Investing in Saving Lives: Designing Second-Stage Women's Shelters on First Nation Reserves

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ABSTRACT

Most Indigenous women in Canada (61%) experience intimate partner violence (IPV), which is significantly worse than the high rate of 44 percent for other women in Canada. Despite the great risk for IPV, only three unfunded second-stage shelters for more than 600 First Nation reserves exist in Canada to provide First Nation women and their children a safe home. Second-stage housing offers IPV survivors transitional homes for an extended period that provide safety and renewal after their initial emergency shelter stays. This article documents the need for safe, nurturing, and culturally appropriate second-stage shelters for Indigenous women and their families to heal and rebuild. The authors provide two second-stage prototype designs based on domestic environmental analysis and concepts of houselessness, home, and co-housing. We discuss how these designs are one step in an action plan to protect Indigenous women and stop the genocide of Indigenous Peoples by supporting cultural, economic, health, and social development. The literature review and design concepts form an agenda to have design goals for housing IPV survivors that answers the "Calls to Justice for Murdered and Missing Women" and expands this needed service to every reserve.

RÉSUMÉ

La plupart des femmes autochtones au Canada (61%) ont subi de la violence conjugale, avec un pourcentage bien plus élevé que le taux de 44% parmi les autres femmes au Canada. Cependant, malgré ce grand risque de violence conjugale, il n'existe dans le pays, pour plus de 600 réserves des Premières Nations, que trois abris de deuxième étape non subventionnés qui peuvent servir de refuges sûrs pour les femmes autochtones et leurs enfants. Pourtant, l'hébergement de deuxième étape offre aux survivantes de violence conjugale des foyers de transition pour des périodes durables qui leur donnent sécurité et renouveau à la suite d'un séjour initial dans un abri d'urgence. Cet article souligne la nécessité de fonder plus d'abris de deuxième étape qui soient sécuritaires, accueillants et conformes à la culture autochtone pour permettre aux femmes autochtones et leurs enfants de guérir et se rétablir. À ce titre, les auteures présentent deux prototypes de foyers de deuxième étape basés sur une analyse de l'environnement domestique et les concepts de sans-abrisme, de chez soi, et de cohabitat. Elles montrent comment ces prototypes peuvent

être un pas important dans un plan d'action pour protéger les femmes autochtones et arrêter le génocide des autochtones en général. Ce plan consisterait à mieux appuyer le développement culturel, économique et social de ces femmes ainsi que leur santé. L'analyse documentaire des auteures et leurs prototypes forment un programme d'action comportant des objectifs pour mieux héberger chaque survivante de violence conjugale qui répondraient aux « demandes de justice pour les femmes autochtones disparues et assassinées » et étendraient ce service indispensable à toutes les réserves.

Keywords / Mots clés : second-stage housing design, intimate partner violence, interior design, First Nations, Indigenous women / conception de maisons d'hébergement de deuxième étape, violence conjugale, design d'intérieur, Premières Nations, femmes autochtones

INTRODUCTION

Colonialism in Canada contributes to the higher risk of intimate partner violence (IPV) and other types of violence against Indigenous women compared with other women in Canada (Burczycka, 2017; Brownridge, Taillieu, Afifi, Chan, Emery, Lavoie, & Elgar, 2017). Indigenous women in Canada are seven times more likely than non-Indigenous women to be a victim of IPV and murder and are much more likely to experience sexual violence (NWAC, 2021; Statistics Canada, 2021). The targeting of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women, girls, and two-spirit people must be recognized as a "race-based genocide" (NWAC, 2021, p. 6) and is influenced by many aspects of colonization. Colonialism and its roles in enacting violence with the Indian Act, the Sixties Scoop, residential and day schools, and further "breaches of human and Inuit, Métis and First Nations rights" (NWAC, 2021, p. 6) lead directly to the current increased rates of violence, death, and suicide in Indigenous populations (NWAC, 2021). A vital paradigm shift is required to dismantle colonialism within Canadian society, at all levels of government, and within public institutions responsible for perpetuating the violence (NWAC, 2021).

Intimate partner violence is inflicted upon women in both anticipated and invisible ways. Most violence against women is IPV, defined as violence by current or former spouses or dating partners. Physical violence is only part of IPV, which encompasses sexual, physical, financial, spiritual, and psychological damaging acts and behaviours (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2021). Intimate partner violence affects families, and children who witness this violence are recognized in Canada as primary victims. Children exposed to family violence can also carry on the cycle of IPV if it becomes normalized in their family life.

The IPV rate for Indigenous women in Canada is alarming: 61 percent of Indigenous women and girls over the age of 15 have experienced IPV, compared with 44 percent of other women and girls in Canada (Women and Gender Equality Canada, 2021; Heidinger, 2021). Regarding financial violence, 16 percent of Indigenous women (versus 6 percent of non-Indigenous women) have had their partners take money or possessions by force, and 13 percent of Indigenous women (versus 3 percent of non-Indigenous women) were denied access to a job, money, or economic assets by their

partner. In addition, children who witness IPV have twice the rate of psychiatric disorders as children from IPV-free homes (Bender, 2004). The cost to Canadian society from IPV was estimated to be $7.4 billion in 2009 (Department of Justice, 2017). Despite the need for redressing IPV, Canada's police/criminal justice system has not sought the input of Indigenous Peoples (NIMMIWG, 2019; Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada & Comack, 2020).

Safety is a human right enshrined in international treaties and conventions, including the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Even so, violence against women (VAW), especially in remote, northern First Nation communities, is a longstanding public health crisis that has affected overwhelming numbers of Indigenous women (Bonnycastle, Nixon, Bonnycastle, Hughes, & Groening, 2021; Maki, 2019). Violence against women also increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated factors, such as the economic downturns observed in the last two years (Ouedraogo & Stenzel, 2021).

Despite Indigenous women being significantly more likely to experience violence than non-Indigenous women, few or no shelters are available on First Nation reserves (Klingspohn, 2018; Ponic, Varcoe, Davies, Ford Gilboe, Wuest, Hammerton, 2012; Heidinger, 2021). The availability of second-stage housing on First Nation reserves is almost non-existent, let alone psychologically and physically acceptable second-stage housing; this inadequacy has amplified IPV cases. Often, from a lack of victim services and safe housing, women have no option but to return to or remain trapped with abusive partners (Tutty, Ogden Giurgiu, Weaver-Dunlop, Damant, Thurston, et al., 2009; Woodhall-Melnik, Hamilton-Wright, Daoud, Matheson, Dunn, & O'Campo, 2017; United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2019). Women also tend to decline substandard living options in second-stage housing for the sake of themselves and their children, which continues the cycle of violence.

This article seeks to develop designs for culturally appropriate second-stage housing as discussed in the method. Designing places of residence that validate women who leave abusive households is one of the strongest ways to combat the IPV/VAW epidemic for Indigenous communities. The method is followed by a domestic environmental analysis and concepts of houselessness, home, and co-housing, and finally the schematic concepts for the prototypes. This article then discusses the potential of these prototypes to normalize designs for second-stage housing in every reserve community to provide safe, culturally appropriate homes that empower and heal.

METHODOLOGY

This article provides two second-stage prototype designs based on domestic environmental analysis and concepts of houselessness, home, and co-housing. An investigation of relevant literature, input from Indigenous and non-Indigenous practitioners, and tours of two existing on-reserve shelters led to the design of a one-story and a two-story second-stage prototype.

Literature was consulted regarding themes of second-stage housing (NIMMIWG, 2019; Maki, 2020; Groening, Bonnycastle, Bonnycastle, Nixon, & Hughes, 2019; Hoffart, 2014). Themes of second-stage housing explored included how Indigenous women perceive home (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017), and IPV survivors (Bonnycastle, Simpkins, & Siddle, 2016; Christensen, 2018; Thistle & Smylie, 2020; Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021). These themes were incorporated into the design

of the shelter prototypes in hope of improving the healing and empowering effect of second-stage housing for cultural, economic, health, and social development.

Overview of second-stage housing

Second-stage housing is crucial for women who survive IPV. These shelters provide women and their children with long-term security and safety (Maki, 2020; Fotheringham, Walsh, & Burrowes, 2014; Bonnycastle et al., 2021). Women 's Shelters Canada (WSC) defines a second-stage shelter as transitional housing for IPV survivors at risk of post-separation danger and needing additional time and support to heal from trauma (Maki, 2020). A woman ideally can move into a second-stage unit from an emergency VAW shelter; however, waitlists are often lengthy.

Second-stage is a longer-term residency and focuses on developing independence, healing, establishing goals, building community, networking, and participating in in-house programming (Hoffart, 2014; Maki, 2020). Although second-stage housing enormously facilitates women's success in leading the lives they desire, little attention is paid to their vitally important role in aiding women and children in addressing the devastation of IPV. The typical six- to 24-month stay in second-stage housing is crucial to the process of healing from trauma. Second-stage housing fosters women's independence and hope and aids in effectively transitioning back into a means of living well (Tutty et al., 2009).

Current research on second-stage shelters recommends that further improvement and research be conducted to make transitional housing accessible for all women regardless of location. In 2018, the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women held hearings to assess the state of services in women's emergency shelters and transitional housing for women and children. These hearings were to "ensure that women and children living in urban, rural and remote communities experiencing violence, including Indigenous women, have access to comparable levels of services in shelters and transition houses across Canada that meet their specific needs" (Vecchio, 2019).

Women and children affected by violence in Indigenous communities frequently have no safe spaces or shelters (Vecchio, 2019). Existing on-reserve shelters are rare. In the three instances that they occur, they are severely underfunded, operate above capacity, and are associated with stigma for the women who access them.

Insufficient housing and programming lead to women and children returning to dangerous and abusive environments (Holtrop, McNeil, & McWey, 2015; Vecchio, 2019). In Nunangat, the homelands of the Inuit in the Northern Territories of Canada, 70 percent of the 52 Inuit communities in these territories do not have a safe shelter for women and children, leaving them at high risk (Vecchio, 2019). Indigenous women suffering from violence lack necessary services. Without these services, Indigenous women and their families are at high risk. The need for a safe space, beds, funding, and safety is unmet without adequately funded secondary shelters for Indigenous women in remote and northern communities. Therefore, improving the quantity and quality of second-stage shelters and locating them on reserves is crucial for reducing these gaps (Vecchio, 2019).

Indigenous women affected by violence living in First Nations communities have few options and many barriers to their safety (Groening et al., 2019; Christensen, 2018; NCCAH, 2009). First Nation reserves are typically in rural and remote communities, which experience higher rates of violence than urban communities (Moffitt, Aujla, Giesbrecht, Grant, & Straatman, 2020; Groening et al., 2019;

Peek-Asa, 2010). Although 634 First Nation communities exist in Canada, representing more than 50 Nations and 50 Indigenous languages, only three First Nation reserves have second-stage shelters and only one in Inuit territories, with Nunavut lacking any second-stage housing (Maki, 2020). Many Nations are also isolated and require special access.

Women in First Nation communities are not able to escape their violent situations without second-stage housing due to the lack of formal and culturally relevant support services, unavailable and unaffordable transportation, isolation, gender inequality, lack of victim services, and lack of aware-ness of violence on survivors and their children (NCCAH, 2009; Groening et al., 2019). Women in rural First Nation communities are underserviced and without public transit or adequate housing (Christensen, 2018; Maki, 2020). Issues are especially pronounced on First Nation reserves due to the housing shortage, resulting in women returning to abusive partners, not having anywhere else to go, or seeking temporary safe spaces (Ponic et al., 2012).

Canada's colonial systems have exploited violence against Indigenous Peoples through control, co-ercion, and oppression, perpetuating violence including IPV against Indigenous women (OCRCC, 2021). Violence against women and the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) epidemic in Canada can be attributed to poverty, racism, and systemic police failures en-abled by the colonial history of Canada (Kubik & Bourassa, 2016; Amnesty International, 2009).

A survivor of IPV has likely suffered from houselessness, generational trauma, sexual and physical violence, trafficking, anti-2SLGBTQQIA[1] sentiment, or violence from the child welfare system against themselves or their children (NIMMIWG, 2019). Additionally, colonialism allows for sub-standard police protection and the investigation of cases involving Indigenous women (OCRCC, 2021; Heidinger, 2022; NIMMIWG, 2019).

Specific to second-stage housing, persisting issues of unceded land and land claims make attaining capital incredibly difficult. This can severely complicate delivering safe spaces on reserve for those fighting IPV (OCRCC, 2021). Colonization and white supremacy have gatekept the right to a wel-coming, domestic environment, forcing the bare minimum of shelter, when available, onto the un-housed and those requiring asylum.

Child welfare is also a product of colonization. Child apprehension, from the origin of the residential school system to now, has caused irreparable harm to Indigenous Peoples (Heidinger, 2022). First Nations women and girls are six times more likely to have ever been the government's legal re-sponsibility and are disproportionately placed in the child welfare system (OCRCC, 2021; Heidinger, 2022). Indigenous children are twelve times more likely to be placed in child welfare than non-Indigenous children (NIMMIWG, 2019). White supremacy and colonization are entrenched in the Canadian child welfare system, yet it is the primary contingency on which the responsibility of chil-dren involved in situations of IPV falls. The state of the child welfare system leads to high levels of child suicide, deprivation of culture and identity, broken connections with family and community, and compromised security (NIMMIWG, 2019). In an already volatile IPV situation, apprehending children from their mothers furthers the violent acts committed against them.

Benefits of on-reserve second-stage housing
Permanent supportive housing, including second-stage shelter programs, increase the likelihood of

women and their families finding various forms of stability after escaping IPV. (Aubry, Bloch, Brcic, Saad, Magwood, Abdalla, Alkhateeb, Xie, Mathew, Hannigan, Costello, Thavorn, Stergiopoulos, Tugwell, & Pottie, 2020; Hoffart, 2014; BC Housing, 2021). Short-term living options, such as emergency or first-stage shelters, have limited capacity to aid survivors of IPV in stable living (Hoffart, 2014). Women need more time to heal from trauma, which second-stage supportive housing provides (Tutty et al., 2009; Hoffart, 2014).

Structured living, an improved sense of safety, food security, and community formed in supportive co-living are all benefits of women's transitional housing (Aubry et al., 2020, Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017). Second-stage programs support women and children leaving IPV to heal and become self-sufficient by fostering independent-living skills (Fotheringham et al., 2014; Holtrop et al., 2015; Hoffart, 2014). Work skill development serves to provide survivors with employment opportunities through a post-second-stage program.

One of the most underrated benefits of transitional housing is that these programs allow women survivors of IPV to parent and be close to their children independent of their spouses (Moffitt et al., 2021; Holtrop et al., 2015). Often women make the deliberate decision to enter second-stage programs, providing a comfortable home for their family as an alternative to homelessness or returning to their abuser (Holtrop et al., 2015). Parenting represents hope and positivity for most survivors of IPV when parenting skills programs support the family in second-stage housing. Ensuring adequate spaces in a second-stage shelter for all the women with children prevents family violence and family separation.

Women who find support from second-stage programs are less likely to return to abusive partners or households (Hoffart, 2014; BC Housing, 2021). The return rate of women to abusive situations lessens the longer their stay in a second-stage shelter (Fotheringham et al., 2014; BC Housing, 2021). Hoffart (2014) explains that graduates of second-stage housing often move away from the program's location either to a new location or back to a home community. Indigenous Peoples' roots in communities call for on-reserve second-stage programs.

Similar to second-stage shelters, the Native Women's Association of Canada cites resiliency (or healing) lodges to facilitate the path to healing for women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals (NWAC, 2021). These lodges offer healing services, educational and economic opportunities, and traditional food, medicine, and ceremony to help Indigenous women escape and prevent further violence (NWAC, 2021). Resiliency lodges are to facilitate culture and language programs, mental health and holistic healing, mother and children workshops, support for arts, and and legal services (NWAC, 2022).

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019) included Calls for Justice in its final report demanding that all governments support long-term sustainable funding for Indigenous-led low barrier shelters. These spaces, including second-stage housing, will accommodate Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people fleeing violence or experiencing poverty or houselessness (Call 4.7). This Call also states that these instances of transitional housing should be located wherever Indigenous women reside, which includes reserves, and should be appropriate to cultural needs (NIMMIWG, 2019).

Co-housing and community

Co-housing, or co-living, refers to self-managed collective housing that incorporates private and communal spaces (Karadima & Bofylatos, 2019; Ruiu, 2016). Co-housing has been studied for its potential to improve wellbeing among socially vulnerable people, build community, and mitigate loneliness (Carrere, Reyes, Oliveras, Fernandez, Peralta, Novoa, Pérez, & Borrell, 2020; Karadima & Bofylatos, 2019). Co-housing varies from individual versus shared use, which directs how users interact with space, and the interactivity between residents. Transitional housing is recharacterized as cohousing to remove the stigma of women's shelters as homelessness. "Co-housing" implies a permanent living situation or home rather than a temporary place. For survivors of IPV, co-housing provides a balance of autonomy and collective social identity fostering healing, community, and prosperity (Karadima & Bofylatos, 2019; Bonnycastle et al., 2021; Fotheringham et al., 2014; Holtrop et al., 2014).

The social capital benefits of co-housing align with second-stage housing: feelings of belonging, reciprocity, and communal values (Ruiu, 2016). Being housed with others in a similar context contributes to possibilities like parental assistance, group counselling, healing gatherings, and the peace of mind that others sharing your space have comparable objectives (Holtrop et al., 2015; MacTavish, Marceau, Optis, Shaw, Stephenson, & Wild, 2012). Other benefits include feelings of acceptance and peer support (Fotheringham et al., 2014).

Houselessness versus homelessness

Indigenous houselessness differs from the Western definition of homelessness, being the physical representation of a disconnect with self, family, language, land, water, and community (Thistle & Smylie, 2020). Also, the definition of Indigenous homelessness differs from settler homelessness (Thistle, 2017). Indigenous communities have historically become homeless after being displaced from pre-colonial Indigenous lands by settler and government violence and policy (Thistle, 2017). However, we use the term "houseless," because although Canada's genocidal policies undermined education, housing, and land use, land in Canada remains Native homeland, despite the Indian Act's land trust (Blacksmith, Thompson, Hill, Thapa, & Stormhunter, 2021).

Native People have been in Canada for many thousands of years and their culture is deeply embedded in the land. Native homeland remains Indigenous land but requires adequate housing, including emergency, second-stage, social, and private housing, as well as decolonizing policies to stop the genocide. To acknowledge this land remains the Native homeland of Indigenous people, we use the term "houselessness" instead of homelessness, which includes 1) visible, 2) hidden homelessness, or 3) relative houselessness. Visible, official, or absolute houselessness refers to the common idea of humans residing in generally unfit places, such as the street or emergency shelters (Echenberg & Munn-Rivard, 2020; Klodawsky, 2006).

In contrast, hidden houselessness accounts for provisionally accommodated people without ownership or renting a permanent home (Groening et al., 2019; Echenberg & Munn-Rivard, 2020). Relative homelessness refers to individuals or families at risk of losing their homes or living in a shelter that does not meet basic needs (Echenberg & Munn-Rivard, 2020). Though absolute houselessness has the most visibility, most individuals who have either cyclically or chronically been classified as houseless are more likely in the hidden or relative category. Since hidden and relative houselessness is

less visible, those affected are almost impossible to quantify, making the actual houselessness epidemic far worse than recorded (Groening et al., 2019; Echenberg & Munn-Rivard, 2020).

Hidden and relative houselessness includes users of women's emergency shelters and temporary housing (Groening et al., 2019). Due to the lack of dedicated transitional housing and support for permanent housing, women tend to choose informal support to stay housed, such as a friend, family member, or new partner's home (Maki, 2020; Echenberg & Munn-Rivard, 2020). Indigenous houselessness is part of a bigger "disbelonging," which describes the collective experience of being without shelter and being rejected from environments to which Indigenous people are rightly entitled (Christensen, 2018).

Hidden houselessness also refers to the idea that a woman can occupy what is conventionally considered a permanent house or residence without safety. Housing can be a site of danger and abuse, compromising the human right to safe shelter (Ponic et al., 2012; Groening et al., 2019). Houselessness in remote areas, including First Nation reserves, is also more inclined to be characteristic of invisible displacement, resulting in even less attention to its solution.

Hidden houselessness can create a false sense of safety after leaving an abusive partner. However, connections still exist that can lead to a return to danger and insecurity (Ponic et al., 2012). Leaving typically does not end the abusive relationship. Leaving and removing oneself and one's children from an abuser is a process rather than an event.

A temporary shelter does not solve houselessness without leading to a safe, stable home. Overcrowded houselessness is often seen in temporary housing and is unhealthy and unsafe. A lack of safe transitional housing with sufficient space contributes to visible, actual houselessness when users cannot justify staying in discomfort (Thistle, 2017; Mashford-Pringle, Skura, Stutz, & Yohathasan, 2021). Considering that second-stage housing users fall into an invisible category of houselessness, a fundamental step for IPV survivors is to move to a permanent, safe house that feels like home. This realization can achieve newfound independence. The development and programming of second-stage shelters offer hope for a future of stability and a safety net. However, what provides a sense of "home" for IPV in Indigenous communities in a productive and comforting way to promote healing from trauma and economic independence?

Home
The idea of "home" represents a complex array of characteristics and ideals based on attachment and user experience. Home represents a space of peace and belonging. Each person defines a home based on their lived experience (Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021; Bonnycastle et al., 2016; Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017). Oppositely, anxiety and discomfort can result from unstable or unsafe housing (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017).

Individuals displaced due to violence respond positively to spaces that embody structure and stability (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017). Destabilization is a crucial characteristic not only seen in cases of IPV and houselessness but in the colonization process as a whole. The destruction of language, tradition, and worldviews destabilizes and weakens Indigenous cultures, and continues to create personal and community trauma (Thistle, 2017). Indigenous second-stage shelter design must create a true sense of home, security, and familiarity as prescribed by Indigenous principles. The

ability to control one's environment is critical since family structure, limited space and control, and a disconnect from one's hometown can significantly change the emotional connection one has with home (Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021; Bonnycastle et al., 2016). The lived experience of women is vital to improving equity and safety in a home environment (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017).

The concept of home also conveys refuge, independence, land, culture, and family (Thistle & Smylie, 2020; Groening et al., 2019; Bonnycastle et al., 2016). Home lies in belonging and attachment; "home-making" and "home-searching" attempts to construct or reconstruct a sense of place and belonging past the needs of a shelter (Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021; Christensen, 2018). Home is about more than survival—it is also about achieving *mino bimaadiziwin* (Anishinaabe: a good life as destined by the Creator) (Christensen, 2018). Second-stage housing provides a place to transition to safety, stability, and *mino bimaadiziwin*. Indigenous home-making facilitates closeness with family and community and is holistic for the benefit of emotional and social wellbeing (Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021).

Home in an on-reserve second-stage shelter environment is conveyed by being Indigenous at its core. Symbols, features, and artwork must reflect and accommodate the diversity of Indigenous experience, be welcoming and open to sharing and respect, and encourage Indigenous staffing in its majority (Thistle & Smylie, 2020). A sense of home should surpass the experience of being sheltered to provide the individual or family's relational, social, and cultural necessities, as well as nourishment (Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021; Alaazi, Masuda, Evans, & Distasio, 2015).

For women and their families escaping violence, home represents opportunity. More than providing a means to be clean, comfortable, and safe, a home gives you the ability to make future goals and grow your capacity (Bonnycastle et al., 2016). Getting an education, having better relationships with family and friends, properly caring for children, and practicing sobriety are all associated with home for victims of IPV (Bonnycastle et al., 2016). For these reasons, a temporary shelter or transitional housing should not simulate home. Rather, second-stage housing provides a home that provides a concrete chance to escape the cycle of violence. Home is not immediacy; home is providence.

LIMITATIONS AND OBSTACLES

As discussed, every individual deserves a unique, welcoming place to call home, regardless of financial or psychological status. This article highlights the lack of thoughtfully designed shelters for victims of IPV, on reserve and in general, to provide a home to escape the cycle of abuse (Bowra & Mashford-Pringle, 2021; Alaazi et al., 2015; Maki, 2020). Emergency shelters and transitional housing designs embody minimalism and impermanence, feeling institutional rather than homey (Maki, 2020). The lack of a second-stage housing design narrative impedes building a sense of home that frees survivors of IPV from the cycle of violence (Maki, 2020).

Furthermore, accessing funding for new second-stage housing for on-reserve First Nations is inconsistent. The government-funded Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) is Canada's primary funder for social housing development. However, information on funding for second-stage shelters is scarce. The CMHC advertises competitions for transitional and supportive housing, namely, the Co-Investment Fund, Women and Children Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative. However, funding availability for second-stage on-reserve housing did not qualify for these competitions in the past.

Responding to Calls 4.7 and 16.1 (the Call for all governments to honour Inuit socio-economic commitments defined by self-government and land claims agreements between Inuit and the Crown) in the final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the CMHC announced two new initiatives on May 2022 (CMHC, 2022). The Indigenous Shelter and Transitional Housing Initiative and the Shelter Initiative for Inuit Women and Children promise to build a minimum of 38 shelters and 50 transitional homes in Indigenous communities (CMHC, 2022). While improving, this process must become more accessible and straightforward for First Nations to progress in the fight against IPV on reserves.

DESIGN CONCEPTS

Second-stage housing should be designed to meet the physical and psychological needs of families escaping IPV. Based on our review of the literature and personal accounts of second-stage housing, we developed a functional design to meet the housing needs of women and children escaping violence. Table 1 summarizes the concepts of spatial design that seek to benefit female survivors of IPV and their children in second-stage housing to give them the work, social, and life supports needed. While second-stage shelters provide residents with a more extended stay than healing lodges as outlined in the NWAC Calls For Justice, and focus on safety from IPV, the functional aspects of the resiliency lodge are implemented in the second-stage shelter prototypes.

Table 1: Design considerations

Need	Design element	Description	Examples
Physical needs	Permanence	Material stability and permanence are critical to the inhabitants of second-stage shelters after long periods of displacement and uncertainty (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017).	Affordable design for affordable housing, creating interiors evocative of "home," stability rather than impermanence, sturdiness, trust.
	Flexibility	Co-housing in a second-stage shelter requires a balance between private and public functions, as well as residential spaces that allow for both individuals and large families (Ruiu, 2016).	Flexible floor plan for different living arrangement needs, open plan for easy rearrangement by users, non-fixed furniture.
	Design for rural communities	Specific considerations are to be made for on-reserve and Northern second-stage shelters on a case-by-case basis.	Scattered site shelters to protect anonymity, additional security measures to protect anonymity.
Pyschological needs	Individualization	Opportunities for decoration, flexible furnishings, control over environmental settings, and additional space available for families are all positive examples of these opportunities (BC Housing, 2019). Women and their families crave growth and freedom, a new foundation from which to reconnect and start over (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017).	Individual furniture selection, ability to style and decorate individual space, opportunities for flexible common spaces to change as required, additional space in the shelter for private family gatherings, prioritization of personal items.
	Safety and security	Social safety, emotional safety, and physical safety were all equally important to the wellbeing of women in long-term shelters (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017).	Privacy walls, security system including cameras, secure entry, making accommodations for users to be safe when outside, consideration for multiple storeys, access to emergency services.

Table 1 (continued)

Need	Design element	Description	Examples
Pyschological needs	Comfort	Long-term housing must be differentiated from short-term housing in how it conveys comfort and consistency to its users with a home-like interior.	Carefully selected furnishings and appliances, space planning for moments of pause and reflection, allocation of space for counselling, and relaxation.
	Facilitating skill building	Second stage housing specific to women is most effective if assisting with children, offering trauma counselling, and educating toward financial literacy (Desai, 2012).	Planning to accommodate activities that enable a sense of self-determination, including classrooms, counselling, therapy, childcare, etc.
Cultural needs	Space for Elders	Available space for shared programming or office space for Elders to meet with individuals or groups of women is ideal for second-stage housing in Indigenous communities and First Nations (BC Housing, 2021).	Designing office-style space for elder meetings, allocating ceremony space so individuals or groups can connect with Elders.
	Ceremony space	Mandatory for Indigenous second-stage programs.	Planning for interior and exterior places for ceremony and gatherings in proximity to communal areas.
	Appropriate aesthetic	In Indigenous housing initiatives, community members were interested in incorporating local heritage and culture into new housing designs (MacTavish et al., 2012).	Colour, form, shape, and symbolism should resonate with the users of the shelter. Art can be sourced from community.

Creating residential units that cater to individual users' needs and reflect their values, personality, and beliefs is essential to a second-stage shelter (Desai, 2012). Customization is also a critical factor in independence, an important goal for second-stage shelters. Shelter residents reported that a sense of control and stability within second-stage housing was a key aspect that aided in healing and comfort while being displaced (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017).

Culturally appropriate design is crucial. Housing design should accommodate traditional cultural activities, foster cultural identity, and strengthen family bonds (MacTavish et al., 2012). Holistic healing in First Nation communities is closely tied to the spirit and ceremony. Therefore, space for pipe ceremonies and smudge-friendly design is required for First Nation second-stage housing (BC Housing, 2021). Ceremonial areas are directly connected to building kinship with other survivors to promote healing and reaffirm a sense of safety. The work of local Indigenous artists or carvers in the construction and design of the space supports cultural identity (BC Housing, 2021).
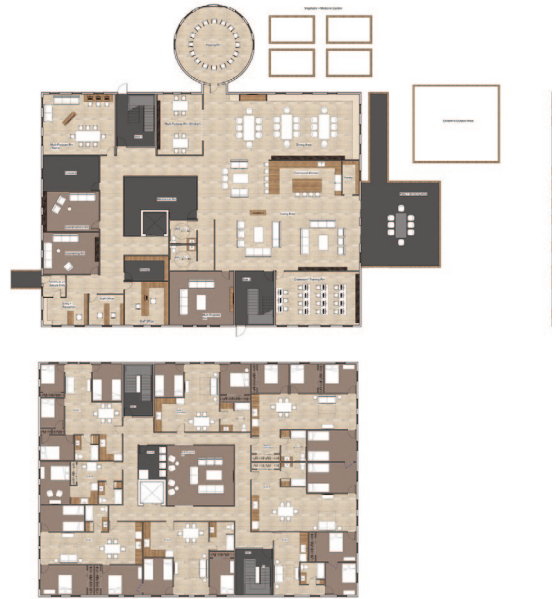
Design prototype

Two prototype second-stage co-housing designs were developed to show the solutions with a single (Figure 1) and a two-storey (Figure 2) version for the social economy to meet a desperate need for women and child safety. This dream of housing women and children fleeing abuse within their community and culture is shown as brick and mortar to transform this situation into a safe and co-housing model.

Figure 1: One story shelter

Figure 2: Two storey, second-stage shelter floor plans

Both prototypes offer communal and private spaces, floor plan flexibility, safety, and cultural spaces. Both designs contain eight suites that accommodate single residents up to one woman with six children, realizing Indigenous women often have large families and care for many children. The shelter includes living spaces with communal kitchens (Figure 3), teaching rooms with computers (Figure 4), office spaces for program facilitators, dedicated spaces for children and adolescents, shared laundry rooms, and circle rooms for ceremonies and counselling. Safety was considered within all parts of the design, from installing a protected entrance to the open layout of communal spaces for effective surveillance and choice of entry to developing a two-storey shelter to protect residents from intruders.

Second-stage housing is intended for long-term residence and should not follow the blueprint for a typical shelter for the unhoused. Typical shelters often lack private space. The dynamic of co-housing bringing different people from traumatic backgrounds together is to build self-determination, but people may have to work through their conflict (BC Housing, 2021; Ruiu, 2016). As an antidote to shelter design, apartment-style suites in the prototype provide comfort, privacy, and normalcy for survivors (Figure 5). At the same time, women and children living in transitional housing should have

Figure 3: Living area interior

Figure 4: Classroom interior

access to various communal spaces for gatherings such as feasts, family visits, group counselling and therapy sessions, aligning with the NWAC's action plan for giving women access to healing, mental health, and cultural support (NWAC, 2022).

Flexibility is essential due to the unpredictability of each woman's situation. Choice and respect for boundaries are critical themes for IPV survivors (BC Housing, 2021). Women can enter second-stage programs alone or with multiple children, so planning static residence suites for each woman limits the number of women that can be accommodated (MacTavish et al., 2012). Therefore, prototype suites were planned to have doors or moving walls inter-connecting each suite to create opportunities

Figure 5: Residence suite interior

for room sharing and help women with several children find safety while living together (Figures 3, 5). Shared living space was planned with unfixed furniture to allow options for partitioning and rearrangement.

Incorporating ceremony space allows women to remain connected to their culture, land, and identity (BC Housing, 2021). The prototype's circle room can work for sharing circles, smudge, prayer, and teaching (Figure 6). In rendered views, natural colours and materials that honour the land are used to ground the space, and in a realized project, these aspects would tie to the First Nation where a shelter is located (Figures 1, 2, 4, 6). Around the facility, connection to the land is emphasized with gardens for growing medicines and vegetables.

Figure 6: Circle room interior

DISCUSSION

Ensuring women can stay on reserve while attending a second-stage program is crucial for women's safety, cultural survival, and the Indigenous economy. Victims of IPV, which include women and their children, need a safe living situation and means of financially and psychologically improving their lives and should not have to leave their community and culture to find it. In Indigenous second-stage shelters, the healing comfort of home is as vital for an interior concept as having a relationship with the land and a home community (Moffitt et al., 2020; Kuokkanen, 2011). Escaping violence often requires Indigenous women to heal while being expected to leave their community to care for themselves and their families (Ponic et al., 2012). Women should not be punished for seeking help.

Mandating adequate safety measures for transitional housing is necessary for women staying in on-reserve second-stage housing. A physical dynamic must exist that advocates for self-determination for survivors while allowing women in a vulnerable phase of their lives security and stability. Security can be introduced with applied safety technology and personnel responsible for watching over the shelter and ensuring psychological security factors are planned in the interior. Open areas with views of the exterior are ideal as they allow women choice of entry and the ability to set social boundaries. Comfort is affected by familiarity as much as by security.

CONCLUSION

The severe number of IPV cases in Canada and the likelihood of Indigenous women experiencing IPV shows that Indigenous supportive transitional housing is a life-or-death matter (Heidinger, 2021; Moffit et al., 2020; NWAC, 2021). Nevertheless, the number of second-stage shelters on reserve, even with the new CMHC initiatives, remains disproportionately tiny compared with actual need. Each reserve and Indigenous community needs safe places to house women and their children. Significantly more on-reserve second-stage housing is required to provide safety for women and save lives (NIMMIWG, 2019; NWAC, 2021; Mashford-Pringle et al., 2021). In addition, IPV survivors' successful transition to independent living requires designing these spaces for privacy, security, counselling, and kinship to help them stabilize and heal (NWAC, 2021; Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2017; MacTavish et al., 2012). The support women and their families receive in second-stage housing helps propel them to their best chance at an IPV-free life.

With the social cost to Canadian society from IPV high at $7.4 billion per year in women's and children's mental and physical healthcare, second-stage housing is a necessary investment that saves lives (Department of Justice, 2017). Policy must be created demanding second-stage housing construction. These designs support the call for action by "painting a picture" of these safe, nurturing, and culturally appropriate homes for Indigenous women and their families to heal and rebuild. The design makes these more of a reality. This prototype offers a design to provide a circle of support and wellness around vulnerable women and children for cultural, economic, health, and social development. Modular and adaptable apartment unit design allows for single women and families of up to eight, housing women and their families undivided and safely.

Violence against women continues to be a North American health crisis and is exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic (Mashford-Pringle et al., 2021; Moffit et al., 2020). Decolonizing education and policies are needed to prevent IPV, including removing barriers to adequate housing on reserve. Indigenous women are at high risk of IPV due to Canada's colonial genocidal policies (NWAC, 2021; 2022), including the Indian Act, which means Indigenous people need more than adequate housing and second-stage housing to attack the root problem for prevention. Healing and reconciliation require decolonizing policies of land-back and removal of the Indian Act to release the Native homeland from the grip of colonization and genocide (Blacksmith et al., 2021).

Funding accessible Indigenous transitional housing prevents fear, isolation, and continued assault and is therefore urgent. Indigenous survivors of IPV need relief, protection, and improved overall wellbeing. This research is intended to increase awareness of the need for, and provide a vision for, second-stage co-housing on First Nation reserves in Canada.

NOTE

1. The acronym 2SLGBTQQIA stands for two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual.

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