insights into issues related to domestic violence and housing. Amanda discussed her general difficulty accessing housing for both mainstream programs and Indigenous based services. She largely felt as if she did not fit into either category, finding it difficult to manage these programs because given her Métis identity. Diana noted that she would love to access Métis specific teachings and therapeutic supports, ones that would be able to understand her unique outlook and experiences. Sabrina also shared similar sentiments and wanted to understand more about the culture and how to harness the culture to heal past trauma associated with historical forms of oppression and a recent challenge as a survivor of intimate partner violence.

1.5 Ideal Way of Living

Respondents were able to share what their ideal way of living would look like. The insights provided give us an understanding of how Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people would live if they were not constrained by economics or issues dealing with intimate

partner violence and familial violence. Most individuals noted that they would like to be homeowners and live near places where they could access green spaces and bodies of water. Most of them would like a modest tone where they can live peacefully and where they do not have to fear experiencing violence.

> *Yeah. 40 acres. A whole lake to myself...that'd be nice. I like, I like in the wilderness. It's peaceful. It's peaceful. Yeah. It's very calm. Yes. (Sorina)*

> *Um, if I can imagine my dream home, it would be I own it. It doesn't, you know, it doesn't have to be fancy. Fancy. Yeah. If I could own a home that would take, you know, so much worry away from me and my, my children because there are future, we have to take care of them, we have to build stability, you know, it's, as parents, it's our job to build credibility and make sure we teach our children how to take care of themselves for when we're gone. So my dream home would be like enough room, enough room to all of my kids. (Natalie)*

Natalie and Sorina both describe their ideal home and living situation. These two respondents embody the sentiments of all the people interviewed for this report. Most women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experiencing intimate partner violence and familial violence want at a safe home that has enough space for themselves and their families. Being able to access large bodies of water and open green spaces is also important. Those we spoke to also emphasized the importance of access to Métis teachings and elders near their home.

One of the main findings that we uncovered where individuals desire to have access to the land and open space. While some of the women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we spoke to enjoy living in urban centers, a notable number of them expressed the desire to have access to open space. This included being able to hike outdoors, engage in various practices and nearby forest for being able to access large bodies of water on a regular basis. A large segment of women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we talked with preferred communal living arrangements. They describe these arrangements as a large apartment complex or building but also had shared communal spaces. In these communal spaces they imagined cultural events where they could discuss and learn about multiple issues related to the Métis Nation. All women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people describe having access to Métis elders as a key part of their ideal living situation. Finally, the women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we spoke to believe that there should be short term housing available for any Métis woman or 2SLGBTQQIA+ person in need. This narrative was particularly important when discussing the experiences of those who had been through intimate partner violence and abuse.

8. Engagement Sessions

Broad engagement sessions that included information for this report gave us further clarification related to that which we heard in interviews on intimate partner violence and housing. Writ large, the women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we spoke to reported levels of intimate partner violence had increased and were especially acute during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet the people included in these sessions noted that issues of domestic violence and housing were nothing new.

1.1 Changing Familial and Social Structures

Individuals retold stories were friends and family members suffered multiple forms of intimate partner and familial violence. The people included in the sessions discussed how the issue of intimate partner violence increased overtime. According to one, older Métis woman, "I grew up with a strong one, where we were always taught men don't hit women. Mm-hmm. Women don't hit women either. Mm-hmm. We don't fight" (Anonymous). So while IPV has become a very real part of Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's lives, as previously discussed, it was not always the case. As another older Métis woman noted, within tight-knit Métis family units, a kind of collective accountability ensured the protection of Métis women:

> *My cousin got a licking from her boyfriend. Okay. We were all talking as cousins and all of a sudden, my brother gets up where you go, I'm gonna go talk to the guy, dragged him out of his house, gave him a lick, and don't you ever touch my cousin again? We're gonna have big problems. We don't do that in our family. So if you wanna be part of the family, you'll conform to the rest of our beliefs, which is all, we all respect each other. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, they're married today. We were brought up a little different. We were brought up, see if somebody gets Sheila, one of the older ones would have to go out and take care of that kid. We were told that to you, your responsibility was to your siblings. Nobody was allowed to hurt them. And if they hit you, hit them back twice as hard...but don't be the instigator.*

As the above passage reflects, wherein a woman was abused by a partner, other family members that have been raised with a sense of collective responsibility, intervened. In this case, they engage in "an eye for an eye," or reciprocal "justice," that protected women from future incidences of violence. As many Métis families have faced pressures of assimilation that weakened existing social structures that would have protected Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, IPV has increased. We see this in the women Poelzer and Poelzer refer to. This has both compounded and contributed to Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's struggles with a lack of accessible, safe and affordable housing. These sessions provided valuable insights and to the challenges Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people faced with domestic violence and housing and how we can attempt to address these issues.

A number of women across our different engagement session spoke to Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's experiences with domestic and intimate partner violence. One woman recounted the story of her cousin in detail:

My sister-in-law ended up going up with this biker and one night they come home. I guess he gave her a huge licking. First one she ever was given in her life. Well, she debated and debated what to do. So as soon as he passed out, she went and grabbed the cast iron crying, knocked him out repeatedly and kicked him for three days. Every time she went by and she kicked him in the ribs, in the whatever. When he finally woke up, she said, three days up and down, hit me again, you won't be alive. Wow. That's the only time he was ever getting her. She said, and then after he felt so bad, she said, because that's the first time he was ever held accountable... For doing that...They were together about another eight or nine years. She left him for another half, was always looking for somebody, somebody better. (Anonymous)

In this instance, and in the absence of a wider family network, including male relatives to intervene and protect her, this participant's cousin took things into her own hands. Although in both of the preceding examples, women stayed with their partners (in the latter case, for a defined but more limited time), it remains that these incidences of IPV had a profound impact on the women and their families.

1.2 Experiences with the Criminal Justice System

Many of the women and 2SLGBTIQQA+ people we spoke to discussed reporting issues of intimate partner violence to the police and other criminal justice agents. However, the criminal justice system often did not provide support and regularly made issues of domestic violence and housing worse for the women reporting this mistreatment. Criminal justice agents and police seemed sympathetic to women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, but they were unable to provide substantive supports to address domestic violence and issues of housing. These problems became even more acute for members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community.

We were shopping the day before and as soon as we got in the store, my kids said, "oh look, mum, there's that John again." I said, let's just go back to the car. So we get to the car and he follows me right to the car and he's at the window. And I unrolled my window that day and I said," Fuck right off. I've had enough of you psycho. Like you're, you're bothering me. You're bothering my kids. Get away from me. You loser... "So we roll up the windows and we drive away and we're going home. And it is the first time I've said anything in a year. I said, that has been harassing us. Like he sits outside of our house all day. He follows me to work, he follows the kids. And the police said he's never done anything that's criminal. He's borderline, but he hasn't done anything...[So later that day the police are at my door]... So I opened the door [and the police said] "we're here to arrest you under section eight-ten of the criminal code. Your common law husband says you threatened him." At this point I've been married to [another man] for 20 ...And every day he comes to my work. He takes things on my windows, he harasses me. And I was arrested. (Anonymous)

The narrative above discusses multiple years of harassment this woman experienced at the hands of an ex-partner. This individual would actively sit outside of her house and

follow her to different grocery stores and locations in the community. The above participant reported this behavior multiple times over the course of several years. However, police often told them that there was nothing they could do and that this man was doing nothing that was unlawful. She eventually told him, to leave her and her family alone and her stalker subsequently reported her to the police. Later that day, she was arrested in front of her husband and children and taken to a local detention center. These narrative and other stories of those we spoke with summarize the lack of support that police provide Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experiencing issues with domestic violence and housing. It also highlights the fact that police, judges and other members of the criminal justice system make matters make issues of domestic violence and housing worse for Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

1.3 Changes Needed to Support Women and 2LSGBTQQIA+ People

The people included in these engagement sessions were able to give us clear insights into what Métis community needed to help improve and address issues of domestic violence and housing. These suggestions included making safe and affordable housing widely available, increasing access to Métis culture, broadening social services to make two women and broadening public transportation for Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

> *Like in the seventies, they have proposed to build like a, like an integrated domestic violence shelter space...with a childcare inside and elder housing because they wanted to have these spaces that were, you know, community centered, integrated and healing. And that, you know, you, you have the elders there to also help out with the children and teach them language culture. You have the children growing up in a, you know, safe space. You have a space for the mothers to begin healing and looking for work and being able to support. And it never got funded. (Anonymous)*

> *Lack of housing. We don't even have buses to send people home. They can't even go home to visit in their communities anymore because our government took away our bus line. Our most vulnerable, vulnerable people are always the first on the chopping block. (Anonymous)*

These two narratives summarized some of the most overarching themes across all four engagements options. There is the need for integrated shelter space for those fleeing intimate partner violence. This means shelter space for women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people experiencing intimate partner violence that provides physical, mental health and Métis specific cultural support. These spaces should also include access to education for women, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and their dependents. This will allow those experiencing intimate partner violence and housing issues to heal from their trauma. Métis women's organization proposed this housing approach in the 1970s and that never received funding from any level of government or private entity to create it to their vision of what is needed. Additionally, there is a lack of public transit that would allow women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to leave or to return home between urban and rural areas, or between towns and cities, when experiencing intimate partner violence. Giving increased cuts to public services and supports and various provinces a lack of transportation has become a serious issue for the people we spoke to. Additionally, it exacerbates current forms of inequality and makes escaping violent situations even more difficult.

9. Environmental Scan

Current research in the area of domestic and intimate partner violence highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions and support services specifically designed for Indigenous women. One study conducted by Dion (2010) found that the intersection of domestic violence and historical trauma is a significant factor contributing to the prevalence of violence against Indigenous women. Indigenous women in Canada are not only more likely to experience violence, but they also face unique challenges when seeking support and justice.[64] These challenges include systemic barriers, lack of culturally appropriate resources, and discrimination within the justice system.[65] It is evident that Indigenous women in Canada face significant challenges when it comes to addressing domestic violence.[66] Efforts to combat this issue must be specific to the cultural and historical context of Indigenous communities and must incorporate a deep understanding of the intersection of domestic violence, historical trauma, and systemic oppression.

Research studies have revealed that one of the primary obstacles lies in the lack of culturally relevant services that fail to fully address the complex root causes of domestic violence in Indigenous communities.[67] The prevailing colonial structures and the historical silencing of Indigenous women's voices in the health care system further contribute to this issue.[68] These colonial structures perpetuate the marginalization and invisibility of Indigenous women, making it difficult for them to access appropriate support and resources.[69] Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize and incorporate Indigenous knowledge and worldviews in the development of services and interventions aimed at addressing domestic violence among Indigenous women. By centering the experiences of Indigenous women and incorporating Indigenous knowledge and worldviews, it is possible to develop more effective interventions and support services tailored to their specific needs. This approach goes beyond the one-size-fits-all response and acknowledges the need for culturally safe and trauma-informed support that respects the principles of place and relationships rooted in Indigenous epistemology. In what follows we provide a brief overview of selected services available to Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people that are specifically provided *by* Métis organizations and governments. This distinction is crucial. While there many be additional pan-Indigenous programming available, as our interviewees and engagement session participants repeatedly emphasized, Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are often unable access to such programs. Many are often already at capacity in serving the First Nations community.

As noted earlier in the report, Emma LaRocque recounts that Métis women in Alberta organized early on to bring together Métis women to talk about the epidemic of sexual violence against Métis women. The impacts of this foundational work are seen the form of things like the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) Supports and Services Navigator (SSN) that can help Métis citizens find and source resources relevant to their needs.[70] MNA has also offered targeted information sessions to its citizenry regarding domestic abuse. The Métis Urban Housing

64 (Doyle, 2022).
65 Barsalou-Verge et al, 2015).
66 (Ogden & Tutty, 2023).
67 (Brownridge, 2008).
68 (Leigh, 2009).
69 (Rizkalla et al., 2020).
70 "Supports and Services Navigator." 2023. Métis Nation of Alberta. https://albertametis.com/programs-services/children-family-services/supports-and-services-navigator/

Corporation (MUHC) and Métis Capital Housing Corporation (MCHC) has notable range of housing initiatives and programs, however they do not have any direct emergency shelters or second stage housing available to Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people fleeing intimate partner violence. They may draw from their existing pool of resources, however, to prioritize applicants from Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people fleeing domestic violence who are "in a women's shelter or safe house," through their Reaching Home program, intended to help prevent homelessness.[71] The program offers financial assistance, housing, and/or client support. From conversations with Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, we learned that many broader initiatives may offer priority assistance to those fleeing violence, especially in situations where children are involved. MCHC/MUHC also offers a pool of funding for rental subsidies.[72] However the subsidy program and the Seniors Housing facility, Renaissance Towers, do not take domestic and intimate partner violence into consideration on their applications.[73] As one of our engagement session participants mentioned, however, the existing location for the Senior's residence is not a safe place, a housing concern frequently raised by women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people we spoke with for this report and for our 2022 report. While Alberta has a remarkable number of offerings, it bears mentioning again that there are no Métis-led emergency shelters or second stage housing geared towards Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people across their spectrum of life. The programs that do exist are required by their funders to be equally open to Métis *and* First Nations and Inuit applicants. Meanwhile, as discussed elsewhere, programs geared towards First Nations and Inuit are *allowed* by the federal government department furnishing them, to *exclude* Métis people. There simply is not enough.

In Ontario, in Fall 2023, Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) offered a series on domestic violence. Taking place virtually, the series of 4 sessions helped to highlight the issue of domestic abuse within Métis communities, building towards offering guidance to those experience domestic abuse. Topics ranged from impacts, types of abuse and abusers, safety planning and available resources, along with healing and recovery.[74] MNO also offers a Victim Services Program, geared towards working to "end violence against Métis women and children," with funding received from Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General.[75] Through the program, they help with cultural support, referrals to external support services (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous), offer assistance with the development of safety plans for those fleeing from violence (and which may also include information on shelters and aid with completing housing applicants), provide assistance for court processes, and a number of other things.[76] While these programs do intervene in housing searches by providing assistance, there are no direct shelter program offerings delivered by MNO itself nor an direct housing initiatives that would provide immediate, culturally-relevant space and respite for those Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people fleeing from violence.

71 "Reaching Home Assistance Application." 2023. Métis Capital Housing Corporation. https://www.metishousing.ca/uploads/source/Application_Forms%3A_/Reaching_Home__Program_Application_PDF_Updated_-_September_2023_-_V2.pdf

72 "Subsidized." 2023. Métis Capital Housing Corporation. https://www.metishousing.ca/housing/subsidized/

73 "Our Seniors Housing." 2023. Métis Capital Housing Corporation. https://www.metishousing.ca/housing/seniors/

74 "Educational Domestic Violence Series." 2023. Métis Nation of Ontario. https://www.metisnation.org/news/educational-domestic-violence-series/

75 "MNO Victim Services Program." 2023. Métis Nation of Ontario. https://www.metisnation.org/news/educational-domestic-violence-series/

76 "How We Help." 2023. Métis Nation of Ontario. https://www.metisnation.org/programs-and-services/healing-wellness/victim-services/how-we-help/

The case is similar in Saskatchewan and British Columbia. In Saskatchewan, the Minister of Housing and Infrastructure has a mandate to pursue "short and long term sustainable housing options for Métis women" who have experienced domestic abuse and other forms of marginalization.[77] While the La Ronge Native Women's Council Inc. operates the Piwapan Women's Centre, it is not a Métis-specific, wholly Métis led program. On the shelter referral form for the Piwapan shelter, it asks about applicants' "Treaty Number."[78] For many of the women we spoke with, this would serve as an automatic deterrent, signaling that the programming is not necessarily geared towards Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, who are not "Treaty Indians." We were unable to find any Métis-controlled shelters spaces or dedicated housing programs available to/for Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in Saskatchewan.

In February 2023, Métis Nation British Columbia posted an advertisement for a Metis Domestic Violence Prevention Educator.[79] While the position was to be geared towards education, it was part of a broader MNBC multi-year project titled Kiikew Keur Healing Hearts, administered by the Kamloops-based Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Family & Community Services.[80] The initiative works to support survivors of domestic abuse. As with other provinces, however, there is a general lack of dedicated housing programs for those fleeing domestic and intimate partner violence situations. In an otherwise impressive report prepared for MNBC, by Big River Analytics Ltd., titled "The Voice of Métis: Housing Needs Assessment Métis Nation British Columbia," the authors do not distinctively discuss people Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people's needs - in particular the urgent need for culturally responsive and trauma-informed shelter space and second stage housing.[81]As we noted in our 2022 report, MNBC has made remarkable strides via its plans for developing expanded office space, child care space, and affordable housing within combined units across the province. What remains to be seen, however, is whether any of the dedicated housing will offer priority support for those Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people escaping domestic and intimate partner violence. Across all Métis governments, our people work tirelessly, but without sustainable and targeted funding for established Métis-led shelters and second stage housing, those Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people living in violent situations, and their children, will continue to see their suffering compounded by ongoing policy neglect.

77 Letter from MN-S Glen McCallum. 2021. Métis Nation-Saskatchewan. https://metisnationsk.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Mandate-Housing-10-21.pdf

78 "What We Do." 2023. Piwapan. https://pwcprograms.com/what-we-do/

79 "Metis Domestic Violence Prevention Educator." 2023. Métis Nation British Columbia. https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:w5c9mJ4TzAQJ:https://www.mnbc.ca/work-programs/skills-training-employment-post-secondary-steps/job-board/metis-domestic-violence&hl=en&gl=ca&client=safari

80 See: https://canadianroots.ca/creation-myf-mar-23-demographic-form/

81 "The Voice of Métis: Housing Needs Assessment Métis Nation British Columbia." 2022. Métis Nation British Columbia. https://www.mnbc.ca/sites/default/files/2022-07/TheVoiceofMétis_-HousingNeedsAssessment.pdf

10. Recommendations

1. Consult with Métis governments on priority locations for the establishment of Métis-owned and run shelters and second stage housing in all areas (which must be both urban and rural)

2. Provide immediate capital development funding and ongoing fixed and sustainable funding for Métis shelters and second-stage housing

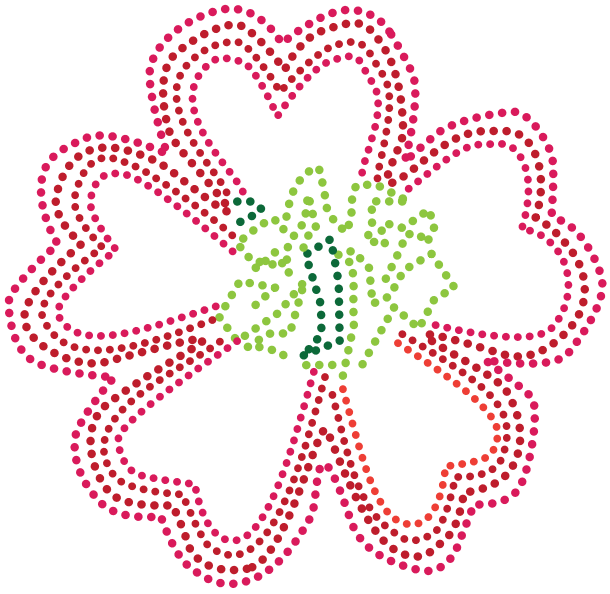
3. Create special access programs for Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people leaving domestic and intimate partner violence situations (including targeted home ownership programs, rent subsidies, and other focused initiatives)

4. Commit to the development of safe, affordable and sustainable Métis housing with a dedicated inventory of safe houses for Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, with a focus on offering Métis families the necessary support for successful tenancies so that they can move upward through the housing continuum

5. Coordinate government departments to ensure culturally relevant childcare is subsidized and provided to Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people fleeing violence to ensure they are able to work to support their core housing needs

6. Build "senior-safe" accessible housing in safe locations for older Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who have experienced domestic and intimate partner violence (including holistic program in house for food, medicine, cultural enrichment activities)

7. Develop targeted "age in place" programs for Métis women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who have already experienced significant disruptions in their lives due to domestic and intimate partner violence (work to reduce the burden of moving in older age)



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Glossary

2SLGBTQQIA+: It is the acronym used by the Government of Canada to refer to various members of Canadian community. 2S: at the front, recognizes Two-Spirit people as the first 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities; L: Lesbian; G: Gay; B: Bisexual; T: Transgender; Q: Queer; Q: Questioning; I: Intersex, considers sex characteristics beyond sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression; +: is inclusive of people who identify as part of sexual and gender diverse communities, who use additional terminologies.

Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS): Is a national survey on the social and economic conditions of First Nations people Métis and Inuit living off reserve. The objectives of the APS are to identify the needs of these Indigenous groups and to inform policy and programs aimed at improving the well-being of these communities. The APS provides update to date data for a stakeholders, including Indigenous organizations, communities, service providers, researchers, governments, and the general public.

Accessibility: Accessibility is the degree to which a product, device, service, environment, or facility is usable by as many people as possible, including by persons with disabilities. Achieving accessibility requires knowledge of accessibility standards, being aware of the needs of people with disabilities, and addressing barriers to access for individuals with disabilities.

Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics (CCJCSS): Is a division of Statistics Canada. They are responsible for the development, collection, integration, and analysis of data that reflect trends in Canada and on the development of national- and jurisdictional-level indicators.

Canadian Survey on Disability (CSD): Is a national survey that collects information about the lived experiences of youth and adults whose everyday activities may be limited due to a long-term condition or health-related problems

Colonization/Colonialism: Is a process of establishing control over targeted territories or peoples for the purpose of taxation and control often by establishing colonies and by settling them. This also includes resource extraction and the exploitation of Indigenous populations. Colonization is structured and enforced by the settlers directly, while their or their ancestors' respective country maintains a connection or control through the settler's colonialism. In settler colonization, a minority group rules either through the oppression and assimilation of the Indigenous peoples or by establishing itself as the demographic majority through driving away, disadvantaging, or outright killing the Indigenous people, as well as through immigration and births of metropolitan as well as other settlers.

Disability: Is the experience of any condition that makes it more difficult for a person to do certain activities or have equitable access within a given society. Disabilities may be cognitive, developmental, intellectual, mental, physical, sensory, or a combination of multiple factors. Disabilities can be present from birth or can be acquired during a person's lifetime. Historically, disabilities have only been recognized based on a narrow set of criteria—however, disabilities are not binary and can be present in unique characteristics depending on the individual. A disability may be readily visible, or invisible in nature.

Domestic violence (is sometimes called intimate partner violence): Includes physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, as well as sexual coercion and stalking by a current or former intimate partner. An intimate partner is a person with whom you have or had a close personal or sexual relationship. Intimate partner violence affects millions of women each year.

Eurocentric: Is a worldview that is centered on western civilization or a biased view that favors it over non-Western civilizations. The exact scope of eurocentrism varies from the entire western world to just the continent of Europe or at times Western Europe . When the term is applied historically, it may be used in reference to an apologetic stance toward European colonialism and other forms of imperialism.

Homophobia: Encompasses a range of negative attitudes and feelings toward homosexuality or people who identify or are perceived as being lesbian, gay or bisexual. It has been defined as contempt, prejudice, aversion, hatred or antipathy, may be based on irrational fear and may sometimes be related to religious beliefs

Manitoba Treaty: The *Manitoba Act* provided for the admission of Manitoba as Canada's fifth province. It received royal assent and became law on 12 May 1870. It marked the legal resolution of the struggle for self-determination between people of the Red River Colony and the federal government, which began with Canada's purchase of Rupert's Land in 1870. The Act contained protections for the region's Métis. However, these protections were not fully realized.

Métis National Council: Represents more than 350,000 members of the Métis Nation, defined as Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and parts of Ontario, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories. It emerged during the intense constitutional debate over Aboriginal rights in the early 1980s. The Métis National Council continues to champion a culturally and politically distinct Métis Nation with roots in Western Canada, and with outstanding claims to self-government, land and other Aboriginal rights.

National Household Survey: Is data collected by the census, the National Household Survey (NHS) is designed to provide information about people in Canada by their demographic, social and economic characteristics as well as provide information about the housing units in which they live.

Open Ended and Closed Ended Research Questions: Open-ended questions prompt people to answer with sentences, lists, and stories, giving deeper and new insights. Closed-ended questions limit answers.

Scrip System: In the late 1800s, the Canadian government began to implement the scrip system, setting up tents for Métis people to make their land claim. Métis applied for scrip in these tents. To redeem them, they had to go to a Dominion Lands Act office, and then they had to travel to the lands that were given to them. The stated intention of scrip was to actually provide equitable settlements to Métis but that never took place. The scrip system quickly became a way to disposes Métis of their ancestral lands whilst benefiting European settlers.

Racism: Is discrimination and prejudice against people based on their race or ethnicity. Racism can be present in social actions, practices, or political systems (e.g. apartheid) that support the expression of prejudice or aversion in discriminatory practices. The ideology underlying racist practices often assumes that humans can be subdivided into distinct groups that are different in their social behavior and innate capacities and that can be ranked as inferior or superior.

Racist ideology can become manifest in many aspects of social life. Associated social actions may include nativism, xenophobia, otherness, segregation, hierarchical ranking, supremacism, and related social phenomena.

Red River Expeditionary Force: In 1870-1877 soldiers were collected from the Militia Units of Quebec and Ontario in early 1870 for service in the Northwest. They were intended to "show the Flag" in Rupert's Land which had just joined Canada as the Province of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. The soldiers were also interested in "punishing" the Metis in Red River for what was perceived as "treason" against the crown during the negotiations leading up to the Confederation of Manitoba. Each soldier was granted a "Bounty Warrant" for 160 acres of crown land. In most cases the soldiers sold these warrants, and they became the basis of wealth for many early economic leaders in Winnipeg.

Road Allowance Communities: The term "road allowance" comes from the specified area measured between a paved or unpaved road and the boundary of private, municipal, provincial, railway, or Crown land. Pushed to the geographic and economic fringes of Canadian society, Métis constructed road allowance communities on unused plots of land typically located at the periphery of larger non-Indigenous communities, First Nations Reserves, or in sparsely populated rural areas. These settlements were often situated next to roads, near farmland, bodies of water such as lakes and rivers, creeks and alongside railway lines; as well as close to hydroelectric facilities , small towns as well inside large urban centers. During the late 1800s and first half of the 1900s dispossession was common for Métis leading them to make do with what little remained – a recurring practice when it came to resources or land.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Was a Royal Commission established in 1991. The commission's report, the product of extensive research and community consultation, was a broad survey of historical and contemporary relations between Indigenous (Aboriginal) and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. The report made several recommendations, the majority of which were not fully implemented. However, it is significant for the scope and depth of research and remains an important document in the study of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Sexism: Is prejudice or discrimination based on one's sex or gender. Sexism can affect anyone, but primarily affects women and girls. It has been linked to gender roles and stereotypes and may include the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to another. Extreme sexism may foster sexual harassment, rape, and other forms of sexual violence. Discrimination in this context is defined as discrimination toward people based on their gender identity or their gender or sex differences. An example of this is workplace inequality. Sexism may arise from social or cultural customs and norms.

Two-spirit **(also known as** ***two spirit*** **or occasionally** ***twospirited*****):** Is a modern, pan-Indian term used by some Indigenous North Americans to describe Native people in their communities who fulfill a traditional third-gender (or other gender-variant) ceremonial and social role in their cultures

Notes



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