**YWCA Brandon: A Demographic Overview of Housing, Reintegration, and Domestic Violence Service Recommendations for Ongoing and Future Strategic Operations**

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**Outline**

**Acknowledgement**

**Introduction**

Despite Manitoba having among the highest provincial rates of police-reported family violence in the country (417 per 100,000 population), domestic violence (DV) and emergency shelter services (ESS) are few (Conroy, 2021). COVID-19 has posed significant challenges for service providers and organizations, many of which have expressed concern about the ways the pandemic has impacted their ability to effectively provide services (Women's Shelter Services, 2020). This is concerning for those who require shelter services. It is particularly concerning for families and victims of domestic violence who are living isolated in rural and remote communities since they may not have access to services when needed the most (Pindera, 2021). Cotter (2021) describes how definitions of DV and intimate partner violence (IPV) evolve over time but often include a range of violent offences that occur between current and former partners who may or may not live together and are often the result of an attempt to gain or assert power or control over a partner. As many people of differing genders, sexualities, and relationship statuses are affected by DV and IPV at rates often higher than their cisgender and heterosexual counterparts, there is a need to provide direction for current and future operations related to support provision for victims of domestic violence (Ibrahim, 2019; Langenderfer-Magruder, et al., 2016). Subsequently, in effort to provide direction for current and future operations to the YWCA Brandon, we provide an overview of findings from a series of environmental scans, literatures reviews, and semi-structured interviews, and we include recommendations for action specific to each researched demographic. These recommendations are intended to be responsive to a rural southwestern Manitoban context.

## Key Findings and Recommendations

**Summary of Key Findings**

1. Unique demographic groups have unique service needs and require specialized supports for best social-health outcomes
2. Numerous barriers to service accessibility exist at the structural, community, and individual level and include stigma related to service use
3. Interagency collaboration is integral to promoting robust support networks for service recipients
4. Services that target a variety of social-health determinants appear to be well-positioned to effectively support individuals through a variety of challenges

**Recommendations for Action**

1. Marketing and branding strategies that demonstrate gender affirmation and family support and include outreach activities
2. Updating organizational non-discrimination policy to reflect gender affirming service provision
3. Infrastructure developed for demographic-specific housing support is recommended
4. Peer-collaborative program development

**Methods**

The community research design employed in this multi-faceted project consisted of several stages of data collection and analysis. Partnership action meetings held remotely between research assistants provided the basis for ongoing data collection and analysis, as well as to establish protocol for handling multiple streams of data collected for this report. An environmental scan of services and agencies throughout Manitoba and Canada helped to contextualize key findings and unearth current practices and programs at various shelter settings. Information gathered from the websites of provincial and national organizations was compiled, organized into themes, and used to complement results of the literature reviews.

Furthermore, a series of literature reviews that sought to determine current and best practice service provision for men requiring DV support services, transitional housing services for men who are single parent fathers, post-incarceration services for gender-marginalized individualss, and supports required for transgender individuals experiencing homelessness were conducted. Literature was obtained, reviewed for relevance to search metrics, summarized, and emergent themes were identified, organized, and articulated.

Finally, for the purposes of assessing what makes transgender people comfortable and safe in shelter settings, semi-structured interviews that sought the perspectives of shelter directors and those who work in the service provision of transgender people were conducted. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and key themes were identified, organized, and articulated.

**Findings and Recommendations**

**Services for Transgender Individuals**

*Housing Services for Transgender Individuals*

      **Environmental Scan.** An environmental scan that included an extensive internet search and information from interviews with service providers helped reveal that homelessness services for transgender folk are extremely limited across the country. For example, there is only one housing service specifically tailored to trans people that is identified throughout Canada. Services identified were mostly tailored for two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus other identities (2SLGBTQ+) programs that may include trans folk but are not specifically geared towards them. The lack of specialized programming and housing for trans people country-wide represents a gap in service provision but also an opportunity to create and implement trans-friendly programming or standalone housing. Service provider interviews revealed that there is an organization in Winnipeg currently working to set up a standalone unit to house 2SLGBTQ+ people experiencing ongoing housing instability. The scan also identified various housing programs for 2SLGBTQ+ individuals including transitional housing programs that offer counselling, occupational supports, and group activities, a long-term housing program, two homes that directly work with trans folk in Winnipeg, a variety of drop-in style programs that offer housing support, and a few 2SLGBTQ+ Housing First programs were identified.

**Table 1: Transgender Shelter Options and Housing Supports Details**
(Note—See appendix 1 for Shelter Contact Information)

| Service Type | Location | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **Drop-In** | **Sunshine House** Winnipeg, MB. | Offers a specialized program called "Like That" for 2SLGBTQ+ people. |
| | **The519** Toronto, ON. | Offers housing support to 2SLGBTQ+ people and has various programmatic offerings specifically for transgender people. |
| **Transitional and Long-Term Housing** | **Friends of Ruby Home** Toronto, ON. | A custom-built transitional house for 2SLGBTQ+ folk. Canada's first custom-built transitional house for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Individual bedrooms and shared living space for 2SLGBTQ+ people between the ages of 16-29. |
| | **Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre** Winnipeg, MB. | Runs a program called Honoring the Spirit of our Little Sisters which is a specialized home designed to help sexually exploited girls and transgender teens. |
| | **Pride Home** Saskatoon, SK. | Run by OUTSaskatoon is a long-term housing operation for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. The program is designed to minimize rent and provide this group with safe, affordable housing. |
| | **Ross-Aoki House** Vancouver, BC. | Run by Atira Women's Resource Society is a 24-room single-room occupancy hotel for trans, gender diverse, and two-spirit people. The project is designed specifically to help trans people who are facing barriers finding safe, affirming housing. This project is led by a trans person. |
| | **Salvation Army Booth Centre*** Winnipeg, MB. | Previously offered a shelter program (no longer in operation) to help house 2SLGBTQ+ people. According to an interview participant this program did not last long as it was not created with the input of 2SLGBTQ+ people and this group often had reservations about outing themselves to an organization that has historically treated them quite poorly. |
| | **YMCA Sprott House** Toronto, ON. | Transitional housing program for 2SLGBTQ+ youth. This program provides 25 youth and young adults up to one year of supported residential living, but it can also support up to 6 residents on an emergency basis. |
| **Housing First** | **Aura Host Homes** Calgary, AB. | Run through Trellis Society in Calgary is a program designed to help find safe, affordable housing for 2SLGBTQ+ youth who are at risk of, or currently facing, homelessness. |
| | **RainCity Housing** Vancouver BC. | Runs a program that works to secure housing for young people who identify as queer or trans. It also helps to connect clients to gender affirming health care, employment, and community. |
| | **West Central Women's Resource Centre*** Winnipeg, MB. | Offers a Housing First program that includes trans women. A local trans advocate stated that WCWRC extends their programing to anyone facing gender-based violence which should include any people who fall under the trans umbrella. |

**Findings.** This investigation sought to explore transgender people's experiences with housing organizations, needed supports, and comfortability and safety factors in shelter settings. Academic and grey literature report data were reviewed along with eight interviews conducted with shelter providers and those who provide services for trans people in Manitoba. The analysis highlighted three main themes: transgender homelessness is prevalent, significant barriers to trans people accessing housing supports exist, yet promising strategies to improve the comfort and safety of this group in accessing these supports also exist.

Despite only making up around 10% of the general population, it is estimated that 25-40% of homeless youth in Canada are 2SLGBTQ+ (Abramovich, 2017). Factors associated with this disproportionality include identity-based family rejection, domestic and family violence, discrimination and harassment in education, unemployment and housing instability, and negative interactions with social services (Ecker, 2017; Sellers, 2018;).

Abramovich & Kimura (2021) describe a situation where trans and other 2SLGBTQ+ people are overrepresented amongst the homeless but "underrepresented in shelters and housing programs" (p. 2). Often, transgender people will opt to use risky survival strategies (e.g., street sleeping, couch surfing, exchanging sex for a place to stay) instead of staying in shelters due to the high rates of discomfort, discrimination, and violence that they face in these settings (Ecker, 2017; Crossley, 2015; Sellers, 2018; Yu, 2010). The executive director for a local shelter described how they feared not being able to retain clients because of these challenges, stating "we struggle with that a lot, because are we putting them into a riskier place?" While also supported by Abramovich & Kimura (2021), some participants noted that trans people may feel excluded by faith-based housing and service organizations or those that segregate their facilities and programs by gender. Trans people who have other marginalized identities (e.g., race, class,

sexual identity) may face further stigma and higher barriers in accessing these services due to the intersectoral nature of these marginalities (Sellers, 2018). Despite these challenges, housing support organizations can be successful in meeting the comfort and safety needs of transgender people.

One of the most identified strategies includes training staff to be knowledgeable about transgender issues such as using preferred pronouns and hiring staff whose identities match, or better represent, the identities of their clients (e.g., transgender, people of colour) (Munro, 2017; Pike, 2007). One 2SLGBTQ+ educator said that in serving transgender folk it was important to have transgender people on staff because "it's a lot easier for clients to engage when they're feeling represented in the community or into the space … and I think having, you know, people who are of the same race or same gender identity can be really helpful because … they can empathize with those experiences as well." The importance of 2SLGBTQ+ branding strategies such as posting rainbow stickers, posters, and other media that can be used to quickly identify the shelter as safe space was also identified by participants and is supported by the literature (Bardwell, 2015; Pike, 2007). Additionally, service workers and relevant literature explained that it is important to not segregate people based on their gender or birth sex but instead by listening to the clients and assigning them to an area that most closely aligns with their identity or where they feel the safest (Bardwell, 2015; Ecker et al., 2019; Mottet & Ohle, 2003). Finally, multiple participants explained that it is important for trans people to have access to a community (e.g., identity-based support groups) so trans people can better explore their gender identity and so shelters can easily refer clients to gender affirming forms of care.

**Recommendations.** Based on interviews with shelter directors and trans friendly service providers, literature, and the environmental scan, the following recommendations emerged for

YWCA Brandon. First, reach out to Trans Manitoba to help inform programming and make it trans affirming. Running support groups for trans people or building ties with local pride organizations is supported by both the literature and interview data as important strategies in building the safety and comfort levels of the people who may access their organizations (Munro, 2017; Yu, 2010). In general, advocate for trans people through recruitment, policy, training and education, create specialized services (programming and/or standalone housing) for 2SLGBTQ+ people that involve this group in the process of developing them (e.g., allowing them to provide input), apply discretion when collecting personal information such as gender identity (and be able to explain why such data needs to be collected and who sees it), ensure that clients can access gender affirming care, supports, and resources on a referral style basis, and consider the needs of trans people with other marginalized identities. Regarding staff and training, ensure that sensitivity training is mandatory for all staff to complete and that it is integrated into policy and practice, educate clients on trans issues, hire transgender staff, work in partnership with organizations like SERC to develop training modules for staff and ensure these modules have a separate section on Indigenous 2SLGBTQ+ issues (and work with local Indigenous agencies to ensure cultural accuracy). In terms of physical space, universalize washrooms with locking doors so that they can be used by anyone, labelled simply with what is in them, and do not restrict their usage based on gender (allowing people to use the facility in which they feel safest). In this regard, also display visible 2SLGBTQ+ signage (e.g., a rainbow sticker on the door, poster in the facility) and include 2SLGBTQ+ specific language and imagery in advertising and pamphlets that promote their services so that they can overtly show that they are a safe space for this group. Finally, in terms of policy, YWCA Brandon should develop a policy for all staff to use the preferred names and pronouns of their clients (regardless of one's legal documents), update non-

discrimination policies to include specific language around gender identity, expression, and

sexuality (posted so all can see it), and develop shelter policy on accommodating trans people

based on the individual's choice that allows clients to self-select the residency that makes them

feel safest and best aligns with their gender identity and expression.

**Table 2: Transgender Individuals Housing Supports – Recommended Actions**

| Level of Action | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **Collaboration** | **Organizational Policy Development** | **Education and Training** | **Space and Infrastructure Development** |
| **Transgender Individuals: Housing Support** | 1. Reach out to Trans Manitoba for collaboration<br><br>2. Create specialized services and supports for trans people<br><br>3. Involve trans people throughout the process of the development of any form of trans housing<br><br>4. Provide opportunities for trans clients to share the experience and knowledge that they have acquired to inform programming<br><br>5. Consider the needs of trans | 1. Develop shelter policy on accommodating trans people based on the individual's choice, not on the staff or management's perception of their gender identity<br><br>2. Ensure that they allow residents to self-select the shelter or room where they feel safest or aligns best with their gender identity<br><br>3. Develop a policy for all staff to use preferred names and pronouns (regardless of what one's | 1. Ensure sensitivity/equity training is mandatory for all staff to complete<br><br>2. Hire transgender staff. Don't use them as a token, representation is very important in making trans clients feel safe and represented<br><br>3. Work in partnership with organizations like the SERC in developing training modules for staff<br><br>4. Ensure training modules include a separate section on Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ issues, including two-spirit people and work with local Indigenous | 1. Universalize washrooms so that they can be used by anyone.<br><br>2. Provide private shower options, if there is no way to make that happen then set up a system where people can use group showers privately with a locking door<br><br>3. Display visible LGBTQ2S signs (e.g., rainbow sticker on door, posters/signs) throughout the shelter and include LGBTQ2S specific language in advertisements, pamphlets, or other materials that describe |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | people with intersecting marginalized identities<br><br>6. Apply discretion when collecting personal information such as sex and gender (particularly for trans residents)<br><br>7. Provide opportunities for individuals to self-identify their gender<br><br>8. Be able to explain why collecting such information is necessary | legal name or gender is)<br><br>4. Update non-discrimination policies to include specific language around gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality.<br><br>5. Post non-discrimination policy so that it is visible to all residents | agencies to ensure cultural accuracies. | your programs and services. |

**Services for Women**

*Domestic Violence Shelters and Support Services*

        **Environmental Scan.** An environmental scan of domestic violence shelters for women revealed a variety of shelter services and programs throughout Canada. The most standardized services are emergency shelters for women and children, residential shelters for short-term stay, and transitional housing where women can stay and get assistance from staff while pursuing more permanent housing. Several shelters offer non-residential services, which are services for women who are escaping abuse but who do not wish to stay in shelters. These services lack shelters for families and men. The exception to this is the YWCA in Brandon which offers family emergency shelters where men are welcome to stay with their families. The Bloom in Vancouver also welcomes anyone to stay in their women's shelter who identifies as a woman.

        While services in women's shelters are not standardized, there are common practices among many shelters. All researched shelters appear to have a 24/7 crisis hotline, and the Calgary Women's Shelter offers crisis support in numerous languages. Another common service is a hidden emergency shelter location, meaning individuals seeking emergency shelter must call the shelter, and staff will give out the address if the individual fits the shelter's criteria. Counselling services appear to be another shared practice among shelters across Canada. The most common types are one-on-one counselling and group counselling. Demographic-specific counselling is available in some shelters. Common examples of this are counselling services specifically for children or teenagers. Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter offers a Child, Youth and Family program while the Bryony House (Halifax) has a Living in Freedom Everyday (L.I.F.E) program which helps women explore their dating habits so they can avoid the recurring cycle of violence in which women may find themselves. Furthermore, men's counselling is

harder to find, but is often offered as two categories of services: male counselling for abusive

men who want to take steps to overcome their abusive behaviours, and male counselling for

victimized men. These services are open to community members. There does not appear to be

counselling specific to transgender or nonbinary individuals.

**Table 3: Domestic Violence Shelters and Support Services for Women**
(Note—See appendix 1 for Shelter Contact Information)

| Location | Shelter | Description |
|---|---|---|
| **Local** | **YWCA**<br>Brandon, MB. | Offers an emergency shelter for men, women, and children; transitional housing; and non-residential services. |
| **Regional** | **Willow Place**<br>Winnipeg, MB. | Offers emergency shelters with a confidential location for women and children. Offers counselling services for abusive men wanting to overcome this behavior. |
| | **Nova House**<br>Selkirk, MB. | Offers residential and non-residential services for women and children escaping abuse. |
| | **Parkland Crisis Centre**<br>Dauphin, MB. | Offers and emergency shelter for women and children, and programs to help women safely re-enter the community. |
| | **Genesis House**<br>Winkler, MB. | Offers residential and non-residential services, and has services specific for abused elderly peoples. |
| | **Aurora House**<br>The Pas, MB. | Offers emergency shelter services where walk-ins are welcome. |
| **Provincial** | **Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter**<br>Calgary, AB. | Offers an emergency shelter for women and children, counselling services for men, and a range of counselling and community services intended to help abused women re-enter the community safely. |
| | **Nellie House**<br>Toronto, ON. | Offers an emergency shelter and transitional shelter for women and children, and many educational and counselling facilities for children. |
| | **Sofia House**<br>Regina, SK. | Offers an emergency shelter with long-term stay options for women and children, and programs that help women and children to become independent. |

| National | The Bloom<br>Vancouver, BC. | Offers an emergency shelter for women 19 years and older and their children, a housing service for people who require mental health support, and a housing center for end-of-life support. |
|---|---|---|
| | Byrony House<br>Halifax, NS. | Offers an emergency shelter for women and children and phone support intended to help women create a plan to escape abuse and find safety in a shelter. |

**Recommendations.** There is opportunity for shelters across Canada to standardize more domestic violence and shelter services for women. All shelters should have a 'hide your website' option, a 24-hour crisis line, easy-to-find contact information and instructions on how to get directions to a shelter with a hidden location, counselling services for a wide range of demographics (such as men, children, teenagers, trans people, women, people with mental health problems, etc.), and services that help women safely re-enter the community. In order for women to re-enter the community, however, we also need to increase education about domestic violence, so women who have lived in shelters are not viewed negatively upon reintegration. Additionally, it is essential for shelters to clearly establish who is welcome to stay at their shelters. For instance, shelters must state whether people who identify as women are welcome to stay at the women's shelter and whether there are age restrictions on who is welcome to stay. This information needs to be clearly stated and easily accessible so people fleeing abuse can quickly find a shelter that will accommodate them.

**Table 4: Domestic Violence Shelters and Support Services for Women—Recommended Actions**

| Level of Action | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **Collaboration** | **Organizational Policy Development** | **Education and Training** | **Space and Infrastructure Development** |
| **Domestic Violence Shelters and Support Services for Women** | 1. Shelters must clearly state who is welcome to stay in their shelters. This information must be easily accessible. | 1. Shelters across Canada should work to have standardized services. This includes the following examples:<br>a. A 'hide your website' option<br>b. A 24-hour crisis line,<br>c. Easy-to-find contact information and instructions on how to get directions to a shelter with a hidden location,<br>d. Counselling services for a wide range of demographics<br>e. Services that help women safety re-enter the community. | 1. Work needs to be done to de-stigmatize shelter living so women re-entering society are not stigmatized. | 1. Increase spaces that are easily accessible for men, transgender people, and non-binary individuals.<br><br>2. Women's shelters should be inclusive to women who identify as women.<br><br>3. More counselling spaces are needed for specific demographic groups. There are not currently spaces in women's shelters for transgender and nonbinary individuals to receive specialized support. |

*Reintegration Support for Women and Gender Marginalized Individuals (WGMI)*

**Findings.** Significant gaps in social reintegration programming, especially for women and gender-marginalized individuals (WGMI), exist throughout Canada (Griffiths, Dandurand, & Murdoch, 2007). While the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies is specialized in improving the social-health outcomes of marginalized, victimized, criminalized, and imprisoned women through community-based reintegration programming, only one society exists in Manitoba and is centralized in the urban setting of Winnipeg (Madden, 2009). Through a review of the literature, a variety of factors that support the reintegration of WGMI following incarceration were identified. Research exploring the perspectives of both service providers (Heckard, 2020; Perkins, 2020) and formerly incarcerated individuals (Dobmeier, 2021; Janssen, 2017; Kelsey, 2020) support pre-release contact as key to providing reintegrative support for WGMI. Pre-release contact reinforces continuity of care and supports women and gender-marginalized inmates to identify ongoing concerns while incarcerated. This approach supports the best chance for successful reintegration upon release. In addition, collaboration and multi-sectoral partnerships between key stakeholders help to form robust reintegration support networks (John Howard Society, 2016; United Nations, 2018). Effective post-release supports were identified by service providers and service recipients to include housing supports, employment and education, family and social supports, resources that include legal and material resources, food security, and public funded cash assistance programs (Heckard, 2020). Health support that includes trauma support groups, substance abuse treatment programs, HIV/STBBIs screening and treatment, and other chronic health challenges are critical services for WGMI reintegration (Heckard, 2020; Janssen, 2017). Gender-responsive programs that promote anti-stigma campaigns were also identified as key to reintegration support for WGMI (Boppre, 2019).

**Recommendations.** YWCA's interest in supporting the reintegration needs of WGMI in Southwestern Manitoba could draw from previous research that supports multi-sectoral gender- and intersectionally-responsive approaches following incarceration (Bopre, 2019; Griffiths, Dandurand, & Murdoch, 2007). This includes identifying other key service agencies who already support the reintegration needs of the formerly incarcerated (Elizabeth Fry Society, John Howard Society), networking with those agencies, and supporting the specifically layered needs of those individuals through anti-stigma efforts, maternal supports, and other person-centered approaches. In addition, developing an integrated approach to case management prior to release, and following incarceration, is recommended. Meeting with individuals at Brandon Correctional Centre, for example, could foster continuity needed for successful reintegration and reduced recidivism (DeBooy, 2020). Targeting barriers to care is recommended at the structural, community, and individual levels. Stigma is a pronounced issue for WGMI following incarceration; anti-stigma campaigns would support public awareness raising, increased receptivity from service recipients, and demonstrate allyship with hard-to-reach individuals.

**Table 5: Reintegration Support for WGMI – Recommended Actions**

| Level of Action | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **Collaboration** | **Organizational Policy Development** | **Education and Training** | **Space and Infrastructure Development** |
| **Reintegration Support for WGMI** | 1. Identify other key service agencies who support reintegration needs of the formerly incarcerated, network with those agencies, and support the layered needs of those individuals requiring support<br><br>2. Shared stakeholding between service providers and service recipients recommended for improved reintegration outcomes<br><br>3. Develop an integrated approach to case management prior to release, and following incarceration. | 1. Develop and publish organizational policies that reinforce gender-affirming programs, space, and language use<br><br>2. Implement organizational policies that protect confidential information of WGMI and their carceral experiences<br><br>3. Implement a leadership/advisory committee plan to oversee WGMI reintegration services | 1. Work in partnership with organizations like the John Howard Society of Brandon in developing training modules for staff regarding the complex nature of incarceration and reintegration<br><br>2. Hire WGMI staff for reintegration purposes | 1. Redefine, and cultivate, space to be used for WGMI individuals who have been incarcerated<br><br>2. Identify opportunities for creative outlets to share about "prison experience" |

**Services for Men**

*Male Domestic Violence Services*

      **Findings.** While independent services exist for both males who identify as heterosexual and for gay men, they are similarly plagued by prevailing sociocultural views that males tend to perpetrate violence against their partners. As a result, multiple levels of barriers to service accessibility exist for male victims of DV and lead to variable help-seeking behaviors and service reception results (Lysova & Dim, 2020; Lysova, Hanson, Dixon, Douglas, Hines, & Celi, 2020). Programs can be tailored to unique demographic variables such as heterosexual men (Entilli & Cipolletta, 2017), men with disabilities (Ballan, Freyer, & Powledge. (2017), African American Men (Campbell-Hawkins, 2019), Chinese Men (Simon & Wallace, 2018; Tsang, Chan, & Cheung, 2021), and men who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ (Freeland, Goldenberg, & Stephenson, 2018). How men conceptualize and frame their sense of victimization can be used to inform areas for programmatic development (Brooks, Martin, Broda, & Poudrier, 2020). While IPV is often feared by men since victimization is perceived as a "forbidden narrative," finding opportunities for disclosure and, "breaking the silence," were noted as key themes in supporting men who have experienced DV (Brooks, et al., 2020). As power and control are part of the IPV struggle, finding ways to empower survivors through initiatives/programs/services are needed. Subsequently, exploring victim narratives through talk therapy and advocating for male victim narratives through marketing programs may help to alleviate potential challenges surrounding male victimization.

**Recommendations.** Increasing community/service provider knowledge on challenging topics/topics of men, diversity, and IPV helps to address the disparity in training (Casas, 2017). "More community awareness," among gay and bisexual males is necessary for the development of resources and opportunities for support (Freeland, Goldenberg, & Stephenson, 2018). Adding IPV resources/information to already implemented prevention programs such as HIV and STBBI screening may support program "bridging" (Freeland et al., 2018). Staff with lived experience and trauma-informed approaches are central to care. Violence is often experienced as one among several adversities (De Puy, Abt, & Romain-Glassey, 2017) and therefore reinforces the importance of offering in-house/referral services that include counselling services such as individual and group counselling (Freeland, R., Goldenberg, T., & Stephenson, R. (2018), social services that support housing and housing re-entry programs (Klein, Chesworth, Howland-Myers, & Macy, 2021), health professionals that support significant health challenges such as mental health issues including PTSD and depression (Hines & Douglas, 2015; Berger, et al., 2016), as well as physical health issues (Hines & Douglas, 2015), legal support services (De Puy, Abt, & Romain-Glassey, 2017), and finally, services that provide opportunity for men to express their recovery needs. Organizations that adopt inclusive branding strategies including the use of inclusive language, diversity and neutrality represented in visual media, strategic community partnerships and outreach, online communication/social media platforms, and anti-stigma campaigns that promote community awareness are noted to be especially effective in reducing barriers to service access (Dewey, M., & Heiss, S. N. (2018)).

**Table 6: Male Domestic Violence Services – Recommended Actions**

| | Level of Action | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **Collaboration** | **Organizational Policy Development** | **Education and Training** | **Space and Infrastructure Development** |
| **Male Domestic Violence Services** | 1. Offer in-house/referral services that include counselling services, social services that support housing, health professionals that support significant health challenges, and other services such as legal aid | 1. Develop and publish organizational policies that support materials and resources that counteract prevailing social views of masculinity related to DV and IPV | 1. Enhance community/service provider knowledge on challenging topics/topics of men, diversity, and IPV helps to address the disparity in training<br><br>2. Adding IPV resources/information to already implemented prevention programs such as HIV and STBBI screening may support program "bridging"<br><br>3. Hire staff with lived experience | 1. Adopt inclusive branding strategies that use a variety of media and visual aids to reinforce male survivor narratives |

*Transitional Housing Supports for Men as Single Parent Fathers (MSPF)*

**Findings.** Within current literature on transitional housing supports for MSPFs, a major theme is the shift in traditional parenting roles. Many fathers described modern fathering to be a hybrid of economic and emotional support as opposed to purely economic support (Roche, Barker, & McArthur, 2018). This social belief that men must be 'breadwinners' is closely tied to notions of hegemonic masculinity aforementioned. Participants in Stokes, et al.'s research (2020) said that their self-esteem deteriorated by being a homeless father. Many men, however, believe that getting help is 'unmasculine' which leads to them turning down services—whether it be for mental health, housing, or fathering duties (Mykkänen, et al., 2017). Additionally, Mykkänen, et al. (2017) wrote that men are more likely to successfully change their lives if they are taken seriously by those around them. It is therefore, crucial to normalize men accepting help and to normalize the idea that men can be a good father despite housing and economic challenges.

When a MSPF feels pressure to be the 'breadwinner', he must try to become economically sufficient while also finding daycare or educational facilities for their children (de Vet, et al., 2019). This is also true for single mothers; however, the difference is that men, more strongly than women, feel that they are a failure as a parent if they cannot economically provide for their child (Pattnaik, 2013).  Other differences between homeless mothers and fathers is that women often have an easier time finding part time or flexible jobs than men, and it is often more difficult for males to find a shelter that will accommodate them (Pattnaik, et al.., 2013). When shelters are utilized, fathers expressed concern that shelters are not healthy places for children. Thus, children become more reliant on the father when living in shelters, which impedes a father's ability to find or keep a job (Hudson, 2017).  Subsequently, numerous challenges surrounding the ability of MSPF to simultaneously care for their children and retain employment

exist and include lack of transportation, lack of funds, unstable hosing, and other determinants often outside their immediate control (Johnson, et al., 1999).

  **Recommendations.** There is a need for increased education about the inequities between the role of a mother and father. It is evident that there is an unequal pressure for males to be the economic provider for the family. This pressure leads to increased stress for fathers, who feel as though they need to be able to provide for their children to be relevant in their children's lives. Some fathers who are homeless will refuse to see their children because they do not want their child to see them as 'useless'. There is also a need for services that will specifically appeal to the specific needs of fathers. Without the specific focus on fatherhood needs, males often think services target females and, therefore, cannot support male needs. Furthermore, there must be programs that allow single fathers to explore their own emotional and social issues. Fathers cannot merely focus on economic issues and on their children while neglecting their own well-being. There are numerous programs that broadly work to help homeless men find work; however, these programs are often not personalized enough. There need to be services that will not only help men find jobs, but that will help men find secure jobs that may lead to careers or find jobs that they are actually interested in. Another problem many single fathers face is that they can easily lose custody to the child's mother. If a father is responsible and treats the child right, then there should be policies that help fathers have rights to the child—even if the mother and father have never been married. In order to overcome some of these legal barriers, there need to be more services for family counselling so fathers who have overcome abusive behaviours and addictions can discuss coming back into the child's life with the mother in a safe, peaceful, and mediated environment. If successful, there need to be father and child counselling services that help the pair create a trusting bond.

**Table 7: Transitional Housing Supports for Men as Single Parent Fathers (MSPF) – Recommended Actions**

| | Level of Action | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **Collaboration** | **Organizational Policy Development** | **Education and Training** | **Space and Infrastructure Development** |
| **Transitional Housing Supports for Men as Single Parent Fathers (MSPF)** | 1. Create services that will specifically appeal to the needs of fathers. Without the specific focus on fatherhood needs, males often think services target females and, therefore, cannot support their needs.<br><br>2. The focus of many welfare father support programs is to help men find jobs so the men can pay their child support. More attention needs to be given to helping men create fulfilling lives for themselves.<br><br>3. Create services that will not only help men find jobs, but will help men secure jobs that lead to careers or find jobs they are actually interested in.<br><br>4. Increase services for family counselling so fathers who have | 1. Identify and eliminate policies that view fathers merely as breadwinners. If fathers offer emotional care to their children, their child support should be reduced. | 1. De-stigmatize traditional parenting roles<br>--Fathers are still typically seen as 'breadwinners', which puts unfair stress on the father to provide for the family economically.<br><br>2. As more women enter the workforce, fathers are expected to provide more emotional support for the child than in previous generations. This means that mother and father both need to offer a balance of emotional and economic support.<br><br>3. Help educate single fathers on their own emotional and social issues. Fathers cannot merely focus on economic issues and on their children while neglecting their own well-being. | 1. Create more blended shelters so families can stay together while seeking shelter. |

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| overcome abusive behaviours and addictions can discuss coming back into the child's life with the mother in a safe, peaceful, and mediated environment.<br><br>5. Create services that reconcile father and child relationships. | | | |

**Limitations**

Several limitations of this project were identified: First, the environmental scans of both women's shelters and housing supports for transgender individuals do not provide an exhaustive overview of shelters and services in Canada. Instead, these scans attempt to reveal what programs and strategies shelters throughout Canada use. Additionally, the information gathered on these shelters are based on the shelters' websites and therefore may not be up to date. More research needs to be done regarding the effectiveness of some of these services to better understand which services should be standardized across Canadian shelters. Second, project time and ethical constraints made it difficult to conduct more interviews with a broad range of community residents. Finally, literature reviews were conducted using as relevant and recent literature as research assistants could identify. Some limitations exist as demographic/topical applicability, at times, needed to be extrapolated. For example, because much of the research pertaining to trans people is from within the broader spectrum of 2SLGBTQ+ people information on transgender people had to be extrapolated. More research is needed that focuses on transgender people's experiences in service provision.

**Conclusion**

This report sought to provide an overview of findings from a series of environmental scans, literatures reviews, and semi-structured interviews that explore the topics of housing, reintegration, and victim support services for women, gender-marginalized individuals, and men. It also sought to articulate a series of recommendations that are well-adapted for a rural, Southwestern Manitoban context. While the application of these findings and recommendations is estimated to be more challenging in practice than theory, this report organized key findings

and recommendations in ways that can hopefully be taken up by administrators and staff of

YWCA for their ongoing and future strategic operations.

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**Appendices**
**Appendix 1: Organizations and Service Contact Information Identified through Environmental Scan**

| Environmental Scan Overview | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Organization** | **Location** | **Website** |
| **Women and Domestic Violence Shelters** | Aurora House | The Pas, MB | https://www.aurorahouse-sharethecare.com/ |
| | Bryony House | Halifax, NS | https://www.bryonyhouse.ca |
| | Calgary Women's Shelter | Calgary, AB | https://www.calgarywomensshelter.com/index.php |
| | Genesis House | Winkler, MB | https://genesishouseshelter.ca/ |
| | Nellie's | Toronto, ON | https://www.nellies.org/ |
| | Nova House | Selkirk, MB | https://www.novahouse.ca/ |
| | Parkland Crisis Center | Dauphin, MB | https://parklandcrisiscentre.ca/index.php |
| | Sofia House | Regina, SK | http://sofiahouse.ca/ |
| | The Bloom | Vancouver, BC | https://www.thebloomgroup.org/our-work/women-children/ |
| | Willow Place | Winnipeg, MB | https://willowplaceshelter.ca/ |
| | YWCA | Brandon, MB | https://www.ywcabrandon.ca/ |
| **Topic** | **Organization** | **Location** | **Website** |
| **Transgender Shelter Options and Housing Supports (See Table 2 for program details)** | Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre | Winnipeg, MB | https://www.mamawi.com |
| | Salvation Army Booth Centre* | Winnipeg, MB | https://www.wpgboothcentre.ca |
| | Sunshine House | Winnipeg, MB | https://www.sunshinehousewpg.org |
| | West Central Women's Resource Centre | Winnipeg, MB | https://www.wcwrc.ca |
| | OUTSaskatoon (Pride Home) | Saskatoon, SK | https://www.outsaskatoon.ca/pridehome |
| | Trellis Society (Aura Host Homes) | Calgary, AB | https://www.growwithtrellis.ca/youth-programs/housing-shelters/aura |

| | RainCity Housing | Vancouver, BC | https://www.raincityhousing.org/social-impact/innovations/#LGBTQ2S-housing-scroll |
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| | Friends of Ruby | Toronto, ON | https://www.friendsofruby.ca/transitional-housing |
| | The 519 | Toronto, ON | https://www.the519.org/programs |
| | YMCA Sprott House | Toronto, ON | https://www.ymcagta.org/youth-programs/youth-housing |

**Appendix 2: Overview of Key Findings**

| Key Findings | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **Identified Strengths/Facilitators to Care** | **Identified Concerns/Barriers to Care** | **Other** |
| **Environmental Scan: Women and Domestic Violence Shelters** | 1. Shelters offer a wide range of services including:<br>  a. Emergency shelters<br><br>  b. Residential shelters (for short term stays)<br><br>  c. Non-residential options (for using programs without staying in the shelter)<br><br>  d. Transitional Housing (housing for women to stay at while looking for a permanent home)<br><br>2. Shelters may offer diverse counselling programs including:<br>  a. One-on-one counselling<br><br>  b. Group counselling | 1. Need for collaboration with Education systems for youth and teens who are unable attend school regularly because they are staying at shelters.<br><br>2. Need for services that prioritize localized groups, such as elders, trans people, and families.<br><br>3. Need for services or referral networks that support women through legal matters.<br><br>4. Opportunities to expand counselling services that are more specific to individuals needs.<br><br>5. Opportunities to increase education on systemic issues and patterns, so women can avoid them in the future. | |

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| | c. Youth counselling<br><br>d. Family Counselling<br><br>3. All shelters offered a 24/7 crisis hotline<br><br>4. Most shelter websites had a 'hide your browser' button, which immediately took users to a different webpage, so women could look at shelters without the fear of being caught. | | |
| **Transgender Individuals: Housing Support** | 1. Training staff to be knowledgeable about transgender issues, pronoun/name usage<br><br>2. Hiring staff who represent the identities of their clients<br><br>3. Marketing and branding strategies that include stickers or posters that can be used to quickly identify the space as trans-safe<br><br>4. Non-segregated housing based on gender/sex<br><br>5. Supporting trans individuals for autonomous housing and shelter decisions<br><br>6. Establish sense of community so that | 1. 2SLGBTQ+ people, and trans persons specifically, are overrepresented amongst homeless youth while also underrepresented in care<br><br>2. Trans people will often engage in risky behaviours to avoid shelters which are perceived to be unsafe<br><br>3. Trans people may feel excluded by faith-based organizations and those who segregate by gender<br><br>4. Trans people may experience added stigma in attempting to access services | |

| | trans people can better explore their identity and be referred to gender affirming forms of care | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **WGMI: Reintegration Support** | 1. Multi-agency collaboration key to supportive networks<br><br>2. Pre-release and post-release contact (i.e. case management) are key to successful reintegration outcomes | 1. Few social reintegration services exist for WGMI who have been formerly incarcerated<br><br>2. Trans, and other marginalized identities, may face further stigma and exacerbated barriers in accessing services following incarceration | |
| **Male Domestic Violence Services** | 1. Programs can be developed for unique male demographic variables<br><br>2. Finding ways to empower men is central to providing male DV victim services<br><br>3. Exploring victim narratives through talk therapy deemed valuable | 1. Socially-reinforced masculine views tend to perpetuate notion of male perpetrators of violence against their partners.<br><br>2. Significant social barriers exist to accessing care for male victims of DV | |
| **Transitional Housing Supports for Men as Single Parent Fathers (MSPF)** | 1. Fathers' primary duty has shifted from being purely economic to being a blend of economic and emotional support.<br><br>2. When men have emotional support, they often make | 1. Society still views fathers as 'breadwinners' despite the fact that they offer more emotional support to their children then they have in past generations, and despite the fact that it is extremely | 1. The amount of single fathers is underestimated in literature. |

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| | beneficial changes to the lifestyle<br><br>3. Men often understand fatherhood as a personal experience, meaning that there is no single way to be a good parent.<br><br>4. Fathers who partake in programs that help them find a job often find the programs helpful and fulfilling. | common for women to work and support their family.<br><br>2. Many fathers believe that they cannot possibly be a good father if they do not have money for their children.<br><br>3. Men may be reluctant to seek shelter services because they have had bad experiences with social services in the past, because it is 'unmasculine' for men to seek help, and because it is an unhealthy environment for their children.<br><br>4. Women often receive more welfare money than men.<br><br>5. It is extremely difficult for men to find work and care for a child because of complications related to transportation, attire, money, and time. | |

**Table 3: Recommendations for Action**

| Level of Action | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **Collaboration** | **Organizational Policy Development** | **Education and Training** | **Space and Infrastructure Development** |
| **Transgender Individuals: Housing Support** | 1. Create specialized services and supports for LGBTQ2S people<br><br>2. Involve trans people throughout the process of the development of any form of trans housing<br><br>3. Provide opportunities for trans clients to share the experience and knowledge that they have acquired to inform programming and policy<br><br>4. Consider the needs of trans | 1. Develop shelter policy on accommodating trans people based on the individual's choice, not on the staff or management's perception of their gender identity<br><br>2. Ensure that they allow residents to self-select the shelter or room where they feel safest or aligns best with their gender identity<br><br>3. Develop a policy for all staff to use preferred names and pronouns (regardless of what one's legal name is or what gendered section someone is in) | 1. Ensure sensitivity/equity training is mandatory for all staff to complete<br><br>2. Hire transgender staff. Don't use them as a token, representation is very important in making trans clients feel safe and represented<br><br>3. Work in partnership with organizations like the SERC in developing training modules for staff<br><br>4. Ensure training modules include a separate section on Indigenous LGBTQ2S+ issues, including two-spirit people and work with local Indigenous agencies to ensure cultural accuracies. | 1. Universalize washrooms so that they can be used by anyone.<br><br>2. Provide private shower options, if there is no way to make that happen then set up a system where people can use group showers privately with a locking door<br><br>3. Display visible LGBTQ2S signs (e.g., rainbow sticker on door, posters/signs) throughout the shelter and include LGBTQ2S specific language in advertisements, |

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| | people with intersecting marginalized identities (e.g. <br><br>5. Apply discretion when collecting personal information such as sex and gender (particularly for trans residents) <br><br>6. Provide opportunities for individuals to self-identify their gender <br><br>7. Be able to explain why collecting such information is necessary | 4. Update non-discrimination policies to include specific language around gender identity, gender expression, and sexuality. <br><br>5. Post non-discrimination policy so that it is visible to all residents | | pamphlets, or other materials that describe your programs and services. |
| **Women and Domestic Violence Shelters** | 1. Shelters must clearly state who is welcome to stay in their shelters. This information must be easily accessible. | 1. Shelters across Canada should work to have standardized services. This includes the following items: <br>   a. A 'hide your website' option <br><br>   b. A 24-hour crisis line, easy-to-find contact information and | 1. Work need to be done to de-stigmatize shelter living so women re-entering society are not stigmatized. | 1. Need to create spaces that are easily accessible for men, transgender people, and non-binary individuals. <br><br>2. Women's shelters should be inclusive to women who identify as women. <br><br>3. More counselling spaces |

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| | | instructions on how to get directions to a shelter with a hidden location,<br><br>c. Counselling services for a wide range of demographics (such as men, children, teenagers, trans people, women, people with mental health problems, etc.),<br><br>d. Services that help women safety re-enter the community. | | are needed for specific demographic groups. There are not currently spaces in women's shelters for transgender and nonbinary individuals to receive specialized support. |
| **WGMI: Reintegration Support** | 1. Identify other key service agencies who support reintegration needs of the formerly incarcerated, network with those agencies, and support the layered needs of those individuals requiring support<br><br>2. Shared stakeholding between service | 1. Develop and publish organizational policies that reinforce gender-affirming programs, space, and language use | 1. Work in partnership with organizations like the John Howard Society of Brandon in developing training modules for staff regarding the complex nature of incarceration and reintegration<br><br>2. Hire WGMI staff for reintegration purposes | 1. Redefine, and cultivate, space to be used for WGMI individuals who have been incarcerated<br><br>2. Identify opportunities for creative outlets to share about "prison experience" |

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| | providers and service recipients recommended for improved reintegration outcomes<br><br>3. Develop an integrated approach to case management prior to release, and following incarceration. | | | |
| **Domestic Violence and Housing Services for Men** | 1. Offer in-house/referral services that include counselling services, social services that support housing, health professionals that support significant health challenges, and other services such as legal aid | 1. Develop and publish organizational policies that support materials and resources that counteract hegemonic masculine views related to DV and IPV | 1. Enhance community/service provider knowledge on challenging topics/topics of men, diversity, and IPV helps to address the disparity in training<br><br>2. Adding IPV resources/information to already implemented prevention programs such as HIV and STBBI screening may support program "bridging"<br><br>3. Hire staff with lived experience | 1. Adopt inclusive branding strategies that use a variety of media and visual aids to reinforce male survivor narratives |

| **Transitional Housing Supports for Men as Single Parent Fathers (MSPF)** | 1. Create services that will specifically appeal to the needs of fathers. Without the specific focus on fatherhood needs, males often think services target females and, therefore, cannot support their needs.<br><br>2. The focus of many welfare father support programs is to help men find jobs so the men can pay their child support. More attention needs to be given to helping men create fulfilling lives for themselves.<br><br>3. Create services that will not only help men find jobs, but will help men secure jobs that lead to careers or find jobs they are | 1. Eliminate stigmas in policies that view fathers merely as breadwinners. If fathers offer emotional care to their children, their child support should be reduced. | 1. De-stigmatize traditional parenting roles --Fathers are still typically seen as 'breadwinners', which puts unfair stress on the father to provide for the family economically.<br><br>2. As more women enter the workforce, fathers are expected to provide more emotional support for the child than in previous generations. This means that mother and father both need to offer a balance of emotional and economic support.<br><br>2. Help educate single fathers on their own emotional and social issues. Fathers cannot merely focus on economic issues and on their children while neglecting their own well-being. | 1. Create more blended shelters so families can stay together while seeking shelter. |
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| | actually interested in.<br><br>4. Increase services for family counselling so fathers who have overcome abusive behaviours and addictions can discuss coming back into the child's life with the mother in a safe, peaceful, and mediated environment.<br><br>5. Create services that reconcile father and child relationships. | | | |

**List 1: Recommended Readings**

**Transgender Individuals**

Abramovich, A., & Kimura, L. (2021). Outcomes for Youth Living in Canada's First LGBTQ2S Transitional Housing Program. Journal of Homosexuality, 68(8), 1242–1259. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1696102

Hixson-Vulpe, J. (n.d.). Creating Authentic Spaces: A gender identity and gender expression toolkit to support the implementation of institutional and social change.pdf. The 519.

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Trans Manitoba & Manitoba Centre for Health Policy. (2021, July 26). Data Collection Critiques. Google Docs.

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**Women**

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Dobmeier, R. A., Korni, S. K., Brown-Smythe, C., Outland, R. L., Williams-McGahee, P. L.,
Anna, N., & White, J. (2021). Reentry as experienced by women in jail: Advocating for
change. *Adultspan Journal, 20*(1), 29-46. **https://doi.org/10.1002/adsp.12104**

Janssen, P. A., Korchinski, M., Desmarais, S. L., Albert, A. Y. K., Condello, L.-L., Buchanan,
M., … Martin, R. E. (2017). Factors that support successful transition to the community
among women leaving prison in British Columbia: a prospective cohort study using
participatory action research. *CMAJ Open*, *5*(3), E717–E723.
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Perkins, D. (2020). *Gender-Specific Services for Women Released from Prison: An Appreciative
Inquiry. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*. Capella University. Retrieved from
https://search.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/gender-specific-services-women-
released-prison/docview/2393743578/se-2?accountid=41849

**Men**

Brooks, C., Martin, S., Broda, L., & Poudrier, J. (2020). "How Many Silences Are There?"
Men's Experience of Victimization in Intimate Partner Relationships. *Journal of
Interpersonal Violence, 35*(23-24), 5390 – 5413.

Johnson, E. S., Levine, A., & Doolittle, F. C. (1999). Fathers' fair share: Helping poor men
manage child support and fatherhood. *Russell Sage Foundation.*

Lysova, A., Hanson, K., Dixon, L., Douglas, E. M., Hines, D. A., & Celi, E. M. (2020). Internal
and External Barriers to Help Seeking: Voices of Men Who Experienced Abuse in the
Intimate Relationships. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative
Criminology*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X20919710

Stokes, M. N., Cryer-Coupet, Q. R., & Tall, K. G. (2020). "You get more training to drive a
car": Examining the parenting experiences and service needs of nonresident fathers who
are experiencing homelessness. *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*, 21(4), 558-569.
https://doi-org.berlioz.brandon.ca/10.1037/men0000255.