

## **Shelters for victims of abuse with ties to Indigenous communities or organizations in Canada, 2017/2018**

by Ashley Maxwell

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## Shelters for victims of abuse with ties to Indigenous communities or organizations in Canada, 2017/2018: Highlights

- In 2017/2018, there were 85 shelters for victims of abuse that had ties to First Nations, Métis or Inuit communities or organizations—also referred to as Indigenous shelters—operating across Canada. More than half (59%) of these shelters were located in rural areas. Over a one year period, these shelters saw over 10,500 admissions, the vast majority being women (63.7%) and their accompanying children (36.1%).
- On April 18, 2018 (the survey snapshot day), there were 344 women and 288 children staying in Indigenous shelters for reasons of abuse.
- On snapshot day, around 70% of women and children in Indigenous shelters, and around 20% of women and children in non-Indigenous shelters, identified as First Nations, Métis or Inuit. In contrast, Indigenous persons represented 4% of Canadian women (age 18 and older) and 8% of children as a whole.
- The majority of the women residing in shelters experienced emotional or psychological abuse, and most indicated that their abuser was a current or former intimate partner. A higher proportion of women in Indigenous facilities reported the abuse that they were seeking shelter from to the police (38%), compared with women in non-Indigenous facilities (28%).
- Most of the women in Indigenous and non-Indigenous facilities who sought shelter because of abuse were protecting their children from exposure to violence (71% and 59%, respectively).
- Around one in three (35%) women residing in Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse were previously clients of that shelter in the last year, either receiving services as a resident (29%) or on an outreach basis (6%).
- About one-third (34%) of the women who departed an Indigenous shelter for victims of abuse on snapshot day returned to a residence where their abuser lived, while around one-quarter (26%) moved to a residence of a friend or relative.
- On snapshot day, 75% of the short-term beds in Indigenous shelters were occupied, and around one-third (34%) of all short-term shelters were considered full. These proportions were lower than in non-Indigenous shelters (80% and 36%, respectively). Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous shelters in urban areas had higher occupancy rates than those in rural areas.
- There were 69 women and 16 accompanying children who were turned away from an Indigenous shelter for victims of abuse on April 18, 2018. Women were most often turned away from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous shelters because of capacity reasons (56% and 84%, respectively).
- Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse identified a lack of permanent housing and a lack of affordable long-term housing as the most common challenges facing shelters and their residents in 2017/2018.

# Shelters for victims of abuse with ties to Indigenous communities or organizations in Canada, 2017/2018

by Ashley Maxwell

First Nations people, Métis and Inuit—also referred to as Indigenous peoples—have long and unique social, cultural and political histories in Canada. The history of colonization, including residential schools—the 60's scoop and forced relocation—continue to impact Indigenous persons and communities (Aguilar and Halseth 2015; Bombay et al. 2009; The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). Indigenous peoples often experience social and institutional marginalization, discrimination, and various forms of trauma and violence—including intergenerational trauma and gender-based violence. As a result, many Indigenous peoples experience challenging social and economic circumstances (Holmes and Hunt 2017; Klingspohn 2018; National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 2019; The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). For example, compared with the rest of the Canadian population, Indigenous peoples have a higher unemployment rate, often report lower levels of income, and frequently live in crowded or unsuitable housing (Anderson 2017; Statistics Canada 2015; Statistics Canada 2017b; Statistics Canada 2018c; Statistics Canada 2013). Many have identified these types of disadvantages as contributing social factors to an elevated risk of victimization among Indigenous peoples (The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015).

While the recognition that Indigenous populations are at a higher risk of victimization is not a new discovery, there has been increased concern in recent years regarding the overrepresentation of Indigenous persons as victims of crime in Canada following a report released by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, as well as the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 2019; The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). Corroborating the stories shared during the MMIWG inquiry, research has shown that Indigenous persons are more likely to be victims of violence than their non-Indigenous counterparts (Arriagada 2016; Boyce 2016; Miladinovic and Mulligan 2015; Perreault 2015; Scrim 2009), and Indigenous women in particular are proportionately more likely to be victims of intimate partner violence (Arriagada 2016; Boyce 2016; Hotton Mahony et al. 2017). Research on victimization has pointed to a variety of different risk factors which contribute to this increased vulnerability among the Indigenous population, including being relatively young, having lower levels of education and higher levels of unemployment, having a history of childhood maltreatment, being a member of a lone-parent family, having children in foster care, experiencing mental health issues and/or substance use issues, etc. (Boyce et al. 2015; Burczycka 2017; Carrière et al. 2018; Firestone et al 2015; Hudon and O'Donnell 2017; Kumar and Tjepkema 2019; Perreault 2015; Spillane et al 2015; Statistics Canada 2017b; Statistics Canada 2015; Statistics Canada 2013). Living in rural or remote areas and communities can also contribute to this increased risk of victimization among Indigenous peoples (Perreault 2019; Perreault and Simpson 2016; Rotenberg 2018).

To date, little research has focused on the services available to Indigenous victims of crime that exist across Canada.<sup>1</sup> In particular, few studies have focused on available victim services in Indigenous communities, many of which report the highest levels of crime in the country (Statistics Canada n.d.b). These services include residential services and emergency shelters, which are among the most commonly used victim services (Allen 2014; Munch 2012). Facilities provide safe shelter and basic living needs for victims of abuse, as well as different kinds of support and outreach services (Moreau 2019). Access and availability of these types of services are essential for victims of abuse in Indigenous communities, where alternative housing options are often limited or unavailable for victims leaving abusive situations (House of Commons 2019). Many victims of abuse in rural Indigenous communities also face other challenges which can impact their ability to receive support, such as geographic isolation, the absence of confidentiality in small communities, limited access to telephone or Internet services, lack of emergency services, lack of affordable or public transportation, and others (House of Commons 2019; United Nations 2019b).

Using data from the 2018 Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse (SRFVA), this *Juristat* presents information on shelters for victims of abuse that have ties to First Nations, Métis or Inuit communities or organizations in Canada (see Text box 1).<sup>2</sup> The SRFVA is a census of all shelters in Canada that are primarily mandated to serve victims of abuse (see Survey description).

This article examines the characteristics of Indigenous shelters in Canada, including the number of annual admissions and the types of services offered, and provides additional breakdowns based on the characteristics of the individuals who are accessing these shelters for reasons of abuse. This information is based on two distinct time periods which are captured by the survey. First, data relating to the characteristics of shelters are based on a 12-month reference period that preceded the collection of the survey data (2017/2018).<sup>3</sup> Second, information relating to individual residents is based on the snapshot day of April 18, 2018.<sup>4</sup>

## Over 10,500 admissions to shelters with Indigenous ties in 2017/2018

In 2017/2018, there were 85 shelters with ties to Indigenous communities or organizations that were primarily mandated to serve victims of abuse, 30 of which were located on reserve. Most (72%, or 61 shelters) Indigenous shelters were located in

a First Nations, Métis or Inuit community. Overall, Indigenous shelters represented 17% of all shelters operating across Canada, and they provided 16% of the funded beds.<sup>5</sup> There were over 10,500 admissions to these shelters over a 12-month period (Table 1).<sup>6</sup> Almost all of the admissions to Indigenous shelters were women (63.7%) and their accompanying children (36.1%). The majority of the admissions to non-Indigenous shelters were also women (59.5%) and their children (40.4%).

### **Text box 1** **Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse**

The Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse (SRFVA) asks responding shelters five questions which specifically relate to their association with Indigenous communities or organizations:

1. Is your shelter an Indigenous organization?<sup>7</sup>
2. Is your shelter located in a First Nations, Métis or Inuit community?
3. Is your shelter located on reserve?
4. Is your shelter owned by a First Nations government (band council)?
5. Is your shelter operated by a First Nations government (band council)?

For the purposes of this article, respondent shelters were identified as Indigenous or non-Indigenous based on the answers provided to these questions. A shelter was defined as Indigenous if it responded yes to any of the above questions.<sup>8</sup> Those shelters that did not provide answers to any of the questions were excluded.<sup>9</sup>

Based on this categorization, there may be instances where a respondent shelter is classified as an Indigenous organization that primarily serves these populations and is associated with Indigenous groups, but it is not located in an Indigenous community. According to the 2018 SRFVA, 72% of the Indigenous shelters identified that they were located in a First Nations, Métis or Inuit community.

It is also important to note that not all individuals who are accessing shelters that have ties to Indigenous communities or organizations are Indigenous.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, many Indigenous victims receive services in non-Indigenous shelters. On snapshot day in 2018, around one-fifth (17%) of the women in non-Indigenous shelters were First Nations, Métis or Inuit.

Most (93%, or 79 shelters) of the shelters for victims of abuse that had ties to Indigenous communities or organizations provided short-term housing, typically offering accommodation to residents for less than three months in the form of individual beds (e.g., transition homes, domestic violence shelters), while 7% (6 shelters) provided long-term housing—generally providing accommodation to residents for three months or longer through residential units such as apartments or houses (Table 2).<sup>11</sup> In comparison, 26% (110 shelters) of the shelters that did not have ties to Indigenous communities or organizations provided long-term housing.

A recent report from Women's Shelter's Canada noted that there is a significant lack of long-term (second stage) shelters in many Indigenous communities throughout the country. According to this report, it is often difficult to establish second stage shelters in some of these communities due to the lack of affordable housing. Existing second stage shelters in many of these communities also have large catchment areas, and there are often very few second stage shelters that serve populations spread over large geographic areas (Maki 2019b). In Nunavut in particular, where just under half (46%) of Canada's Inuit population lives (Statistics Canada 2017a), there are no second stage shelters (Maki 2019b).

### **More Indigenous shelters located in rural areas than urban areas**

In 2017/2018, close to 6 in 10 (59%) shelters for victims of abuse which had ties to Indigenous communities or organizations were located in rural areas, where many Indigenous people live—and where women tend to experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence (Burczycka 2019).<sup>12, 13</sup> In particular, many rural Indigenous shelters were located on reserve (23 shelters, or 46% of rural shelters). Shelters in some of these remote, rural communities often face specific challenges related to the populations that they serve, as well as their geographic isolation. For instance, rural shelters frequently serve populations spread over large areas, where victims tend to have fewer places they can go to if they leave abusive situations, often because of a lack of alternative housing. Some of these rural communities also have a limited number of other victim services available, and many victims face difficulties accessing the services that do exist.

The remaining 41% of Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse were located in urban areas. According to the 2016 Census of Population, over half (52%) of the Canadian Indigenous population lives in an urban area of at least 30,000 people (Statistics Canada 2017a). The presence of urban Indigenous shelters points to an ongoing need for focused, culturally sensitive support and services for Indigenous victims living in urban centres.

In comparison, 30% of the shelters for victims of abuse that did not have ties to Indigenous communities or organizations were located in rural areas, while 70% were located in urban areas.

## On snapshot day, all residents in Indigenous shelters were women and children

There were 758 residents staying in Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse on April 18, 2018 (the survey snapshot day) (Table 3). All of these residents were adult women (56%) and their accompanying children (44%) (424 women and 334 children).<sup>14</sup> Even though four (5%) of these shelters were mandated to serve men as well as women and children, there were no men staying in Indigenous shelters on snapshot day. Most (83%) of the residents were staying in the Indigenous shelters for reasons of abuse.<sup>15</sup> In part, this may be due to the fact that overall, there are fewer shelters in Indigenous communities. As a result, some individuals may access Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse for other reasons (e.g., homelessness).

Women and children also represented almost all (99.8%) of the residents who were staying in shelters that did not have ties to Indigenous communities or organizations, and an even greater proportion of residents in non-Indigenous facilities (91%) were residing in these shelters for reasons of abuse.

## Large proportion of Indigenous women and children residing in shelters

Indigenous persons represented a large proportion of the residents in shelters for victims of abuse in 2017/2018, compared with their representation in the overall Canadian population. On snapshot day, the majority of women (70%) and children (68%) residing in Indigenous shelters, and around one-fifth of the women (17%) and children (20%) in non-Indigenous shelters, were First Nations, Métis or Inuit.<sup>16</sup> According to the latest Canadian Census of Population, 4% of Canadian women (age 18 and older) and 8% of children were Indigenous in 2016 (Statistics Canada 2018b).

Compared with shelters for victims of abuse in urban areas, shelters in rural areas had a higher proportion of Indigenous residents. On snapshot day, 79% of women in rural Indigenous shelters were First Nations, Métis or Inuit, compared with 63% of women in urban Indigenous shelters.

In 2017/2018, the large majority of Indigenous shelters (89%), and half (50%) of non-Indigenous shelters reported offering culturally sensitive services to support Indigenous peoples (Table 4; see Text box 2).<sup>17, 18</sup>

### Text box 2

#### Specialized victim services for Indigenous persons

Many victim service providers offer dedicated services for Indigenous victims of crime. These specialized services often accommodate the distinct characteristics of Indigenous persons, by taking into account their diverse cultural norms and beliefs, as well as their history, which includes colonization and tools of colonization such as the residential school system and the 60s scoop (Aguiar and Halseth 2015; Bombay et al. 2009; The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). Some victim service programs recognize the traditional healing methods of Indigenous peoples for instance, while others offer support to Indigenous victims which focus on their specific social situations. For example, Indigenous persons with a history of mental health or substance use issues may be supported by culturally appropriate mental health or substance use programming, while others who are experiencing difficulties finding employment may be supported through traditional skills training or employment programming and job placement services.

Many Indigenous victim service programs exist in Canadian urban metropolitan areas, where over half of the Indigenous population lives (Statistics Canada 2017a). These areas also sometimes have dedicated victim services staff who are trained to accommodate Indigenous victims of crime.

Each province and territory is individually responsible for delivering victim services, in order to meet the differing needs of victims of crime in their respective jurisdiction (Allen 2014; Allen and McCarthy 2018). As a result, the number and types of Indigenous-centred services can vary across the country, given the dispersion of the Indigenous population throughout the provinces and territories.

However, providing formalized victim services to Indigenous persons can be challenging in certain remote Indigenous communities. Many of these areas have a limited availability of services such as shelters or crisis centres for example, because they are geographically dispersed or not easily accessible. This is particularly challenging in northern Canada (Perreault 2015; Perreault and Simpson 2016; Rotenberg 2018). As a result, victims in these communities may not receive the support they require, or they may need to travel a long distance in order to receive services. Crime victims in some of these communities also sometimes receive informal support, by having victim services staff attend to them directly in the community, or by receiving support over the telephone (Allen and McCarthy 2018). Victims may also find support through other community members. For example, a woman leaving an abusive situation may lean on family or friends for support if a shelter for victims of abuse is not available in her community, or if she cannot access it. Criminal victimization data from 2014 showed that most crime victims in the territories (where a large number of Indigenous persons live) did not use formal victim services, while 92% of victims confided in someone such as a friend, family member or colleague (Perreault and Simpson 2016).

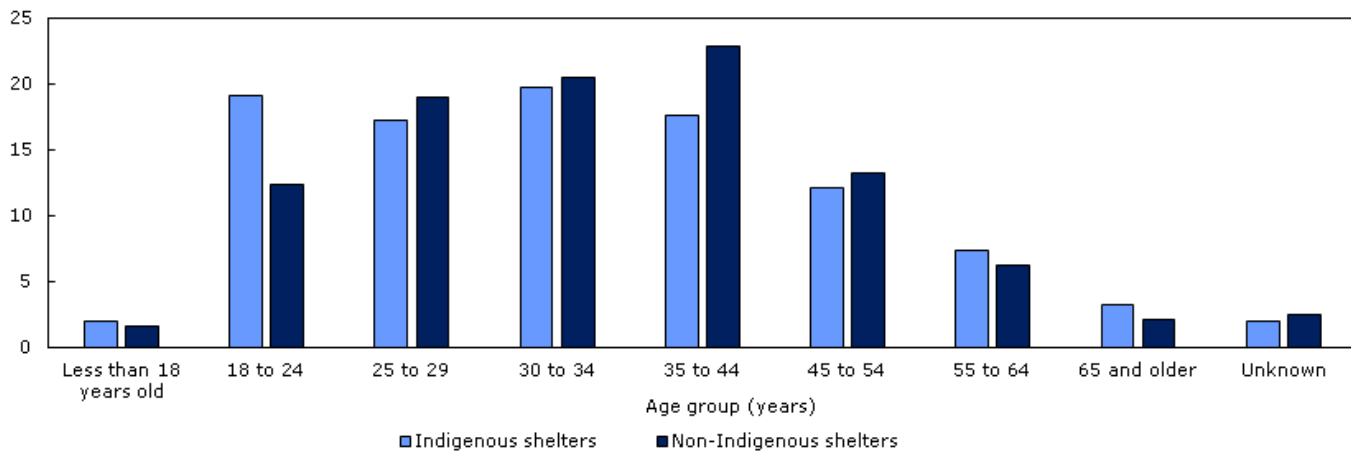
## Women and children in Indigenous shelters are younger than those in non-Indigenous shelters

Overall, women who were residing in shelters for victims of abuse that had ties to Indigenous communities or organizations were younger than women in non-Indigenous shelters.<sup>19</sup> On snapshot day, nearly 4 in 10 women (38%) residing in Indigenous shelters were under the age of 30, compared with one-third (33%) of women in non-Indigenous shelters (Chart 1). In particular, nearly one in five (19%) women in Indigenous shelters were between the ages of 18 and 24 (versus 12% of women in non-Indigenous shelters). Previous research has shown that age is a key factor that is consistently associated with violent victimization (Perreault 2015), especially for young Indigenous women (Boyce 2016).<sup>20</sup> Additionally, studies have shown that young persons tend to experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence (Burczycka 2019), which could help explain the overrepresentation of young women in shelters servicing victims of abuse.

**Chart 1**

**Age of women residing in shelters for victims of abuse, by type of shelter, Canada, April 18, 2018**

percent<sup>1</sup>



1. Excludes 9% of women in Indigenous shelters and 7% of women in non-Indigenous shelters for whom age was not reported.

**Note:** The April 18, 2018 reference period reflects the survey snapshot day, a predetermined business day meant to represent a typical day of operations for shelters across Canada. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council). The sum of the percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

Children in Indigenous shelters were also younger than children in non-Indigenous shelters. On snapshot day, 90% of children residing in Indigenous shelters for reasons of abuse were age 11 and younger, while 80% of children in non-Indigenous shelters were also age 11 and younger.<sup>21, 22</sup>

## Most women residing in shelters experience multiple types of abuse, most often emotional or psychological abuse

Women residing in shelters for victims of abuse had often experienced multiple types of abuse. On snapshot day, most (86%) of the women residing in Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse indicated that they had experienced emotional or psychological abuse (Table 5).<sup>23</sup> Physical abuse had been experienced by close to three-quarters (74%) of the women who reported their abuse type, followed by financial abuse, which was experienced by close to half (46%) of the women residents. Women staying in shelters that did not have ties to Indigenous communities or organizations also experienced similar kinds of abuse. However, there were a few types of abuse where there were some notable differences. For example, a larger proportion of women in Indigenous shelters than non-Indigenous shelters experienced harassment (37% versus 30%).<sup>24</sup> Additionally, a larger percentage of women residing in Indigenous shelters experienced human trafficking (including 7% where human trafficking was for sex work, and 2% where human trafficking was for forced labour or other reasons), compared with women in non-Indigenous shelters (2% and 1%, respectively).

Indigenous women in particular, are at an increased risk of experiencing human trafficking and sexual exploitation. This was recently highlighted by the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls 2019; Public Safety Canada 2019). While national police-reported data related to the number of Indigenous victims of human trafficking is not presently available, recent figures show that there have been more than 1,700 incidents of human trafficking in Canada since 2009 (Cotter 2020).

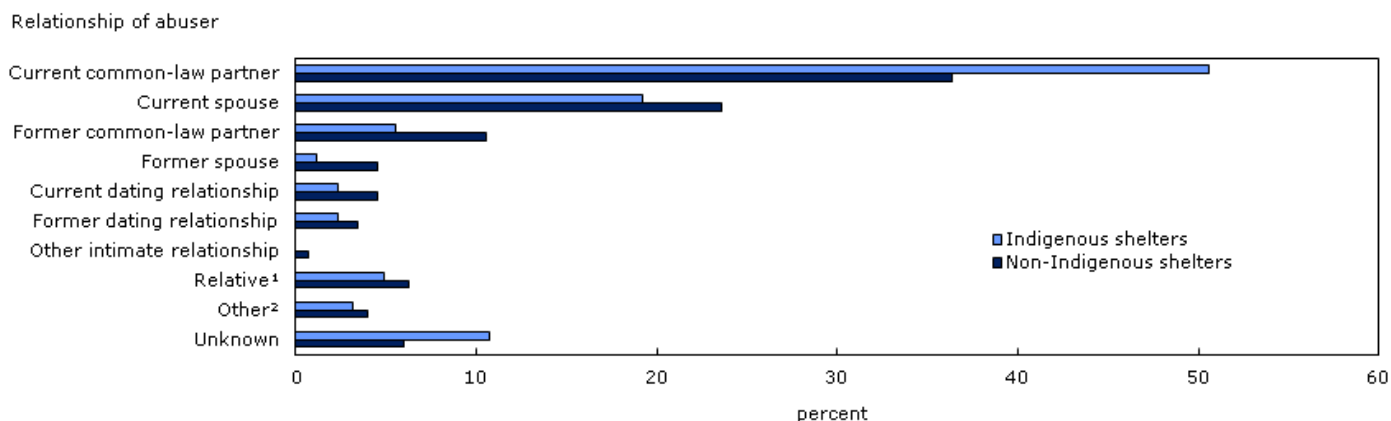
## Most women residing in shelters experience abuse by a current or former intimate partner

Recent family violence research has shown that intimate partner violence (IPV)—which includes violent offences that occur between current or former legally married spouses, common-law partners, dating relationships and other kinds of intimate partners—is a common form of police-reported violent crime in Canada. In 2018, 30% of all police-reported violent crime victims, and 45% of all female violent crime victims were the result of IPV (Burczycka 2019). In addition, previous research on victimization has also shown that Indigenous persons are proportionately more likely to be the victims of spousal violence than non-Indigenous persons (Boyce 2016).<sup>25</sup>

Compared with victims who do not experience intimate partner violence, victims of IPV may be more likely to seek shelter because of abuse as a result of their connection to their abuser, since research has shown that many IPV victims live in a shared residence with their abuser (Burczycka 2019). Victims of abuse who live in small, close-knit communities—such as Indigenous communities—may also be more likely to seek shelter in a facility than those who do not live in these communities, because there tend to be fewer available housing alternatives for victims leaving abusive relationships.

On snapshot day, around three-quarters (72%) of women residing in shelters for victims of abuse which had ties to Indigenous communities or organizations experienced abuse by a current intimate partner—most commonly a current common-law partner (51%) (Chart 2).<sup>26</sup> This is reflective of the overall marital status breakdown of Indigenous persons generally—who are more likely than non-Indigenous persons to live in common-law relationships (Statistics Canada 2018a). A further 9% of women who sought shelter at an Indigenous facility identified a former intimate partner as their abuser, and 5% identified relatives (e.g., parent, child, sibling, extended family).

**Chart 2**  
**Relationship of abuser to women in shelters primarily for reasons of abuse, by type of shelter, Canada, April 18, 2018**



1. Includes parents, children, siblings and extended family.

2. Includes caregiver, friend/acquaintance, authority figure and other unspecified relationships.

**Note:** The April 18, 2018 reference period reflects the survey snapshot day, a predetermined business day meant to represent a typical day of operations for shelters across Canada. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council). The sum of the percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding. Reasons of abuse can include, for example, having experienced physical, sexual, financial, emotional or psychological abuse, or harassment, among others.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

While many women residing in non-Indigenous shelters also identified their abusers as current or former intimate partners, the proportions differed. For instance, a smaller percentage of women residing in non-Indigenous shelters experienced abuse from a current intimate partner (65%), and twice as many women identified a former spouse as their abuser (19%).

## Close to 4 in 10 women who sought shelter at an Indigenous facility reported the abusive situation to the police

Research has shown that most types of victimization, including both violent and non-violent, do not come to the attention of the police (Perreault 2015; Sinha 2015). In 2014 for example, just under one-third (31%) of all criminal incidents were reported to the police, either by the victim directly (21%) or in some other way (10%). In regards to spousal violence specifically, just under one in five (19%) victims of spousal violence contacted the police themselves to report their victimization (Burczycka 2016).



There are various reasons why criminal incidents do not come to the attention of the police, including feeling as though the incident was too minor to be worth taking the time to report it, or feeling as though the incident was a personal matter that should be handled informally (Burczycka 2016; Perreault 2015). For a number of spousal violence victims, another common reason for not reporting the incident to the police is the belief that no harm had been intended (Burczycka 2016). Other reasons include not wanting to get the offender in trouble, fearing revenge, believing the offender would not be adequately punished, or believing the police would not be effective (Perreault 2015).

Reporting to the police can also vary for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, due to the characteristics of some of these remote communities themselves. For instance, victims in Indigenous communities may not report abuse to the police because of the economic and personal burden related to the court process (e.g., having to leave the community to attend court). This burden can also be higher in situations where the abuser is a family member or an intimate partner. In addition, the close-knit nature of some of these communities may also make Indigenous victims less likely than non-Indigenous victims to report their abuse to the police, because victims do not want the rest of the community to find out about the situation (House of Commons 2019), which could impact their relationships with others in the community. Additionally, some individuals in Indigenous communities may fear or distrust the police—often tied to colonization—which could also impact their willingness to report abuse to the police (Public Inquiry Commission 2019). However, it may also be more difficult to hide situations of abuse from the police in small communities, because more people may be aware of the abuse.

In 2017/2018, over one-third (38%) of the women who sought shelter at an Indigenous facility because of abuse reported that abuse to the police.<sup>27, 28</sup> This was a larger percentage than women who were staying in shelters that did not have ties to Indigenous communities or organizations (28%).<sup>29, 30</sup>

In addition, slightly more women in both types of facilities that were located in rural areas reported the abuse that they were seeking shelter for to the police, compared with women in shelters in urban areas.

## **Women often admitted to shelters with children, most wanting to protect them from exposure to violence**

Many women who seek shelter at facilities because of abuse have parental responsibilities, and many seek shelter with their accompanying children, in order to protect them from experiencing or witnessing violence or abuse in the home. According to self-reported victimization data from 2014, one-third (33%) of people in Canada aged 15 and older reported having experienced physical or sexual abuse by an adult, or having witnessed violence in the home as children (Burczycka 2017).

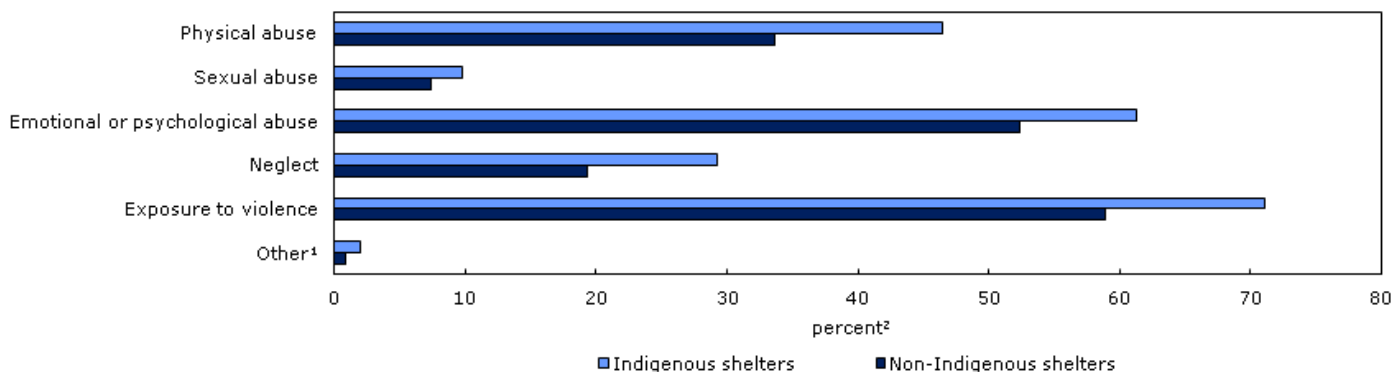
On April 18, 2018, close to three-quarters (72%) of the women residing in Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse had parental responsibilities.<sup>31, 32</sup> Of these women, 172 (73%) were admitted with their children, while 65 (27%) women were not.<sup>33</sup> Women residing in shelters that did not have ties to Indigenous communities or organizations had slightly lower proportions of parental responsibilities (66%), and about three-quarters (76%) of these women were also admitted with their children.<sup>34</sup>

The majority of the women who were residing in shelters for reasons of abuse were protecting their children from exposure to violence (71% of women in Indigenous shelters and 59% of women in non-Indigenous shelters) (Chart 3).<sup>35, 36, 37</sup> Exposure to violence was the most common type of abuse that women were protecting their children from on snapshot day. Additionally, women in Indigenous shelters were more likely than women in non-Indigenous shelters to be protecting their children from physical abuse: close to half (46%) of the women residing in Indigenous shelters were protecting their children from physical abuse, compared with just over one-third (34%) of the women in non-Indigenous shelters. Many women in Indigenous shelters were also protecting their children from emotional or psychological abuse (61%). Overall, women in Indigenous shelters were more likely than women in non-Indigenous shelters to be protecting their children from all of the types of abuse captured by the survey.

Chart 3

**Types of abuse women were protecting their children from by going to a shelter for victims of abuse, by type of shelter, Canada, April 18, 2018**

Type of abuse



1. Includes harassment, forced religion, economic abuse, among others.

2. Excludes 14% of women in Indigenous shelters and 13% of women in non-Indigenous shelters for whom a response was not reported.

**Note:** The April 18, 2018 reference period reflects the survey snapshot day, a predetermined business day meant to represent a typical day of operations for shelters across Canada. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council). Protection of children includes protecting those under the age of 18 as well as adult children under the care of their parent(s), such as those with disabilities. Percentages exceed 100% as respondents could mark all responses that apply.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

**About one in six women residing in Indigenous shelters have a disability**

Overall, women in Canada have a higher prevalence of disability than men (Morris et. al 2018). Research has shown that having a disability of any type is often associated with higher rates of violent victimization (Burczycka 2016; Conroy and Cotter 2017; Cotter 2018; Perreault 2015). According to the most recent self-reported victimization data, women with a disability were twice as likely to be a victim of violent crime as their counterparts without a disability. Women with a disability were also more likely to experience spousal violence by a current or former intimate partner, compared with those without a disability (Cotter 2018). In addition, research has also shown that Indigenous peoples have a higher prevalence of disability than the non-Indigenous population (Burlock 2017; Hahmann et al. 2019).

On snapshot day in 2018, around one in six (18%) women, and one in ten (10%) children residing in shelters for victims of abuse with ties to Indigenous communities or organizations had at least one disability, a higher proportion than among those residing in non-Indigenous shelters (11% of women and 6% of children in non-Indigenous shelters).<sup>38, 39</sup> Although these proportions were lower than the overall prevalence of disabilities among Canadians—22% of people in Canada aged 15 and older have at least one disability (Morris et. al 2018)—other factors associated with victimization may also be present. For example, the lower prevalence of disabilities among victims in shelters may be attributed to the fact that victims overall tend to be younger than non-victims (Perreault 2015).

In some respects, Indigenous shelters were more accessible than non-Indigenous shelters. For instance, more than 80% of the shelters for victims of abuse that had ties to Indigenous communities or organizations were partially or fully wheelchair accessible, compared with 71% of non-Indigenous shelters.<sup>40, 41</sup> However, fewer Indigenous shelters reported offering certain types of specialized services for individuals with various types of disabilities. For example, 11% of Indigenous shelters offered specialized services for those with visual disabilities, compared with 22% of non-Indigenous shelters (Table 4). Fewer rural Indigenous shelters, in particular, reported offering these types of services. This may be due to the size of rural shelters, in that they are often smaller than most urban shelters, and are therefore unable to provide as many specialized services to victims.

**Around one-third of women in Indigenous shelters are former clients**

Many women who utilize victim services such as shelters for victims of abuse have previously used these types of services, often due to repeated experiences of abuse and violence. According to the most recent self-reported data on victimization, many spousal violence victims indicated that they had experienced abuse on multiple occasions (Burczycka 2016).

On snapshot day, around one in three (35%) women residing in Indigenous shelters for reasons of abuse were former clients at the facility, a higher proportion than women in non-Indigenous shelters (30%).<sup>42</sup> Specifically, 29% of women in Indigenous shelters were previously residents in the last year, while 6% of women previously received services on an outreach basis.<sup>43</sup>

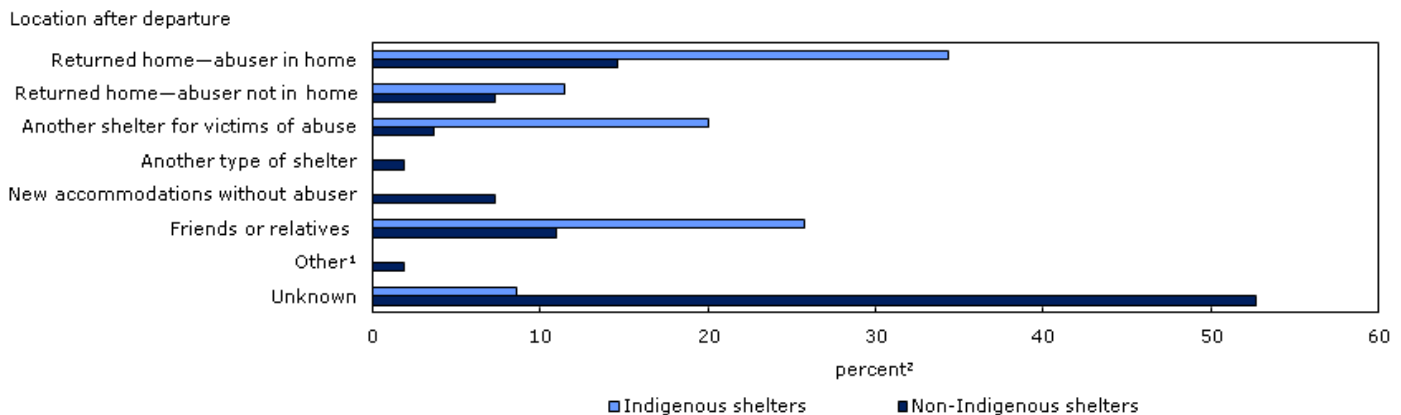
The proportion of returning clients was also higher for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous shelters in rural areas, compared with urban areas. On snapshot day, over 40% of the women in rural Indigenous shelters were previous clients, compared with 31% of women in urban Indigenous shelters. However, there are often multiple types of shelters available to victims in urban areas (e.g., homeless shelters, emergency shelters), as well as other types of support and services (e.g., sexual assault centres, protection services, counsellors). Therefore, victims in urban areas can often receive support through different shelters or services in the same area, and may in fact also be previous clients. In smaller rural areas and communities, there tend to be fewer options for victims, so victims may utilize the same shelter repeatedly.

### Many women who depart Indigenous shelters return to a residence where their abuser lives

Escaping an abusive situation can be extremely difficult, especially when the victim has a personal relationship with their abuser—or is economically dependent on them—such as an intimate partner relationship. While victim services such as shelters offer assistance to these victims of abuse, many of them do not provide a long-term means of permanently leaving these situations. This can be problematic if suitable housing alternatives are not available to abuse victims once they leave a shelter (House of Commons 2019). Even though some victims rely on their community for support and safe shelter in these situations—by living with friends or family—many victims ultimately end up returning to the abusive relationship that they were trying to leave in the first place, and return to a residence with their abuser.

On snapshot day in 2018, 35 women and 10 children departed a short-term shelter for victims of abuse that had ties to Indigenous communities or organizations.<sup>44</sup> Around one-third (34%) of these women returned to a home where their abuser lived, and over one-quarter (26%) were going to live with friends or relatives (Chart 4).<sup>45</sup> A further 11% of women returned to a residence where their abuser was not living.

**Chart 4**  
Location after departure for women who left short-term shelters for victims of abuse, by type of shelter, Canada, April 18, 2018



1. Includes hospitals, among others.

2. Excludes 5% of women in non-Indigenous shelters for whom location after departure was not reported.

**Note:** The April 18, 2018 reference period reflects the survey snapshot day, a predetermined business day meant to represent a typical day of operations for shelters across Canada. Short-term shelters are defined by their mandated expected length of stay, regardless of practice. Short-term shelters include shelters whose expected length of stay is less than three months. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council). The sum of the percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

If suitable housing alternatives are not available, women who leave shelters also frequently end up going to other facilities for shelter. One-fifth (20%) of the women who left an Indigenous shelter on snapshot day were departing for another facility for victims of abuse.

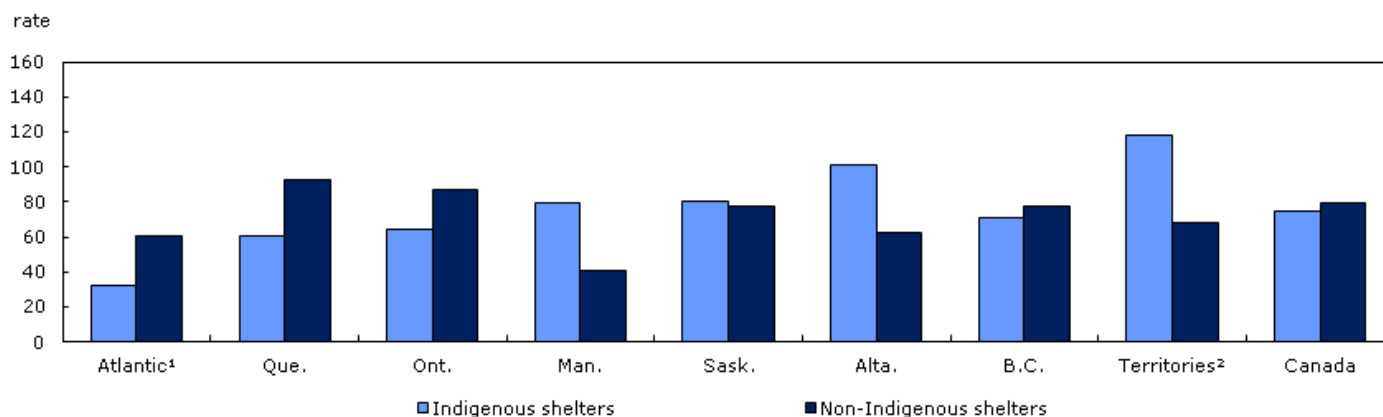
Although it was unknown where over half (53%) of the women who departed a short-term non-Indigenous shelter went following their departure, many women who reported where they were going returned to a residence with their abuser (15%).<sup>46, 47</sup> A further 15% of women returned home and their abuser was no longer in the home, or moved to new accommodations without their abuser (7% respectively). About one in ten (11%) women who left a non-Indigenous shelter moved to accommodations with friends or relatives.

## Around one-third of short-term Indigenous shelters were full on snapshot day

Facilities for victims of abuse do not always have the ability to accommodate all of the individuals who are seeking shelter, often due to a lack of available beds. While some shelters utilize unfunded beds in these circumstances—such as extra cots or mattresses, pull-out couches, rollaway beds, or sleeping bags—these do not provide a suitable long-term alternative to a lack of shelter space (Maki 2019a). This can be problematic—especially in small communities or rural areas—if victims are turned away from a shelter because of a lack of beds, and if other shelters or different types of victim services are not available to support these victims.

On April 18, 2018, there were 962 funded beds in the 79 short-term shelters for victims of abuse which had ties to Indigenous communities or organizations (Table 2). These shelters were three-quarters (75%) occupied on snapshot day, with 722 residents occupying funded beds (Table 6; Chart 5).<sup>48</sup> The occupancy rates of Indigenous shelters varied across the country. The highest occupancy rates were observed in the Territories (118%) and Alberta (101%)—where the number of residents staying in shelters exceeded the number of available funded beds—while the lowest occupancy rate was in the Atlantic provinces (33%).<sup>49</sup> Overall, around one-third (34%) of all short-term Indigenous shelters were considered full (i.e., 90% occupancy or greater) on snapshot day.<sup>50</sup>

**Chart 5**  
Occupancy for short-term shelters for victims of abuse, by type of shelter, and region, April 18, 2018



1. Includes Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

2. Includes Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

**Note:** The April 18, 2018 reference period reflects the survey snapshot day, a predetermined business day meant to represent a typical day of operations for shelters across Canada. Short-term shelters are defined by their mandated expected length of stay, regardless of practice. Short-term shelters include shelters whose expected length of stay is less than three months. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council). The occupancy rate is calculated by dividing the total number of residents on the snapshot day by the total number of funded beds, multiplied by 100. Occupancy can exceed 100% if there are more residents staying in shelters than there are available funded beds.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

In comparison, short-term non-Indigenous shelters were slightly more occupied on snapshot day (80% occupied, with 4,032 residents occupying funded beds), and a larger percentage of these shelters were considered full (36%).

## Indigenous shelters located in rural areas less likely to be full than those in urban areas

Overall, short-term shelters for victims of abuse that were located in urban areas had higher occupancy than those that were located in rural areas, and a greater number of urban shelters were considered full on snapshot day. There were fewer residents occupying funded beds in short-term Indigenous shelters that were located in rural areas than those that were in urban areas, even though overall there were more available funded beds in rural shelters (517 funded beds compared with 445 funded beds). Rural short-term Indigenous shelters were 68% occupied on snapshot day, and 23% were considered full (Table 6). In contrast, urban short-term Indigenous shelters were 83% occupied, and more than twice as many (50%) urban shelters were full.

Short-term shelters that did not have ties to Indigenous communities or organizations also had higher occupancy rates in urban areas than in rural areas (83% compared with 68%), and more urban shelters were considered full on snapshot day (38% versus 32%).

Since many shelters in rural areas provide support to victims spread over large areas, the lower occupancy rates may be because victims do not have the ability to access these shelters, due to a lack of affordable or public transportation services

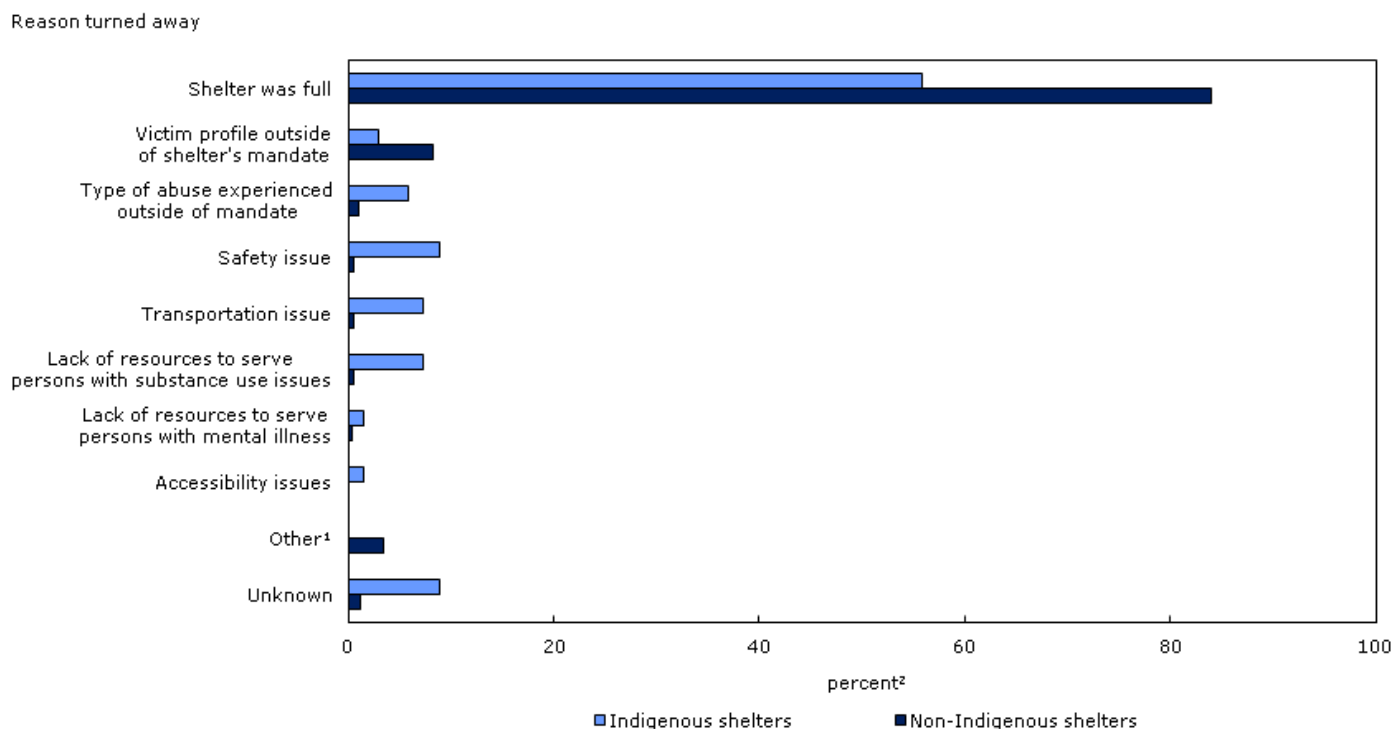
for example. Women may also not want to leave their small communities and their networks of support, in order to receive services. Victims in rural areas may also not be aware of the available victim services that exist in their communities and surrounding areas.

### Most women turned away from facilities because shelter at full capacity

Issues of over-capacity and high occupancy are especially challenging when victims are turned away from shelters because the facility does not have the ability to accommodate them (House of Commons 2019; Maki 2019a; Maki 2019b; Maki 2018). In small communities or rural areas, this can be particularly problematic if there are a lack of alternative shelters or victim services available that can provide support if a shelter is full, which can sometimes result in victims remaining in or returning to abusive situations. Capacity has been listed as an ongoing problem for many shelters, especially those that are located in urban areas, where there is often a constant influx of victims seeking shelter. Many shelters in urban areas almost always operate at full capacity (Maki 2019a). Additionally, some shelters may also have to turn people away because they do not have the staff and resources to accommodate victims, even though they may have vacant beds.

There were 69 women and 16 accompanying children who were turned away from an Indigenous shelter for victims of abuse on April 18, 2018. More than half (38 women, or 56%) of these women were turned away because the shelter was at full capacity (Chart 6).<sup>51, 52</sup> Other common reasons for turning women away from Indigenous shelters were safety issues (9%), transportation issues (7%), or the shelter did not have the resources for substance use issues (7%).

**Chart 6**  
Reasons women were turned away from shelters for victims of abuse, by type of shelter, Canada, April 18, 2018



1. Other reasons include house dynamics (e.g., residents of house have extreme high needs) and no space for pets.

2. Excludes 1% of women turned away from Indigenous shelters and 9% of women turned away from non-Indigenous shelters where the reason for turn away was not reported.

**Note:** The April 18, 2018 reference period reflects the survey snapshot day, a predetermined business day meant to represent a typical day of operations for shelters across Canada. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council). The sum of the percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding. Excludes one other response category available to respondents for reason turned away, language barrier, as reporting was too low or non-existent.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

There were 573 women and 215 children turned away from a non-Indigenous shelter for victims of abuse on snapshot day. While women were also most frequently turned away from non-Indigenous shelters for capacity reasons (84%), the other most common reasons for turning women away differed.<sup>53</sup> On snapshot day, 8% of women were turned away from non-Indigenous facilities because their reason for seeking shelter was outside the shelter's mandate (e.g., the victim was not seeking shelter for reasons of abuse), and 3% were turned away for other reasons such as house dynamics (e.g., residents of house have extremely high needs that they could not accommodate new victims) or the shelter did not have space for pets.

## Lack of permanent housing most common challenge for Indigenous shelters

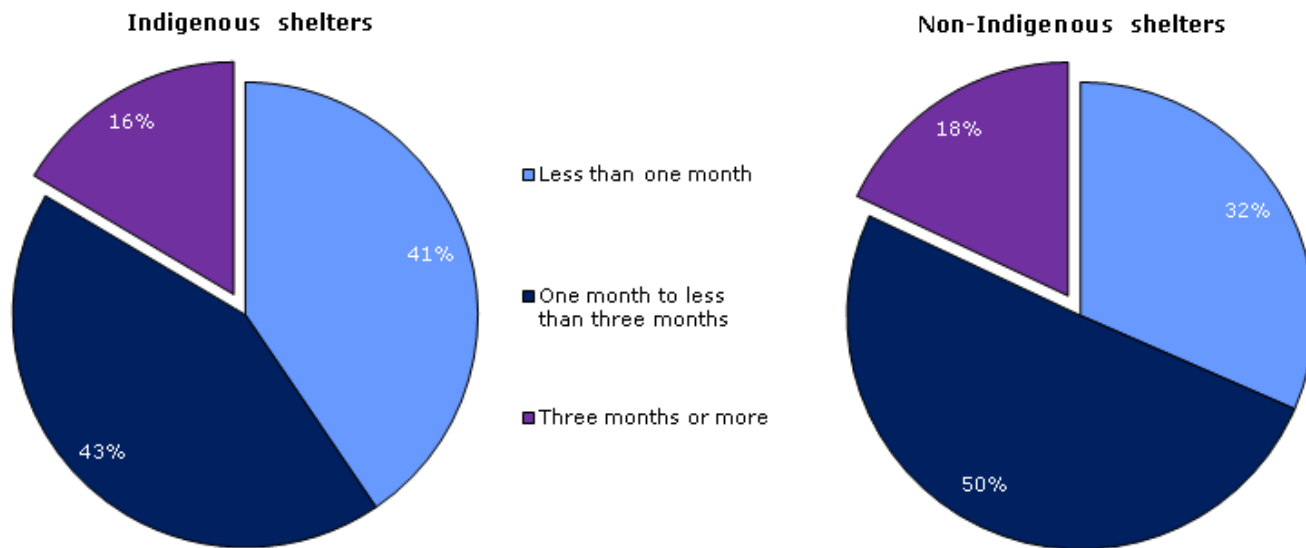
Besides issues with capacity, shelters for victims of abuse face many other challenges which are associated with both the operation of the shelters themselves, and issues related directly to the residents and the services that can be provided to victims. These challenges can vary depending on the location of the shelter (rural versus urban), and can differ based on the characteristics of the victims who are accessing the shelters.

The Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse (SRFVA) asked responding shelters to identify the most common challenges facing their shelters and residents in 2017/2018 (see Text box 3). Many of these issues have been documented in other research on the subject (Maki 2019a; Maki 2019b; Maki 2018), and some were also highlighted by a recent House of Commons committee meeting on shelters and transition houses serving women and children affected by violence in Canada (House of Commons 2019).

According to the SRFVA, a lack of permanent housing was the most common (48%) challenge listed by Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse in 2017/2018, and was the second most common (36%) challenge for non-Indigenous shelters (Table 7).<sup>54</sup> Additionally, a lack of affordable long-term housing was listed as the most common challenge facing residents in both types of shelters (70% and 79%, respectively) (Table 8).<sup>55</sup> Often, women who seek shelter because of abuse have nowhere safe to go after they leave facilities, so many end up returning to a residence that they shared with their abuser (House of Commons 2019). This might be more pronounced in rural communities, where housing shortages are particularly high (United Nations 2019a).

Shortages of affordable housing frequently lead to shortages in shelter spaces, since women cannot afford to leave shelters (House of Commons 2019). Many residents end up staying in short-term shelters for longer than the expected length of stay (up to three months) because there are no suitable housing alternatives available to them, which can cause an additional strain on shelters. In 2017/2018, 16% of short-term Indigenous shelters and 18% of short-term non-Indigenous shelters reported average lengths of stay of longer than three months (Chart 7). Allowing residents to stay in shelters for longer than they are supposed to often reduces a facility’s capacity to take in new residents seeking shelter because of abuse (Maki 2019a). The limited number of long-term shelters—especially in rural Indigenous communities—only compounds this issue, because victims often have nowhere safe to go after leaving a short-term shelter.

**Chart 7**  
Average length of stay in short-term shelters for victims of abuse, by type of shelter, Canada, 2017/2018



**Note:** Short-term shelters are defined by their mandated expected length of stay, regardless of practice. Short-term shelters include shelters whose expected length of stay is less than three months. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council).

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

The overall housing situation in Canada also negatively impacts victims of abuse seeking shelter, especially in large urban areas where people cannot afford to buy homes, and rents are extremely high due to limited inventory (Ali 2016; Gaetz et al. 2016; Kirkby and Mettler 2016; Novac 2006). Many victims of abuse are also unable to find suitable housing because landlords hesitate or refuse to rent to them (House of Commons 2019). As a result, women and children frequently end up returning to a residence with their abuser after leaving shelters, because the only other alternative available to them is often homelessness (Ali 2016; House of Commons 2019; Novac 2006).

### **Text box 3**

#### **Other common challenges facing shelters for victims of abuse**

Many of the challenges facing shelters for victims of abuse are interconnected, and relate to a facility's ability and capacity to provide support to victims.

##### **Need for physical repairs**

Many shelters for victims of abuse have a need for physical repairs. Research has shown that many shelters require repairs and improvements due to aging buildings, but they lack the resources to do so (Maki 2019a; Maki 2019b; Maki 2018).<sup>56</sup> According to the Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse, around one in five (19%) Indigenous shelters listed the need for physical repairs as a common challenge facing their shelter (Table 7). Although about two-thirds (64%) of these Indigenous shelters made physical repairs or improvements in 2017/2018—which were largely funded by provincial/territorial government sources—the need for repairs has been listed as an ongoing concern for many shelters, since it can directly impact their ability to provide services to residents. Specifically, shelters that require repairs are often less accessible to victims, especially those with disabilities (Maki 2019a).

##### **Lack of funding**

Over one-third (36%) of Indigenous shelters listed a lack of funding as a common challenge facing their shelter in 2017/2018 (Table 7). Indigenous shelters received most of their funding from provincial/territorial government sources (Table 9). However, shelters are often unable to provide basic services to victims because they are consistently underfunded (Maki 2019a). In 2017/2018, shelters for victims of abuse that had ties to Indigenous communities or organizations reported \$51.4 million in funding.

##### **Inability to meet the diverse/complex needs of victims**

The characteristics of victims of abuse who seek shelter at facilities can be quite diverse. While shelters offer a wide variety of different programs and services to support victims of abuse (Table 4), shelters are not always able to meet the complex needs of victims. For example, many victims seeking shelter need to be supported in different ways because they may experience substance use and/or mental health issues, are involved with the criminal justice system, and so forth. Some shelters do not always have the ability to serve victims with complex needs adequately, and are often under-equipped to support these types of victims properly (House of Commons 2019; Maki 2019a).

### **Summary**

Shelters for victims of abuse that have ties to Indigenous communities or organizations primarily serve individuals from the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities throughout the country. Even though the Indigenous population represents a small proportion of the Canadian population overall (Statistics Canada 2017a), research has shown that these individuals are victimized at a much higher rate than the rest of the population (Arriagada 2016; Boyce 2016; Miladinovic and Mulligan 2015; Perreault 2015; Scrim 2009). Young Indigenous women in particular, are highly susceptible to many different kinds of violence. Understanding the characteristics of shelters which serve victims of abuse in these communities, as well as the profile of the people who are accessing these shelters, is essential for developing strategies to address abuse, gender inequality and victimization.

In 2017/2018, there were 85 shelters primarily mandated to serve victims of abuse that had ties to Indigenous communities or organizations operating across Canada. More than half (59%) of these shelters were located in rural areas, which often face very specific challenges that can impact a shelter's ability to provide support to victims. Shelters in rural Indigenous communities frequently serve populations that are geographically dispersed, who often have limited access to other types of victim services. However, many Indigenous shelters were also located in urban areas, where many Indigenous persons live—pointing to the ongoing need for focused, culturally sensitive support for Indigenous victims living in urban centres.

The majority (93%) of the Indigenous shelters provided short-term (up to three months) accommodations to victims of abuse, while a much smaller proportion (7%) provided long-term accommodations (three months or longer).

On snapshot day, all of the residents in Indigenous shelters were women and their accompanying children, most of whom were there for reasons of abuse. Most women who sought shelter experienced multiple types of abuse, and their abuser was often a current or former intimate partner.

Many women leave Indigenous shelters and return to live with their abuser, often because of housing shortages and limited places that victims can go to in order to leave abusive situations. Even though some victims rely on the community for support, many also continue to seek shelter at other facilities for victims of abuse if space is available.

High occupancy rates and shelters operating at or near capacity are ongoing issues for many shelters for victims of abuse, since women are most commonly turned away from facilities because the shelter is full. On snapshot day, a smaller proportion of short-term Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse were occupied or considered full, compared with non-Indigenous shelters. However, occupancy rates were higher for both types of shelters in urban areas, compared with rural areas.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous shelters face many challenges which can impact their ability to provide support to victims of abuse, including a lack of funding, an inability to meet the diverse needs of clients, and the need for repairs. For Indigenous shelters in particular, there tend to be issues related to accessibility, since the populations they are serving are often spread over large geographic areas, and from small, sometimes isolated communities. Overall, a lack of permanent housing and a lack of affordable long-term housing were the most common issues facing Indigenous shelters and their residents in 2017/2018. This represents a challenge for many facilities because women often stay longer in shelters than they are expected to because they cannot find another affordable place to stay.

## Survey description

### Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse

This *Juristat* article was produced by the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics at Statistics Canada with the funding support of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse (SRFVA) is a census of Canadian shelters primarily mandated to provide residential services to victims of abuse (defined as ongoing victimization). The objective of the SRFVA is to produce aggregate statistics on the services offered by these shelters during the previous 12 month reference period, as well as to provide a one-day snapshot of the clientele being served on a specific date (mid-April of the survey year). The intent of the survey is to provide valuable information that is useful for various levels of government, sheltering and other non-profit organizations, service providers and researchers to assist in developing research, policy, and programs, as well as identifying funding needs for shelters for victims of abuse. This information may also be used by Statistics Canada for other statistical and research purposes.

The SRFVA is a redesign of the Transition Home Survey (THS). As part of the Family Violence Initiative, the THS was developed in order to address the need for improved information about services for victims of family violence.

The SRFVA questionnaire content was developed through consultations with stakeholders that occurred between October and December 2015 and subsequent focus group testing. The SRFVA differs from the THS in terms of survey frame, content, collection, processing and analysis. In particular, the scope of the SRFVA was changed from all shelters serving abused women and their children, to shelters primarily mandated to provide residential services to victims of abuse, including women, men and accompanying children. Due to these changes, data collected for the SRFVA are not comparable with historical THS data.

### Target population and response rates

Shelters surveyed were identified by Statistics Canada through its consultations with provincial and territorial governments, transition home associations, other associations and a review of entities on the Statistics Canada Business Register. Shelters potentially in scope were then contacted prior to the collection of the survey to determine their primary mandate. These may include short-term, long-term, and/or mixed-use shelters, transition homes, second stage housing, safe home networks, satellites, women's emergency centres, emergency shelters, Interim Housing (Manitoba only), Rural Family Violence Prevention Centres (Alberta only), family resource centres, and any other shelters offering services to victims of abuse with or without children.

Of the 552 shelters who identified their primary mandate as providing services to victims of abuse in 2017/2018, 509 returned their questionnaire for a response rate of 92%. For those respondents who did not provide their information through the



questionnaire, and for those respondents who did not answer some key questions in their questionnaires, imputation was used to complete the missing data for key questions. Imputation methods included the use of trend-adjusted historical data when available and donor imputation, where values are taken from a similar record in terms of shelter location, type and size.

For more information and copies of the questionnaire, refer to the Statistics Canada survey information page: Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

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## Notes

1. Although not focusing on Indigenous victim services directly, Women's Shelters Canada recently released two reports on violence against women shelters and transition homes in Canada. These reports are based on a survey which was conducted on violence against women first and second stage shelters/transition homes, and was intended to collect information related to different aspects of the shelters themselves, such as the services they offer, human resources, challenges they face, etc. (Maki 2019a; Maki 2019b; Maki 2018). Additionally, a recent Statistics Canada article also presented findings on all shelters for victims of abuse in Canada (Moreau 2019).
2. For further information on all shelters for victims of abuse in Canada, see Moreau 2019.
3. Respondents were asked to select a 12-month reference period that most closely resembled the period their shelter refers to in its annual reports. Categories included a standard fiscal year (April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018), a calendar year (January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017) or a 12-month period of their choosing. In 2017/2018, 87% of shelters responding to the survey reported their annual information based on the standard fiscal year.
4. The snapshot day is a predetermined business day meant to represent a typical day of operations for shelters across Canada. The April 18, 2018 date was selected based on consultations with service providers. This date reflected a period of relative stability in terms of admissions and respondents could maximize the resources available to respond to the survey. The snapshot day does not reflect seasonal differences in shelter use nor long-term trends throughout the year.
5. There were 40 shelters that did not report whether or not they had ties to Indigenous communities or organizations. These shelters and any information related to the residents at these shelters (480 residents) will not be included in any subsequent analysis.
6. An admission refers to the official acceptance of a resident into the shelter with the allocation of a bed, child's bed, crib, bedroom or bedroom unit, or apartment. The total number of admissions includes those who may have been admitted more than once. Each shelter visit is counted as a separate admission. For example, the same person being admitted to a shelter three times in a year would count as three admissions.
7. The specific question in the survey asked respondent shelters "Are you an Aboriginal organization?" For the purposes of this article, the term Indigenous is used to refer to shelters for victims of abuse that have ties to First Nations, Métis or Inuit communities or organizations. This term is also used when referencing information related to Aboriginal identity from the 2016 Census of Population, and Aboriginal victims from the General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization).
8. It is important to note that it is not possible to analyze Indigenous shelters by type of Indigenous group (First Nations, Métis or Inuit) using data from the Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.
9. A number of the shelters that did not provide any information related to their association with Indigenous communities or organizations were located on reserve. This was determined by looking at the postal code information that the shelters provided when they completed their survey questionnaire, and comparing it with census subdivision information from the 2016 Census of Population. As a result, the number of Indigenous shelters (specifically on-reserve shelters) is slightly underestimated.
10. Most (74%) Indigenous shelters that reported the Indigenous identity information of their residents to the survey indicated that at least half of the residents in their shelters on snapshot day were First Nations, Métis or Inuit. More specifically, 27 Indigenous shelters (36%) reported that all of their residents were Indigenous.
11. Shelters that reported offering both short and long-term accommodation (mixed shelters) are classified as short-term shelters throughout this article.
12. Shelters were designated as being located in either rural or urban areas based on Statistics Canada's Postal Code Conversion File Plus (PCCF+) tool. Rural shelters are those that are situated outside of a census metropolitan area (CMA) or census agglomeration (CA). Urban shelters are those that are situated within a CMA or CA. A CMA or a CA is formed by one or

more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more must live in the core. A CA must have a core population of at least 10,000. To be included in the CMA or CA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core as measured by commuting flows derived from previous census place of work data, where 50% or more of the population commutes into the core.

13. According to the Census, 42% of the Canadian Indigenous population lived in an area that had fewer than 10,000 people in 2016 (Statistics Canada n.d.a).

14. In the Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse, older youth who are not accompanied by a parent are counted as adults and not as accompanying children, even if they are under the age of 18.

15. The Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse only requested detailed characteristics of those residents who indicated their primary reason for seeking shelter was due to abuse. Those residing in shelters for other reasons (e.g., homelessness, crisis intervention or emergency shelter) were not included in any subsequent breakdowns.

16. Excludes 31 shelters that did not report this information about residents.

17. Excludes 12% of Indigenous shelters and 26% of non-Indigenous shelters that did not report on services directed towards vulnerable populations.

18. Includes services that accommodate and recognize the diverse needs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit persons (e.g., traditional healing methods, provision of services by spiritual Elders, integration of Indigenous cultural norms and beliefs).

19. Excludes 9% of women residents in Indigenous shelters and 7% of women residents in non-Indigenous shelters for whom age was not reported.

20. According to the most recent Canadian Census of Population, overall, Indigenous peoples are younger than the non-Indigenous population (Statistics Canada 2017a). However, it should be noted that the Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse is unable to determine the age breakdown of a specific type of resident (such as Indigenous residents).

21. Accompanying children include adult children (generally 18 years of age and older) with disabilities or who are caretakers of a parent experiencing abuse.

22. Excludes 17% of children residents in Indigenous shelters and 4% of children residents in non-Indigenous shelters for whom age was not reported.

23. Excludes 5% of residents in Indigenous shelters where a response was not reported. Responses exceed 100% as respondents could mark all responses that apply.

24. Excludes 7% of residents in non-Indigenous shelters where a response was not reported. Responses exceed 100% as respondents could mark all responses that apply.

25. References to spousal violence are based on self-reported data collected from the General Social Survey on Victimization. Spousal violence refers to violence committed by current or former legally married spouses or common-law partners. In contrast, intimate partner violence (IPV) includes violent offences that occur between current or former legally married spouses, common-law partners, boyfriends and girlfriends and other kinds of intimate partners. The IPV data presented in this article are based on the police-reported Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

26. Also includes other intimate partners where the people involved had a sexual relationship or a mutual sexual attraction but to which none of the other relationship options apply. This can include “one-night stands” or brief sexual relationships.

27. It is important to note that unlike the General Social Survey on Canadians’ Safety (Victimization), the Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse cannot distinguish between abusive situations that are self-reported by the victim to the police, from abuse that comes to the attention of the police in some other way (such as from family or friends).

28. Excludes 17% of residents in Indigenous shelters where a response was not reported.

29. Excludes 5% of residents in non-Indigenous shelters where a response was not reported.

30. The Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse cannot determine the Indigenous identity of victims who reported their abuse to the police.

31. Excludes women without children, women who have adult children living outside of the home or women who do not have custody of their children.

32. Excludes 4% of residents in Indigenous shelters where a response was not reported.

33. It is not possible to determine the reasons why a woman with parental responsibilities was not admitted with her children (e.g., children were not permitted, the shelter didn’t have space for the children as well, etc.) using the Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

34. Excludes 2% of residents in non-Indigenous shelters where a response was not reported.

35. Protection of children includes protecting those under the age of 18 as well as adult children under the care of their parent(s), such as those with disabilities.

36. The Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse cannot determine if women residing in shelters were protecting their children from being victimized themselves, or if abuse was occurring in the home.
37. Excludes 14% of women in Indigenous shelters and 13% of women in non-Indigenous shelters for whom a response was not reported. Responses exceed 100% as respondents could mark all responses that apply.
38. Excludes 3% of women and 9% of children in Indigenous shelters, and 1% of women and 1% of children in non-Indigenous shelters for whom a response was not reported.
39. Disabilities include mobility, visual, hearing, developmental or intellectual, and other disabilities.
40. Includes shelters that are either fully or partially wheelchair accessible based on whether or not at least one building entrance, bedroom or bathroom is wheelchair accessible.
41. Excludes 4 Indigenous shelters and 2 non-Indigenous shelters that did not report information regarding accessibility.
42. Excludes 13% of women in Indigenous shelters and 14% of women in non-Indigenous shelters for whom a response was not reported.
43. Outreach refers to situations where services are provided but the individual is not living in the shelter (i.e., not a resident). For example an individual may receive counseling services, or support through a crisis phone line, etc.
44. The Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse cannot determine the reason why an individual departed a shelter.
45. Due to the small number of departures on snapshot day, it is important to interpret this section with caution. The distribution of location types could vary if a different snapshot day were to be selected.
46. Excludes 5% of women in non-Indigenous shelters for whom a response was not reported.
47. Due to the large number of unknown location responses for women who departed non-Indigenous shelters on snapshot day, it is important to make comparisons with Indigenous shelters with caution. For all unknown location responses, either the shelter did not know the location of where the woman was going when she departed, or the woman did not know where she was going when she left the shelter.
48. The occupancy rate is calculated by dividing the total number of residents on a given day by the total number of funded beds, multiplied by 100. The occupancy rate provides an indicator of the total bed space being used at a given point in time.
49. Occupancy can exceed 100% if there are more residents staying in shelters than there are available funded beds.
50. When interpreting this section, it is important to note that a given shelter's capacity and occupancy could vary if a different snapshot day were to be selected. Even though the snapshot day is a predetermined business day meant to represent a typical day of operations for shelters across Canada, it does not reflect seasonal differences in facility use nor long-term trends throughout the year.
51. Excludes 1% of women in Indigenous shelters for whom a response was not reported.
52. For a given individual who was turned away from a shelter for victims of abuse on snapshot day, the Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse cannot determine whether that particular shelter was at capacity. Shelters are only able to report the number of individuals who were turned away on the survey snapshot day for a particular reason.
53. Excludes 9% of women in non-Indigenous shelters for whom a response was not reported.
54. Excludes 5 Indigenous shelters and 11 non-Indigenous shelters that did not report the top three challenges or issues currently facing their shelter. Percentages do not equal 100% as each shelter could provide up to three challenges.
55. Excludes 5 Indigenous shelters and 12 non-Indigenous shelters that did not report the top three challenges or issues currently facing residents using their shelter. Percentages do not equal 100% as each shelter could provide up to three challenges.
56. Through the National Housing Strategy, the federal government recently committed to funding the repairs of many family violence shelters over the next 10 years (National Housing Strategy 2018).

Detailed data tables

**Table 1**  
**Admissions to shelters for victims of abuse, by type of shelter, and region, 2017/2018**

Region	Indigenous shelters <sup>1</sup>				Non-Indigenous shelters			
	Total admissions <sup>2,3</sup>	Women	Accompanying girls <sup>4</sup>	Accompanying boys <sup>4</sup>	Total admissions <sup>2,3</sup>	Women	Accompanying girls <sup>4</sup>	Accompanying boys <sup>4</sup>
	number							
Atlantic <sup>5</sup>	272	176	66	30	3,064	2,185	481	398
Quebec	554	294	154	105	12,296	7,349	2,554	2,393
Ontario	1,550	1,008	267	265	16,297	9,677	3,441	3,167
Manitoba	1,823	1,539	131	153	1,615	783	421	404
Saskatchewan	974	385	323	266	2,346	1,029	685	632
Alberta	1,607	853	413	341	9,242	5,157	2,118	1,936
British Columbia	2,749	1,885	453	411	7,106	4,729	1,295	1,082
Territories <sup>6</sup>	995	569	195	231	885	539	203	143
<b>Canada</b>	<b>10,524</b>	<b>6,709</b>	<b>2,002</b>	<b>1,802</b>	<b>52,851</b>	<b>31,448</b>	<b>11,198</b>	<b>10,155</b>

1. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council).  
 2. An admission refers to the official acceptance of a resident into the shelter with the allocation of a bed, child's bed, crib, bedroom or bedroom unit, or apartment. The total number of admissions is based on all admissions for a 12-month reference period and includes those who may have been admitted more than once. Each shelter visit is counted as a separate admission. For example, the same person being admitted to a shelter three times in a year would count as three admissions.  
 3. To meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*, admissions of men and those where the age or sex of the individual was unknown or not reported are not presented separately in this table. Therefore, total admissions may not equal the sum of adult women, accompanying girls and accompanying boys.  
 4. Accompanying children include adult children (typically aged 18 or older) accompanying a parent or caregiver, such as adult children with disabilities and those who are caretakers of a parent experiencing abuse.  
 5. Includes Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.  
 6. Includes Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.  
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

**Table 2**  
**Beds, units and admissions, by type of shelter for victims of abuse, and region, 2017/2018**

Region	Indigenous shelters <sup>1</sup>						Non-Indigenous shelters					
	Short-term <sup>2</sup>			Long-term <sup>2</sup>			Short-term <sup>2</sup>			Long-term <sup>2</sup>		
	Shelters	Beds <sup>3</sup>	Admissions <sup>4</sup>	Shelters	Units <sup>5</sup>	Admissions <sup>4</sup>	Shelters	Beds <sup>3</sup>	Admissions <sup>4</sup>	Shelters	Units <sup>5</sup>	Admissions <sup>4</sup>
	number											
Atlantic <sup>6</sup>	8	83	270	x	x	x	29	427	2,905	15	90	159
Quebec	9	84	554	x	x	x	90	1,109	11,775	18	146	521
Ontario	14	181	1,550	x	x	x	92	1,941	14,975	36	506	1,322
Manitoba	4	64	1,153	x	x	x	11	175	1,454	x	x	x
Saskatchewan	5	80	966	x	x	x	10	166	2,262	x	28	84
Alberta	10	150	1,604	x	x	x	28	632	8,632	10	196	610
British Columbia	21	247	2,689	x	x	x	52	564	6,406	18	195	700
Territories <sup>7</sup>	8	73	995	x	x	x	5	47	844	x	x	x
<b>Canada</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>9,781</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>5,061</b>	<b>49,253</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>1,218</b>	<b>3,598</b>

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*  
 1. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council).  
 2. Shelters are defined by their mandated expected length of stay, regardless of practice. Short-term shelters include shelters whose expected length of stay is less than three months, and typically provide individual beds to residents, as opposed to separate apartments or units. Long-term shelters include shelters whose expected length of stay is three months or longer, and typically provide residential units (e.g. apartments) to residents.  
 3. Beds refers only to the number of funded beds, including children's beds and cribs if applicable, regardless of source of funding. Excludes unfunded beds, which may include emergency beds such as cots, sofas or sleeping bags.  
 4. An admission refers to the official acceptance of a resident into the shelter with the allocation of a bed, child's bed, crib, bedroom or bedroom unit, or apartment. The total number of admissions is based on all admissions for a 12-month reference period and includes those who may have been admitted more than once. Each shelter visit is counted as a separate admission. For example, the same person being admitted to a shelter three times in a year would count as three admissions.  
 5. Units refers to the number of apartments or houses available. An individual unit may house multiple people and are typical of long-term shelters.  
 6. Includes Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.  
 7. Includes Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.  
**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

**Table 3**  
**Residents in shelters for victims of abuse, by resident type, type of shelter, and region, April 18, 2018**

Region	Indigenous shelters <sup>1</sup>			Non-Indigenous shelters		
	Total residents <sup>2</sup>	Women	Accompanying children <sup>3</sup> number	Total residents <sup>2</sup>	Women	Accompanying children <sup>3</sup>
Atlantic <sup>4</sup>	29	22	7	417	259	158
Quebec	51	22	29	1,238	731	507
Ontario	117	70	47	2,426	1,349	1,066
Manitoba	53	35	18	164	64	100
Saskatchewan	72	24	48	195	74	121
Alberta	155	91	64	845	367	475
British Columbia	195	101	94	822	469	353
Territories <sup>5</sup>	86	59	27	52	29	23
<b>Canada</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>6,159</b>	<b>3,342</b>	<b>2,803</b>

1. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council).

2. To meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*, men residents and those where the age or sex of the individual was unknown or not reported are not presented separately in this table. Therefore, total residents may not equal the sum of adult women and accompanying children.

3. Accompanying children include adult children (typically aged 18 or older) accompanying a parent or caregiver, such as adult children with disabilities and those who are caretakers of a parent experiencing abuse.

4. Includes Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

5. Includes Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

**Note:** The April 18, 2018 reference period reflects the survey snapshot day, a predetermined business day meant to represent a typical day of operations for shelters across Canada.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

**Table 4**  
**Percent of shelters for victims of abuse offering selected services, by type of service and type of shelter, Canada, 2017/2018**

Selected services	Indigenous shelters <sup>1</sup>	Non-Indigenous shelters
	percent	
<b>General services</b>		
Crisis phone line	83	79
Transportation	78	69
Pet accommodation <sup>2</sup>	20	19
Housing referrals	84	86
<b>Professional services</b>		
Addictions or substance use	49	26
Legal <sup>3</sup>	61	73
Employment	47	27
<b>Services for adults</b>		
Individual counselling	78	88
Group counselling	58	70
Safety or protection planning	95	98
Life skills training <sup>4</sup>	84	82
Parenting skills training	73	71
<b>Services for children</b>		
Childcare	84	67
Counselling <sup>5</sup>	78	87
<b>Services for vulnerable populations</b>		
Culturally sensitive services for Indigenous persons	89	50
Services in non-official languages	43	55
Immigrants or refugees	28	63
Wheelchair accessibility <sup>6</sup>	80	71
Persons with mobility disabilities	21	20
Persons with visual disabilities	11	22
Persons with hearing disabilities	21	37
Persons with development or intellectual disabilities	24	34

1. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council).

2. Excludes accommodation of service animals.

3. For example paralegal services, assistance with legal documents, legal aid.

4. For example help with budgeting, banking, groceries, day-to-day management.

5. For example play therapy, role playing and goal oriented programming.

6. Includes shelters that are either fully or partially wheelchair accessible based on whether or not at least one building entrance, bedroom or bathroom is wheelchair accessible; excludes the provision of additional services for persons with mobility disabilities.

**Note:** Information in this table excludes some additional services that were collected in the survey. Information for services in this table excludes the following number of shelters that did not report services offered in a particular category: General services excludes 7 shelters, professional services excludes 155 shelters, services for adults excludes 15 shelters, services for children excludes 147 shelters and services for vulnerable populations excludes 121 shelters except for wheelchair accessibility which excludes 6 shelters. The sum of the response categories can exceed 100% as respondent shelters could mark all categories that apply.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.



**Table 5**  
**Types of abuse experienced by women residing in shelters for victims of abuse, by type of shelter, Canada, April 18, 2018**

Type of abuse	Indigenous shelters <sup>1</sup>		Non-Indigenous shelters	
	number	percent	number	percent
<b>Total women residents<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>328</b>	<b>...</b>	<b>2,779</b>	<b>...</b>
Physical	242	74	2,022	73
Sexual	89	27	921	33
Financial	151	46	1,448	52
Emotional/psychological	283	86	2,470	89
Harassment	122	37	834	30
Forced marriage	4	1	45	2
Human trafficking: sex work	22	7	57	2
Human trafficking: forced labour/other	5	2	20	1
Cultural	40	12	176	6
Spiritual	28	9	145	5
Other <sup>3</sup>	x	x	153	6

... not applicable

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

1. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council).

2. Excludes 5% of women residents in Indigenous shelters and 7% of women residents in non-Indigenous shelters for which the type of abuse experienced was unknown or not reported.

3. Other includes abuse through technology or cyber abuse, and abuse related to immigrant status (withholding status or information).

**Note:** The sum of the response categories can exceed 100% as respondents could mark all categories that apply. The April 18, 2018 reference period reflects the survey snapshot day, a predetermined business day meant to represent a typical day of operations for shelters across Canada.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

**Table 6**  
**Occupancy for short-term Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse, by urban or rural area, and region, April 18, 2018**

Region	All short-term shelters				Urban short-term shelters <sup>1</sup>				Rural short-term shelters <sup>1</sup>			
	Shelters		Occupancy <sup>3</sup>	Shelters full <sup>3</sup>	Shelters		Occupancy <sup>3</sup>	Shelters full <sup>3</sup>	Shelters		Occupancy <sup>3</sup>	Shelters full <sup>3</sup>
	number	Beds <sup>2</sup>			number	Beds <sup>2</sup>			number	Beds <sup>2</sup>		
Atlantic <sup>4</sup>	8	83	33	13	x	30	33	0	x	53	32	17
Quebec	9	84	61	33	x	24	83	67	x	60	52	17
Ontario	14	181	65	21	8	126	84	38	6	55	20	0
Manitoba	4	64	80	25	0	0	0	0	4	64	80	25
Saskatchewan	5	80	80	60	x	22	100	100	x	58	72	33
Alberta	10	150	101	20	x	57	96	33	x	93	104	14
British Columbia	21	247	70	48	14	186	83	57	7	61	31	29
Territories <sup>5</sup>	8	73	118	50	0	0	0	0	8	73	118	50
<b>Canada</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>23</b>

x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*

0 true zero or a value rounded to zero

1. Rural shelters are those that are situated outside of a census metropolitan area (CMA) or census agglomeration (CA). Urban shelters are those that are situated within a CMA or CA. A CMA or a CA is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more must live in the core. A CA must have a core population of at least 10,000. To be included in the CMA or CA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core as measured by commuting flows derived from previous census place of work data, where 50% or more of the population commutes into the core.

2. Beds refers only to the number of funded beds, including children's beds and cribs if applicable, regardless of source of funding. Excludes unfunded beds, which may include emergency beds such as cots, sofas, or sleeping bags.

3. Occupancy is calculated by dividing the total number of residents on the snapshot day by the total number of funded beds, multiplied by 100. Occupancy can exceed 100% if there are more residents staying in shelters than there are available funded beds. A shelter was considered full if its occupancy was 90% or more.

4. Includes Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

5. Includes Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

**Note:** The April 18, 2018 reference period reflects the survey snapshot day, a predetermined business day meant to represent a typical day of operations for shelters across Canada. Shelters are defined by their mandated expected length of stay, regardless of practice. Short-term shelters include shelters whose expected length of stay is less than three months, and typically provide individual beds to residents, as opposed to separate apartments or units. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council).

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

**Table 7**  
**Top challenges facing shelters for victims of abuse, by type of shelter, Canada, 2017/2018**

Challenges	Indigenous shelters <sup>1</sup>	Non-Indigenous shelters
	percent	
Financial instability	11	17
Lack of funding	36	48
Reliance on fundraising	16	27
Food costs	11	3
Transportation costs	8	6
Reliance on volunteers	0	2
Staff turnover	16	18
Mental health issues for staff	5	6
Low employee compensation	34	25
Skills development	13	5
Capacity	10	14
Accessibility issues related to structure	13	9
Need for physical repairs	19	18
Lack of administrative resources	8	5
Providing culturally appropriate supports and services	4	6
Meeting the diverse needs of clients	16	33
Advocacy	3	1
Not having the mandate to serve male clients	9	1
Criminal justice system	3	7
Lack of affordable childcare	6	4
Lack of permanent housing	48	36
Restrictions tied to external regulations	3	2
Other <sup>2</sup>	4	2

0 true zero or a value rounded to zero

1. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council).

2. Includes accessibility of shelter, unreliable transit system, shelter located in rough neighbourhood, among others.

**Note:** Excludes 5 Indigenous shelters and 11 non-Indigenous shelters that did not report the top three challenges or issues currently facing their shelter. Percentages do not equal 100% as each shelter could provide up to three challenges.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

**Table 8**  
**Top challenges facing residents of shelters for victims of abuse, by type of shelter, Canada, 2017/2018**

Challenges	Indigenous shelters <sup>1</sup>	Non-Indigenous shelters
	percent	
Underemployment and low incomes	45	51
Lack of assistance and regulations related to income	19	8
Affordable transportation	11	9
Affordable childcare	9	8
Food costs	11	7
Lack of Legal Aid funding	6	10
Lack of affordable long-term housing	70	79
Lack of shelters	10	8
Lack of other services	10	12
Lack of follow-up support	9	6
Mental health issues	25	39
Substance use issues	44	27
Parenting issues	11	6
Racism	3	1
Immigration regulations	0	3
Safety	8	14
Criminal justice system	1	8
Other <sup>2</sup>	1	2

0 true zero or a value rounded to zero

1. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council).

2. Includes difficult family court process, lack of reliable Internet, lack of health services for residents, among others.

**Note:** Excludes 5 Indigenous shelters and 12 non-Indigenous shelters that did not report the top three challenges or issues currently facing residents using their shelter. Percentages do not equal 100% as each shelter could provide up to three challenges.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.

**Table 9**  
**Funding sources and expenditures for shelters for victims of abuse, by type of shelter, Canada, 2017/2018**

Funding sources and expenditures	Indigenous shelters <sup>1</sup>		Non-Indigenous shelters	
	thousands of dollars <sup>2</sup>	percent	thousands of dollars <sup>2</sup>	percent
<b>Funding sources</b>				
Federal	16,230	31.6	14,168	3.9
Provincial/territorial	31,648	61.6	267,641	72.9
Regional/municipal	1,208	2.4	16,829	4.6
First Nations	554	1.1	0	0.0
Foundations	181	0.4	9,026	2.5
Fees for service	365	0.7	5,932	1.6
Lotteries	44	0.1	978	0.3
Fundraising	588	1.1	40,279	11.0
Other <sup>3</sup>	589	1.1	12,265	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,407</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>367,119</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>				
Salary	34,784	69.1	254,951	72.0
Rent, mortgage, property taxes	1,825	3.6	12,626	3.6
Other housing costs	3,275	6.5	22,737	6.4
Administrative costs	3,002	6.0	15,238	4.3
Staff training	1,191	2.4	3,314	0.9
Office costs	1,134	2.3	7,039	2.0
Direct client costs	2,643	5.2	18,303	5.2
Reserve fund	564	1.1	2,664	0.8
Other <sup>4</sup>	1,942	3.9	17,465	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,360</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>354,336</b>	<b>100.0</b>

0 true zero or a value rounded to zero

1. Indigenous shelters for victims of abuse include shelters that are part of an Indigenous organization, located in an Indigenous community, located on reserve, or owned or operated by a First Nations government (band council).

2. Totals may not equal the sum of their parts due to rounding.

3. Other funding includes interest accrued on invested funds, and unspecified grants and rebates.

4. Other expenses include membership fees, association fees, programming fees, and costs associated with fundraising and volunteers.

**Note:** Percentage calculations are based on unrounded dollar amounts.

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics, Survey of Residential Facilities for Victims of Abuse.