



Juristat

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Canada's Shelters for Abused Women, 2003/04

by Andrea Taylor-Butts

Highlights

- Between April 1, 2003 and March 31, 2004, there were 95,326 admissions of women and dependent children (58,486 women and 36,840 children) to 473 shelters across Canada, largely for reasons of abuse.
- According to the trend data from the last four cycles of the Transition Home Survey (THS), in 2003/04 total annual admissions of women and children declined 7% over the previous survey cycle and have decreased 11% since 1997/98. However, these declines are due largely to drops in the annual admission of children to shelters, which decreased 12% from 2001/02, and 21% from 1997/98. Annual admissions for women declined 3% over 2001/02 and 3% over 1997/98, as well.
- On April 14, 2004 there were 6,109 women and children in shelters. Of these, 2,496 women (76%) and 2,501 children (88%) were in shelters for reasons of abuse.
- The number of residents in shelters for reasons other than abuse, such as housing problems, drug and alcohol addiction and mental health issues has increased. Trend data indicate that while the number of women in shelters to escape abuse was virtually unchanged, up 1% from 1998 compared to 2004, the number of women in shelters for reasons other than abuse grew by 11%.
- Transition homes constituted the largest proportion of facilities providing residential services to abused women in each of the survey years since 1997/98, but their proportions have declined slightly over time (62% in 2003/04, down from 67% in 1997/98). Conversely, the proportion of general emergency shelters (9%, up from 5% in 1997/98) and women's emergency centres (7%, up from 5% in 1997/98) increased.
- The proportion of women in abusive situations residing in short-term, emergency facilities has grown. Specifically, the proportion of abused women using women's emergency centres increased steadily each year, from 5% in 1998 to 10% in 2004. In contrast, the proportion of abused women in transition homes on snapshot day declined from 62% in 1998 to 56% in 2004.
- A total of 3,519 women (52%) and dependent children (48%) were admitted to 31 on-reserve shelters between April 1, 2003 and March 31, 2004, up from 3,262 women and children admitted to 31 on-reserve shelters in 2001/02. Compared to shelters off reserves, a larger proportion of emergency-type shelters were found on reserves, 19% off-reserve versus 35% on-reserve.
- Nearly one-third (31%) of all women in shelters on April 14, 2004 had resided at that same shelter sometime in the past. Of these, four in ten had been there once in the previous year, 38% had been there two to four times and about one in ten (9%) had been to the facility five or more times in the last year.
- About one in ten (11%) women planned to return to their spouse or partner. However, the majority (62%) of women leaving shelters on snapshot day did not intend to return home to their spouse or partner. It was unknown where a quarter (27%) of the women departing intended to reside.
- Of the 93 shelters that could not accommodate or would not admit 221 women and 112 children on April 14, 2004, 62% reported referring them elsewhere because the shelter was full, a decline from previous years (75% of shelters that referred women and children elsewhere in 2001/02 and 71% in 1999/00). Other reasons for turning away clients relate to problems with alcohol and substance abuse as well as mental health issues.
- The proportion of facilities providing programming for children exposed to violence declined from three-quarters of shelters in 1999/00, to 68% in 2001/02, and 57% in 2003/04.



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Introduction

Across Canada, shelters are a critical source of support for many women and children escaping domestic violence and they are an essential component of the services and programs responding to the needs of victims of domestic violence. During 2003/04, more than 95,000 women and children were admitted to 473 shelters nationwide, largely for reasons of abuse. More than just a safe place to stay, shelters offer women and their children access to a variety of services that will help them better their lives, and often provide outreach activities, thereby extending their support to those residing outside of the facility.

The decision to go to a shelter can be influenced by a number of considerations.¹ Women wanting to escape an abusive situation may not know where to go for help or even if there are any shelters in their community. If they have children, abused women may be afraid of losing their children or having to leave them behind if they go to a shelter. They may fear that their spouse or partner will seek retribution if they leave. Women may be concerned about what their family, friends and/or community will think if it is discovered that they are in a shelter. These are just a few of the issues that women in abusive situations contemplate before deciding to use a shelter.

This *Juristat* presents a profile of shelters providing residential services to abused women and their children across Canada in 2003/04. Additionally, through the use of a snapshot day (April 14, 2004), selected characteristics of the women and children using these facilities are presented. Data for this *Juristat* come primarily from the Transition Home Survey (THS).

Box 1: Non-residential agencies serving victims of domestic violence

In addition to the residential services offered by shelters, there are a number of non-residential agencies to which victims of domestic violence can turn for help. These agencies deliver a wide range of services and programming to victims of crime, including assistance through the various stages of the criminal justice process, counselling, emotional support and financial compensation.

The first national survey of non-residential victim services agencies, The Victim Services Survey (VSS), was conducted in 2003 by Statistic Canada's Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Funded through Justice Canada's Policy Centre for Victim Issues and developed in consultation with federal, provincial and territorial ministries responsible for justice and victim services as well as a number of victim services agencies nationwide, the VSS is a census of victim services agencies across Canada. Victim services are defined as agencies that provide direct services to primary or secondary victims of crime and are funded in whole or in part by a ministry responsible for justice matters.

The objective of the Victim Services Survey is to provide a profile of victim services agencies, information on the types of services offered and some insight into the clients using these services (through the use of a snapshot of clients served on October 22, 2003). Additionally, standardized information from criminal injuries compensation and other financial benefit programs was also collected.

According to the Victim Services Survey, many of these agencies directed their efforts toward assisting victims of domestic violence. For example, adult victims of spousal abuse were the focus of about two-thirds of victim services agencies, 63% of agencies targeted adult victims of other domestic violence², and senior victims of partner abuse were the focus of 79% of victim services agencies (Kong 2004). Children or youth who were the victims of domestic violence were the focus of about four in ten agencies. Sexually abused/exploited children and youth were the target population of nearly half of all agencies, and nearly 40% of victim services agencies targeted child or youth victims of physical abuse/neglect (Kong 2004). Through the Victim Services Survey one day snapshot (October 22, 2003) it was found that more than 40% (1,339) of female victims served by such agencies were the victims of a violent crime committed by their spouse, ex-spouse, or intimate partner (Kong 2004).

For more information see: Kong, Rebecca. 2004. "Victim Services in Canada, 2002/03." *Juristat*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-XPE, Vol. 24, no. 11. Ottawa: Minister of Industry.

1. According to the 1999 GSS, about half (48%) of women who had experienced spousal violence in the past five years reported seeking help from some type of social service. About one in ten female victims of spousal violence used a shelter or transition home (Pottie Bunge 2000).
2. Adult victims of other domestic violence include adults who have experienced violence in the home by someone with whom they reside, other than by a partner. This includes adult secondary victims who have witnessed domestic violence, including witnessing partner abuse among a couple (e.g., an adult child who has witnessed the abuse of their mother by their father; a mother who has witnessed the abuse of her adult daughter by her son-in-law, etc.).

About the Transition Home Survey

The Transition Home Survey (THS) is a biennial census of all residential facilities that provide shelter to female victims of domestic violence.³ Questionnaires are mailed to all shelters or agencies known to provide residential services to abused women in every province and territory. In order to provide a more accurate picture of the facilities used by abused women, the THS includes shelters that may serve a broader population, in addition to women escaping domestic violence.⁴ Information is collected on the characteristics of the facilities and the services provided during the previous 12 months (April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004). For the 2003/04 THS, 543 shelters were contacted and responses were received from 473 or 87%.⁵

Whenever possible and appropriate, cross-sectional comparisons will be made with findings from previous cycles of the THS. As well, comparisons over time will be made using time-series data from the THS Trend File. The THS Trend File contains only those facilities that participated in the survey in each of the following years: 1997/98, 1999/00, 2001/02 and 2003/04, thereby controlling for non-response and changes to the composition of shelters due to openings of new facilities and shelter closures.⁶ Information from the THS Trend File will therefore be based on a subset of 332 shelters (representing 61% of all shelters in Canada for 2003/04).

Victims of spousal violence in Canada

Both women and men are victims of spousal violence. Findings from the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization indicate that 8% of women and 7% of men had experienced

spousal violence in the previous five years. However, the survey also found that the violence women suffer tends to be more severe in nature (e.g., beaten, choked, sexually assaulted) and repeated. Moreover, as a result of experiencing spousal abuse, women are three times more likely to be injured, five times more likely to seek medical attention and five times more likely to fear for their lives than men (Pottie Bunge 2000: 11).

Keeping in mind that only a fraction of spousal violence comes to the attention of police (according to the 1999 GSS, just over one-quarter of those who had been the victim of spousal violence the past five years, indicated that they had reported that violence to police), police-reported data indicate that rates of spousal assault have shown a slight decrease in more recent years. According to a non-representative subset of 71 police departments, the rates of police-reported spousal assault rose steadily from 1998 to 2000, but from 2001 to 2003 rates declined.⁷ This trend was true for both male and female victims of spousal violence. Nevertheless, annual rates of police-reported spousal violence were, on average, more than five times higher for females than for males. It should be noted that data from the 1999 GSS indicate that men are also less likely than women to report incidents of spousal violence to police. That men typically experience less serious forms of violence and experience less repeated violence may contribute to this difference (Brzozowski 2004).

Recent policies and legislation reflect emerging awareness of domestic violence issues

Over the last two decades, efforts, largely by women's groups and grassroots movements, have helped bring about a number of policy and legislative developments which reflect an increased awareness of domestic violence and the issues that abused women face. The implementation of spousal abuse charging and prosecution directives and the enactment of civil domestic violence legislation are just two examples.

Since the 1980's there has been a shift in how the justice system responds to domestic violence. No longer treated as a private matter, each province and territory has charging and prosecution directives or policies in place to ensure that spousal violence cases are treated as criminal offences. Moreover, these policies also aim at ensuring the safety and security of victims, promoting victim reporting to police and increasing the system's capacity to handle domestic violence issues.

Box 2: Types of residential facilities for abused women and children: Definitions used in the Transition Home Survey

The term 'shelter', is used broadly to refer to all residential facilities for abused women and their dependent children. The types of shelters defined by the Transition Home Survey include:

Transition Home – Short or moderate term (1 day to 11 weeks), also referred to as first stage emergency housing.

Second Stage Housing – Long-term (3-12 months), secure housing with support and referral services designed to assist women while they search for permanent housing.

Safe Home Network – A network of private homes in rural or remote areas where there is no full-fledged operating shelter. It offers subsidiary very short-term (1-3 days), emergency housing.

Women's Emergency Centre/Shelter – Short-term (1-21 days), respite (temporary relief) for women and their dependent children.

Emergency Shelter – Short-term (1-3 days), respite for a wide population range, not exclusively abused women. Some facilities may provide accommodation for men as well as women. This type of facility may accommodate residents who are not associated with family abuse but are without a home due to an emergency situation (e.g., eviction for non-payment of rent). Other than residential (room and board) services, these shelters offer few additional client services.

Family Resource Centre – An Ontario government initiative that serves a wide range of clients and provides clients with an extensive array of information and referrals as well as residential services.

Other – All other facilities/shelters not otherwise classified. This category may include Rural Family Violence Prevention Centres in Alberta, Interim Housing in Manitoba, and other types of emergency shelters, such as YWCAs. These services may not be exclusive to abused women.

3. Shelters that do not provide residential accommodations are excluded.
4. For example, shelters that provide residential services to abused women as well as to other populations such as male victims of spousal abuse, and men and women in shelters for reasons other than abuse are included. Facilities that *exclusively* serve male victims of spousal abuse fall outside the scope of this survey. At the time of this survey, only one such facility was known to be in operation.
5. Shelters may operate multiple types of residential services (e.g., a shelter might operate a transition home as well as second stage housing). Facilities operating more than one type of residential service were asked to complete a separate questionnaire for each type of residential service they provided.
6. The exclusion of certain shelters, as well as non-response for certain questions by participating shelters, means that some information based on the 2003/04 survey is undercounted or incomplete. This is not the case for the information based on the trend data file.
7. These findings are based on a subset of 71 police departments (active as of December 31, 2003 representing 46% of the national volume of crime in 2003) who consistently reported to the Incident-based Uniform Crime Report (UCR2) Survey from 1998 to 2003 and therefore, are not nationally representative.

With respect to spousal violence, 'pro'- charging (referred to as 'mandatory' in some jurisdictions) policies, first introduced in the mid-1980s, require that charges be laid where there are reasonable and probable grounds to do so, regardless of the victim's wishes. Thus, the victim is relieved of the burden of deciding whether or not to press or drop charges. 'Pro'- prosecution policies require the Crown to prosecute spousal violence cases whenever there is a reasonable likelihood of conviction and it is in the public interest to do so. By the early 1990's, many jurisdictions had expanded their spousal abuse charging and prosecution policies to address a variety of issues including: procedures for withdrawing or staying charges, the use of peace bonds, measures for promoting victim participation in the prosecution as well as the services and support that should be provided to victims. Currently, pro-charging and pro-prosecution policies are in place across all provinces and territories (Final Report of the Ad Hoc Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group Reviewing Spousal Abuse Policies and Legislation 2003: 11). By 2003, according to a subset of 122 police departments⁸, charges were laid in 80% of all spousal violence incidents (82% with a female victim, 70% with a male victim), 8% of incidents were not cleared⁹ and 12% were cleared otherwise¹⁰.

In addition to changes affecting criminal justice, several jurisdictions across the country have or will be enacting civil domestic violence legislation in order to provide victims of domestic violence with further options for safety. Saskatchewan (1995), Prince Edward Island (1996), the Yukon Territory (1999), Manitoba (1999), Alberta (1999), Nova Scotia (2003), the Northwest Territories (2005) and Ontario (passed in 2000, but not yet proclaimed) have all passed similar types of civil domestic violence legislation giving victims in crisis situations access to emergency protection orders.¹¹ Given some inter-jurisdictional variations, the basic objective of this legislation is to grant those experiencing domestic violence with immediate protection and ready access to the justice system, with the hope that early intervention will prevent an escalation of the violence. Examples of components of protective orders are: giving the victim sole access to the family home; removing the abuser from the home; and prohibiting the abuser from contacting or communicating with the victim (Final Report of the Ad Hoc Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group Reviewing Spousal Abuse Policies and Legislation 2003).¹²

The establishment of shelters as a refuge for women trying to escape abusive situations dates back to the 1970's. Since that time, there has been considerable expansion in the number of shelters, with the largest period of growth occurring during the 1980's. As awareness of domestic violence and violence against women, in particular, increased in the late 1970's and early 1980s, government attention became more focused on these issues. Subsequently, the co-operative efforts and partnerships of the federal and provincial/territorial governments and community groups, led to the development of a substantial system of transition homes, second stage houses, and emergency shelters across the country (Code 2003). Prior to 1975, there were just 18 known shelters in Canada. Currently there are more than 500 facilities nationwide that provide residential services to women and their children fleeing domestic violence.

Number and types of residential facilities in Canada

There has been a shift in the types of facilities providing shelter to abused women and their children


Similar to previous years, the vast majority of shelters participated in the 2003/04 Transition Home Survey. Of the 543 facilities known to be in operation, 473 (87%) participated in the seventh cycle of the survey (Table 1).¹³ More than half (53%) of these facilities providing residential services to women were transition homes. About one in five facilities were second stage houses (18%) and another fifth were emergency-type shelters (including 9% women's emergency centres and 11% general emergency shelters). The remaining 9% included other types of facilities such as safe home networks, Rural family Violence Prevention Centres (Alberta), Interim Housing (Manitoba), and Family Violence Resource Centres (Ontario). This is similar to the distribution of shelters responding to the 2001/02 survey. However compared to 1997/98, the proportion of transition homes reporting to the survey has declined (down from 63% in 1997/98) and the proportion of emergency-type shelters increased, representing 20% of reporting shelters in 2003/04, up from 12% in 1997/98.

According to the THS Trend File, there has been a shift in the types of facilities that are providing shelter to abused women and their children. For example, in 1997/98, 67% of shelters were transition homes compared to 62% in 2003/04. And while transition homes constituted the largest proportion of facilities providing residential services to abused women in each of the survey years since 1997/98, emergency facilities have gained in their share. Specifically, the proportion of general emergency shelters increased from 5% of all shelters in 1997/98 to 9% in 2003/04. Similarly, 7% of facilities were women's emergency centres in 2003/04, up from 5% in 1997/98. Second stage housing consistently represented 13% of the shelters included among facilities reporting each year from 1997/98 to 2003/04.

Tracking of facilities over subsequent survey cycles, indicates that some facilities have changed from one classification of shelter type to another. For example, the decline in the proportion of transition homes and concurrent increase in the proportion of emergency-type shelters is largely due to the conversion of transition homes to general emergency shelters

8. These data represent 61% of the national volume of crime in 2003.
9. 'Not cleared' refers to incidents where an accused has not been identified in connection with the incident.
10. 'Cleared otherwise' refers to incidents where the complainant requests charges not to be laid or incidents cleared for other reasons including: departmental discretion, reason beyond department control, suicide of accused, death of accused, death of witness/complainant, accused is less than 12 years old, committal of accused to mental hospital, accused in foreign country, accused involved in other incidents, diversionary program and unknown.
11. New Brunswick is currently considering implementing such legislation.
12. It is likely too soon for the impact of these new measures on victims' safety and their use of shelters to be reflected in THS results.
13. Facilities that house/operate more than one type of shelter (e.g., transition home, emergency shelter and second stage housing) are asked to complete a separate survey for each shelter type. However, in a small number of cases it was not possible to obtain separate questionnaires for each shelter and information for more than one shelter type had to be included on one survey. In such cases, the determination of shelter type was based on the main focus of the facilities' activities (see Data Sources).

Table 1

 Number of shelters operating and responding to the Transition Home Survey by province and territory, 2003/04^{1,2}			
	Number operating	Number that responded	%
Canada	543	473	87
Newfoundland and Labrador	14	12	86
Prince Edward Island	4	4	100
Nova Scotia	19	19	100
New Brunswick	17	16	94
Quebec	117	102	87
Ontario	155	132	85
Manitoba	27	23	85
Saskatchewan	23	18	78
Alberta	43	42	98
British Columbia	105	94	90
Yukon	6	3	50
Northwest Territories	7	5	71
Nunavut	6	3	50

1. Facilities that house/operate more than one type of shelter (e.g., transition home, emergency shelter and second stage housing) are asked to complete a separate survey for each shelter type. However, in a small number of cases it was not possible to obtain separate questionnaires for each shelter and information for more than one shelter type had to be included on one survey. In such cases, the determination of shelter type was based on the main focus of the facilities' activities (see Data Sources).
2. Compared to the 2001/02 THS, in 2003/04 response rates were notably lower for Ontario (93% vs. 85%), Quebec (94% vs. 87%), Saskatchewan (91% vs. 78%), Yukon (83% vs. 50%) and Nunavut (80% vs. 50%) but higher for Alberta (90% vs. 98%).

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2003/04.

or women's emergency centres. Much of this shift in shelter composition from transition homes to emergency-type shelters can be attributed to changes in the make-up of shelters in Ontario, which constituted over one-quarter of all facilities in Canada in 2003/04. Between 1997/98 and 2003/04, Ontario reported the largest decrease in the number of transition homes (down 12 shelters) and the greatest increase in the number of emergency-type shelters (up 11 shelters).

This shift in the composition of shelters may have a number of implications, particularly for service delivery and victim protection. The primary purpose of women's emergency centres and general emergency shelters is immediate, short-term respite. Further, emergency shelters serve a much broader population and range of needs than transition homes and second stage houses. These emergency-type facilities may not have the necessary resources to offer specialized programming and services to abused women, as these services fall outside of their primary mandate. Therefore, abused women may experience reduced access to the services they need. In addition, they may be subject to shorter stays in women's emergency centres and general emergency shelters, and as a result, more apt to return to the shelter in the future. Nevertheless, the precise reasons for the change from one shelter type to another cannot be determined from the survey data. For example, an emergency shelter in 2003/04 that was formerly a transition home in 1997/98 may have changed designations because of the opening of a new transition house in that facility's service area.

The 473 shelters surveyed housed 8,879 licensed or funded beds. However, this count may not be a true reflection of shelter capacity. When shelters are full, emergency accommodations may be made and women may be offered the use of emergency beds such as cots and sofas. Bed counts on the Transition Home Survey only include beds that are licensed or funded and therefore, do not capture these emergency or overflow beds.

Overall, the number of shelters in operation has continued to grow. There were 14 new shelters participating on the 2003/04 survey. However, 11 of these shelters were affiliated or housed within pre-existing facilities. Shelters may house multiple facility types for a number of reasons including operational factors such as costs, the length of stay, the location and a lack of housing options for women and children upon departure. Furthermore, the introduction of a new shelter type does not necessarily mean a corresponding increase in the residential capacity. There were seven shelters that participated in the 2001/02 survey, but had closed by 2003/04.

Annual admissions

A growing proportion of annual admissions are to emergency shelters

Between April 1, 2003 and March 31, 2004¹⁴, there were 95,326 admissions of women and children to shelters across Canada, in the majority of instances, to escape abuse (Table 2).¹⁵ Of the 58,486 women and 36,840 children admitted to shelters in 2003/04, half (51%) resided in transition homes, while 39% resided in short-term facilities, including women's emergency centres (14%) and general emergency shelters (25%). Compared to 2001/02, the proportion of admissions to transition homes has declined slightly from 53% of all admissions, and dropped slightly for women's emergency shelters, down from 17%, but has risen for admissions to general emergency shelters, up from 20% in 2001/02.

According to the THS Trend File, in 2003/04 the overall number of annual admissions to shelters declined 7% compared to 2001/02 and 11% from 1997/98. These declines are due largely to drops in the annual admission of children to shelters. Annual counts for children dropped 12% between 2001/02 and 2003/04. The gap was even greater for children's admissions between 1997/98 and 2003/04, with a decline of 21% in 2003/04. In 2003/04, annual admissions of women declined 3% compared to 2001/02 and were also 3% lower than in 1997/98. Declines in the admission of children to shelters may be explained, in part, by an overall drop in the representation of children in the general population. Between 1998 and 2004, the number of children in Canada aged 14 and under dropped 4%, and children went from representing 20% of the country's population to 18% during this time period.

14. The precise reporting period may vary. Shelters were asked to provide information for the twelve-month period ending March 31, 2004 or their own twelve-month fiscal period.

15. Facilities that house/operate more than one type of shelter (e.g., transition home, emergency shelter and second stage housing) are asked to complete a separate survey for each shelter type. However, in a small number of cases it was not possible to obtain separate questionnaires for each shelter and information for more than one shelter type had to be included on one questionnaire. In such cases, the determination of shelter type was based on the main focus of the facilities' activities (see Data Sources).

Table 2

Number of annual admissions to shelters by provinces and territories and facility type, Canada, 2003/04¹

	Facility type											
	All facility types			Transition house			Second stage housing			Safe home network		
	Total	Women	Children	Total	Women	Children	Total	Women	Children	Total	Women	Children
Canada	95,326	58,486	36,840	48,851	28,161	20,690	3,342	1,497	1,845	426	230	196
Newfoundland and Labrador	1,084	650	434	816	446	370	16	11	5	0	0	0
Prince Edward Island	174	98	76	139	82	57	35	16	19	0	0	0
Nova Scotia ³	8,162	7,417	745	1,652	990	662	151	68	83	0	0	0
New Brunswick	1,756	1,012	744	1,671	978	693	85	34	51	0	0	0
Quebec ⁴	14,980	9,207	5,773	13,889	8,309	5,580	255	130	125	0	0	0
Ontario	28,791	17,226	11,565	12,683	7,333	5,350	1,259	635	624	0	0	0
Manitoba	4,952	2,441	2,511	472	226	246	267	101	166	0	0	0
Saskatchewan	3,986	1,926	2,060	2,236	1,059	1,177	99	36	63	8	3	5
Alberta	13,707	7,729	5,978	1,740	916	824	706	277	429	0	0	0
British Columbia	15,499	9,666	5,833	11,604	6,841	4,763	423	170	253	418	227	191
Yukon	607	388	219	590	376	214	17	12	5	0	0	0
Northwest Territories	722	354	368	632	308	324	29	7	22	0	0	0
Nunavut	906	372	534	727	297	430	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Women's emergency centre			Emergency shelter			Family resource centre			Other ²		
	Total	Women	Children	Total	Women	Children	Total	Women	Children	Total	Women	Children
Canada	13,345	8,097	5,248	23,921	16,938	6,983	1,628	913	715	3,813	2,650	1,163
Newfoundland and Labrador	11	6	5	225	171	54	0	0	0	16	16	0
Prince Edward Island	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nova Scotia ³	0	0	0	6,359	6,359	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Brunswick	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Quebec ⁴	19	6	13	117	62	55	0	0	0	700	700	0
Ontario	2,515	1,515	1,000	8,184	5,194	2,990	1,628	913	715	2,522	1,636	886
Manitoba	1,894	1,113	781	2,133	934	1,199	0	0	0	186	67	119
Saskatchewan	110	58	52	1,508	745	763	0	0	0	25	25	0
Alberta	7,926	4,780	3,146	2,997	1,563	1,434	0	0	0	338	193	145
British Columbia	758	581	177	2,270	1,834	436	0	0	0	26	13	13
Yukon	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northwest Territories	0	0	0	61	39	22	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nunavut	112	38	74	67	37	30	0	0	0	0	0	0

0 true zero or a value rounded to zero

- Precise reporting period may vary. Shelters were asked to provide information for the twelve-month period ending March 31, 2004 or their own twelve month fiscal period. Because the number and type of shelters participating in each cycle of the THS may vary, comparisons of admissions from 2003/04 to results from previous survey cycles are not advisable.
- 'Other' includes all other facilities/shelters not otherwise classified. This category may include Rural Family Violence Prevention Centres in Alberta, Interim Housing in Manitoba, and other types of emergency shelters, such as YWCA's. These services may not be exclusive to abused women.
- Admissions to emergency shelters make-up a substantial proportion of admissions to shelters in Nova Scotia. Since abused women may represent only a small segment of the population using the residential services of an emergency shelter, the majority of annual admissions to shelters in Nova Scotia are likely for reasons other than to escape spousal violence. Emergency shelters serve a wide population, providing residential accommodations to those who find themselves in need of refuge for a variety of reasons. Admissions for 2003/04 are not comparable with admission figures from previous survey cycles due to variations in the number and type of shelters reporting to the THS from cycle to cycle.
- Admissions for shelters in Quebec for 2003/04 are not comparable with admission figures from previous cycles of the survey, due to changes in the administrative counting practises of certain shelters in that province.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2003/04.

Findings from the THS Trend File data coincide with the findings reported above, also pointing to a rise in admissions to shorter-term facilities. The proportion of annual admissions to transition homes, which offer moderate to long-term refuge, has declined since 1997/98. At the same time, there has been an increase in the proportion of women and children admitted to short-term, emergency facilities which may not offer the services and programming to meet the particular needs of those fleeing domestic violence. For example in 2003/04, 62% of annual admissions were to transition homes, down from 75% in


1997/98. Whereas annual admissions to women's emergency centres grew from 11% in 1997/98 to 13% in 2003/04, and the proportion of general emergency shelter admissions rose from 7% to 16% during the same time period. Overall, admissions to emergency-type facilities increased from 18% of all admissions in 1997/98 to 24% in 1999/00, 26% in 2001/02 and 29% in 2003/04. Annual admissions to second stage houses remained stable at about 3% each year of the survey between 1997/98 and 2003/04.

Resident profile, April 14, 2004

On April 14, 2004 there were 6,109 women (3,274) and children (2,835) residing in shelters nation-wide. Among these women and children, eight out of ten were fleeing abuse. Specifically, 2,496 (76%) women and 2,501 (88%) children staying in shelters on the snapshot day were there to escape an abusive situation.

Across Canada, the average rate of abused women residing in shelters was 25 per 100,000 population of married, common law and separated women (Table 3).¹⁶ For the previous survey cycle, the rate was 24 per 100,000 population of married, common law and separated women. Among the provinces,¹⁷ rates of shelter usage for women fleeing the abuse of a spousal relationship were highest in Prince Edward Island (37), Nova Scotia (35) and Saskatchewan (30). However, caution must be used when making inter-jurisdictional comparisons. Rates of shelter usage should not be taken as a direct measure of the incidence of spousal violence in that province. Inter-provincial differences in rates may be the result of a variety of factors such as the capacity and availability of shelters, the catchment area shelters serve and the number of shelters that participated in the survey (Code 2003).

Table 3

 Rate¹ of women in shelters to escape the abuse of a current or former spouse or common law partner on April 14, 2004, Canada, provinces and territories			
	Number of women in shelters on April 14, 2004 to escape the abuse of current or former spouse or common law partner ²	Population of married, common law and separated women ³	Rate per 100,000 married, common law and separated women
Canada	1,973	7,798,290	25
Newfoundland and Labrador	25	137,695	18
Prince Edward Island	13	35,255	37
Nova Scotia	82	236,078	35
New Brunswick	50	191,014	26
Quebec	401	1,790,822	22
Ontario	721	3,071,491	23
Manitoba	72	273,096	26
Saskatchewan	70	235,283	30
Alberta	225	774,859	29
British Columbia	285	1,030,734	28
Yukon Territory	8	7,585	105
Northwest Territories	8	9,214	87
Nunavut	13	5,164	252

1. Rates are calculated based on 100,000 population. Population estimates are provided by Statistics Canada, Demography Division. Populations as of July 1: preliminary postcensal estimates for 2004.

2. On April 14, 2004, 79% of abused women in shelters were there to escape an abusive spouse, common law partner, ex-spouse or ex-common law partner.

3. Separated includes persons currently married, but who are no longer living with their spouse (for any reason other than illness or work) and have not obtained a divorce. Persons who are separated but who live with a common-law partner are not included in this category.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2003/04.

Three-quarters of women residing in shelters were fleeing abuse

The proportion of women and children in shelters for reasons of abuse on April 14, 2004 was slightly higher than it had been on April 15, 2002 (73% of women and 84% of children), but remained smaller than the proportion of women and children in shelters to escape abuse on April 17, 2000 (81% of women and 91% of children).

More specifically, using the THS Trend File, it is found that, since 1998, the number of residents in shelters for reasons other than abuse has increased. Among those 332 facilities included in the Trend File, the number of women in shelters to escape abuse on snapshot day in 2004 was virtually unchanged, up just 1%, compared to 1998. However, the number of women in shelters for other reasons grew by 11% between 1998 and 2004. Nevertheless, the historical data also indicate that the rise in the number of women in shelters for reasons other than abuse had little effect on the overall representation of these women among shelter residents. On April 20, 1998, 17% of women in shelters were there for reasons other than abuse, as were 18% of women on snapshot day in 2004.

While the number of women using shelters on snapshot day has grown, historical data show that the types of shelters being used have changed with the growth in emergency-type shelters. Specifically, the proportion of abused women staying in women's emergency centres increased steadily each year, going from 5% on April 20, 1998 to 10% on April 14, 2004. Use of general emergency shelters was more stable. On snapshot day in 1998, 9% of women seeking shelter from abuse were residing in general emergency shelters, as were 11% in 2000, 8% in 2002 and 9% again on snapshot day in 2004. The proportion of abused women in transition homes on snapshot day declined from 62% in 1998 to 56% in 2004.

Shelter residents most often reported experiencing psychological or emotional abuse and physical abuse

Domestic violence can assume many forms and women fleeing abusive situations frequently suffer more than one type of abuse. On snapshot day in 2004, of the three-quarters of women staying in shelters to escape abuse, 86% were fleeing psychological or emotional abuse, 68% physical abuse (compared to 74% in 2001/02), 50% threats, 46% financial abuse, 31% harassment and 27% sexual abuse.¹⁸ With the exception of physical abuse, the proportions of women in shelters to escape the various forms of abuse were similar on the 2003/04 THS, relative to the previous cycle.

16. Rates are based on the number of women in shelters on April 14, 2004 to escape the abuse of a current or former spouse or common law partner. On that day, 79% of abused women in shelters were there to escape an abusive spousal relationship, including either a current or previous spouse or common-law partner.

17. Because of sparse populations and relatively low response rates in the Yukon Territory, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, these jurisdictions have been excluded from this analysis.

18. Percentages do not add up to 100% due to multiple responses.

About one-quarter of women residents were in shelters for reasons other than to escape abuse such as housing problems

Almost one-quarter of women were in shelters on snapshot day in 2004 for reasons other than to escape abusive situations. Of these women, over two-thirds (68%) were unable to find affordable housing. More than one-third (38%) were experiencing a housing emergency and another 36% were experiencing some short-term housing problem, figures similar to the previous survey cycle. Finally, almost half (46%) were in shelters because of drug and alcohol addictions and about four in ten women (43%) were there due to mental health issues. Again, these figures are relatively consistent with 2002 data.

Source of referral

For the first time, the 2003/04 THS collected information from facilities to identify the source(s) of referral for each of the women residing in shelters on snapshot day. Among women in shelters on April 14, 2004, self-referral was the most likely source of referral (29% of all referrals), followed by referrals from a community agency/contact such as a hospital, doctor, government ministry, police or Aboriginal organization (17%), another transition home (16%), as well as 'other' community agencies (15%). Family and/or friends constituted 8% of all referrals. About 15% of referrals came from some other source or the source was unknown.

Children accompanying mothers

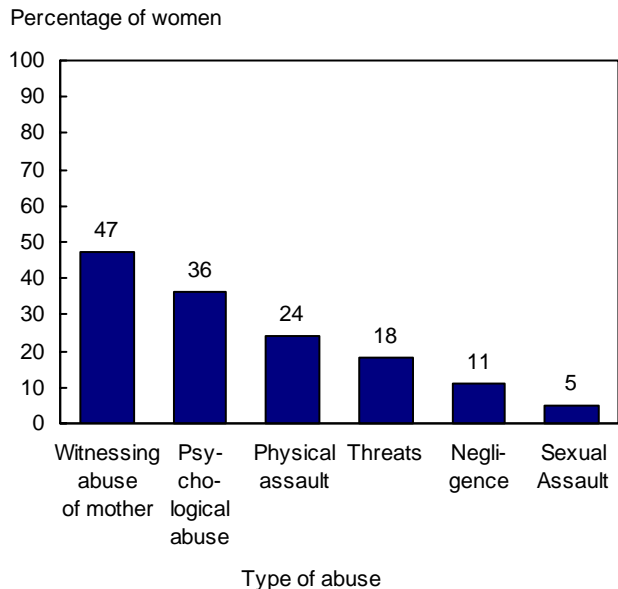
Most abused women brought their children with them to shelters on snapshot day. Nearly three-quarters of the abused women admitted to shelters on April 14, 2004 had parenting responsibilities (Table 4).¹⁹ Of these women, 71% brought their children with them to the shelter. Over two-thirds (67%) of these children were under 10 years of age. Overall, about half of all residents escaping abusive situations were children.

According to the trend data, changes in the proportions of women bringing their children with them to shelters between 1998 and 2004 have been minimal. For example, while the proportion of women with parenting responsibilities was virtually unchanged in 1998 and 2004 (77% and 75%, respectively), the proportion of these women admitted with their children was also only two percentage points lower, going from 75% on snapshot day in 1998, to 73% in 2004.

Women who brought their children with them frequently did so to protect them from various types of harm, including: witnessing the abuse of their mother (47%), psychological abuse (36%), physical abuse (24%), threats (18%), neglect (11%) and sexual abuse (5%) (Figure 1).²⁰ However, since the 2001/02 survey cycle, there were slight declines in the proportions of women indicating that they had come to the shelter to protect their children from these various forms of abuse.

The detrimental effects of domestic violence on children's emotional, cognitive and behavioural development, both in the short- and long-term, are well documented (Hotton 2003; Moss 2003). Despite the need for intervention, the proportion of facilities providing programming for children exposed to violence declined from three-quarters of shelters in 1999/00, to 68% in 2001/02, and 57% in 2003/04.

Figure 1



Note: Figures do not add to 100% due to multiple responses.
 1. Figures represent residents on April 14, 2004. 'Women with parenting responsibilities' include women admitted to shelters with their children and women admitted without their children. However, it is not known if women admitted without their children had custody of those children at the time of admittance.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2003/04.

There are a variety of reasons why mothers might choose not to bring their children with them to a shelter. They may fear losing their children if they bring them to a shelter due to provincial child welfare policies that require mandatory reporting of child abuse to child protection authorities. In other instances, children may be old enough to live on their own, may stay in the family home because of schooling issues, while in other cases may not be eligible to stay in some shelters, as is sometimes the case for example, of male youth over the age of 16.

A woman's decision about whether or not to bring her children with her may also be influenced by the type of facility to which she is going. On April 14, 2004, children were most likely to accompany their mothers to longer-term facilities, such as transition homes and second stage houses (facilities that are better able to address needs associated with long-term change), than to short-term, emergency-type shelters. About one-third (34%) of women with parenting responsibilities who were admitted with their children, were staying in second stage houses, compared to just 15% of women with parenting responsibilities who were not admitted with their children.

19. 'Women with parenting responsibilities' include women admitted to shelters with their children and women admitted without their children. However, it is not known if women admitted without their children had custody of those children at the time of admittance.
 20. Percentages do not add up to 100% due to multiple responses.

Conversely, 31% of women with parenting responsibilities admitted without their children were residing in an emergency facility, compared to just 19% of women with parenting responsibilities who were admitted with their children. Thus, the decline in the proportion of women accompanied by their children may be explained by the concurrent increase in the proportion of women residing in emergency-type shelters.

Women aged 25 to 34 were more likely to use shelters

Research indicates that young women are more likely to fall victim to domestic violence than older women. Findings from the 1999 General Social Survey on Victimization, the 1993 Violence Against Women Survey and the Homicide Survey show that women under 25 years of age had the highest rates of spousal violence and suffered the greatest risk of being killed by estranged spouses (Rodgers 1994; Pottie Bunge 2000; and Hotton 2001). Over 80% of the women in shelters for reasons of abuse on snapshot day in 2004 were between 15 and 44 years old, with the largest proportion of women falling within the 25 to 34 age category (35%) (Table 4). Accounting for their representation in the overall population, women 25 to 34 still find themselves in shelters at a higher rate than women in other age groups.

Table 4

Characteristics of abused women residing in shelters by age, parental status, disability and relationship to abuser, Canada, April 14, 2004		
	Number	%
Total women admitted due to abuse	2,496	100
Age Group		
15-24	454	18
25-34	886	35
35-44	668	27
45-54	261	10
55+	114	5
Age Unknown	113	5
Parental status		
Admitted with child(ren)	1,313	53
Admitted without child(ren) ¹	533	21
Admitted who have no child(ren)	518	21
Parental status unknown	132	5
Disabilities²		
Physical	102	4
Visual disabilities	33	1
Hearing disabilities	14	1
Other disabilities ³	24	...
Relationship between abused woman and abuser		
Spouse	706	28
Common law partner	944	38
Ex-spouse/Ex-partner	323	13
Dating/Ex-dating	122	5
Relative	156	6
Other	108	4
Relationship unknown	137	5

... not applicable

- It is not known if women admitted without their children had custody of those children at the time of admittance.
- This was a multiple response item. Percentages are based on the total number of women in shelters for reasons of abuse on April 14, 2004.
- Percentages of all women unavailable for this item due to multiple responses per respondent (i.e., one woman could have more than one 'other' disability).

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2003/04.

The majority of women were escaping violence from a current partner

Two-thirds of women in shelters for abuse on April 14, 2004 were there to escape the abuse of a current spouse (28%) or common law partner (38%). Another 13% of women were fleeing an abusive ex-spouse or ex-partner. Six percent of women were fleeing abuse by a relative and 5% were there to escape an abusive dating or ex-dating relationship. Another 4% were being abused by a friend, caregiver or authority figure. For 5% of women in shelters on snapshot day, the relationship to their abuser was unknown. These findings are similar to those from previous cycles of the THS.

Box 3: Shelters for abused men

The vast majority of residential services for victims of spousal violence offer services for women. However, according to the *National Directory of Services and Programs for Men Who Are or Have Been Victims of Violence 2003*, there are a few residential facilities in Canada that specifically offer services to male victims of domestic violence.²¹ These organizations provide abused men and their children with short to mid-term refuge, clothing, individual support, information and follow-up.

Maison oxygène in Montréal Quebec is the only shelter known to exclusively serve men.²² This shelter's mandate is to help men 15 years and older who are dealing with problems of spousal abuse, as well as other family difficulties (e.g., the ending of a relationship, financial problems). Its services are primarily aimed at fathers with children. The role of the organization rests on three principles: developing the men's autonomy, reinforcing their self-esteem, and offering support to the men and their children. Maison oxygène provided shelter to 27 men and 53 children, in 2003. Some of the programs and services offered by the facility include the following: Orientation, education, counselling, personal growth groups, referrals, advocacy and community workshops.

According to the 2003/04 THS, while most facilities (90%) had policies that did not allow adult males to be admitted into their facility, 4% of shelters did have policies that permitted the admission of adult men. Another 4% had no facility policy on the admittance of adult men (2% of shelters did not indicate whether or not they had such a policy). Among those shelters that admitted male adults, in total, 47 adult men were admitted to shelters for abuse between April 1, 2003 and March 31, 2004.²³ Of those men admitted for reasons of abuse, 42 (89%) were admitted specifically for domestic violence related abuse.

Shelters are not required to report the abuse of adults to police but are required to report the abuse of children to police and child welfare agencies. The abuse that brings a woman to a shelter may not be a criminal act. Nevertheless, 763 or nearly one in three abused women (31%) in shelters on April 14, 2004 had reported their most recent abusive situation to police. This figure is up slightly from 2001/02, when 29% of women had reported the most recent incident of abuse to police. Among incidents reported to police, charges were laid in 62% of these cases (6% of reported incidents did not result in charges being laid, and for nearly one-third of incidents reported to police, it was unknown whether or not charges were laid). A court

21. The shelters include: Centre de santé Inuulitsivik, Puvirnituq (QC); Maison oxygène, Montreal (QC) and Community Crisis Society, Strathmore (AB). The *National Directory of Services and Programs for Men Who Are or Have Been Victims of Violence* is available at the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence website at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ncc-n/>.

22. For more information on Maison oxygène see <http://www.cam.org/%7Ecafahe/heberge.htm>.

23. Because few adult males are admitted to shelters in the THS, only information on annual admissions is collected. Thus, there is no snapshot day data for adult males.

order,²⁴ such as a peace bond or restraining order, was obtained in about half (52%) of all cases reported to police.

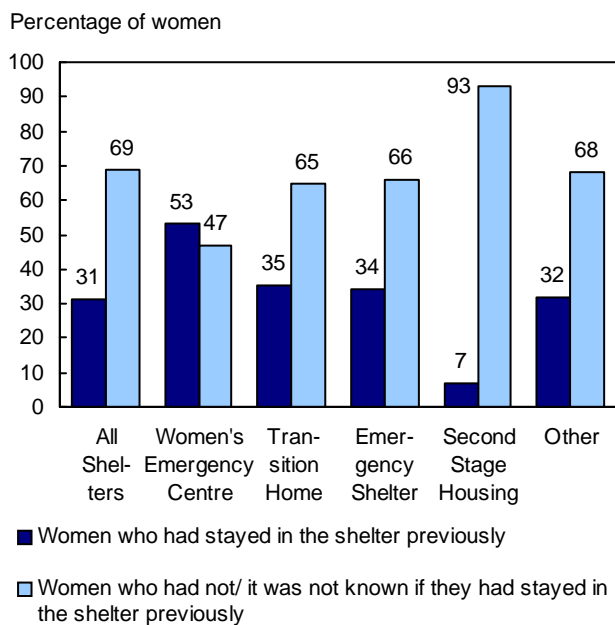
Compared to those residing in other types of shelters, women in second stage houses were more likely to have reported their abuse to police (36%, compared to 29% for all other shelters types), to have charges laid in their cases (68%, compared to 60% for all others) and to have had an order of protection issued (62%, compared to 48% for all others). A possible explanation for this finding might be that women in long-term facilities have been involved with their abuser for a longer period of time and thus, seek more permanent resolutions to their situations.

Nearly one in three women in shelters on April 14, 2004 had been there before

For many women, leaving an abusive relationship is a process rather than a one-time act. Women may return to an abusive partner only to leave once again when the violence re-occurs. Lack of housing alternatives and/or financial resources; commitment to a relationship in which they have invested a great deal; hope that the abuse will stop; guilt over separating children from their father; social pressure to be partnered and cultural or religious beliefs about the sanctity of marriage are a few of the many reasons some women might return to an abusive partner (Rodgers 1994; National Clearinghouse on Family Violence 2001; Horrill and Berman 2004).

Figure 2

One-third of all women residing in shelters on April 14, 2004 had stayed in the shelter previously

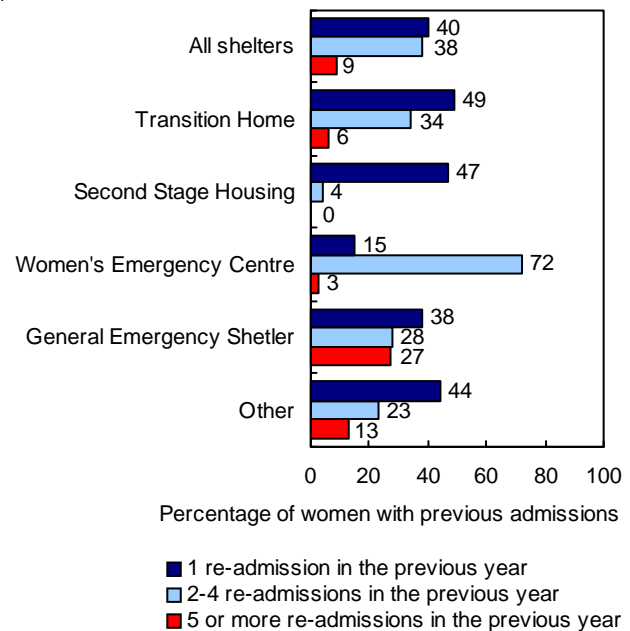


Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2003/04.

Nearly one-third (31%) of all women in shelters on April 14, 2004 (Figure 2) had been there before, with nearly 90% of re-admissions occurring within the previous year. Among the one-third who had been admitted previously, four in ten women (40% or 403 women) had been there once before in the last year and nearly the same proportion (38% or 389) had been to the shelter two to four times before in the previous 12 months. Finally, about one in ten (9% or 94) had been to the facility five or more previous times (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Re-admissions were most likely among residents of women's emergency centres and general emergency shelters



Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2003/04.

These findings on repeat clients could have implications for program development and service delivery as women who seem to be caught in a 'revolving door of abuse and refuge' may have distinctive characteristics and needs compared to those who are able to make the transition to a new life. For example, a recent study found that women who intended to return to their partners after their stay in a shelter were older, married and had more children than those who did not intend to go back (Krishnan, Hilbert, McNeil, and Newman 2004: 172). Moreover, those who planned to return home to their abusers also had higher frequencies of alcohol use, suicidal thoughts/suicide attempts and were less likely to seek out formal services (Krishnan et al. 2004: 171).

24. Court orders include a peace bond, restraining order, undertaking to keep the peace and have good conduct, conditions of probation, emergency intervention order, emergency protection order, victim's assistance order, order to abstain from persistently following a person about from place to place, etc.

Box 4: Main issues and challenges facing shelters

Shelters were asked to identify the top three issues and challenges they will be facing in the coming year. In 2003/04, shelters identified funding, staffing and affordable housing for women upon departure as the top three issues and challenges. In comparison, in 2001/02, shelters indicated that funding, affordable housing and space were the top three challenges they were confronting. It is important to note, however, that these issues and challenges represent the overall national picture, and may vary by province and territory.

Other issues included:

- Shelters at maximum occupancy rates
- Creating and implementing a follow-up program for ex-residents
- Dealing with mental health issues
- Education, exposure, and awareness in the community
- Securing adequate legal services for residents

Where women went when they left shelters

Overall, on April 14, 2004 135 women (98) and children (37) departed from shelters across Canada. Of the women who left a shelter on the 2004 snapshot day, about one in ten (11%) planned to return to their spouse or partner, a proportion similar to the previous THS cycle. The majority of women (62%) leaving shelters on that day did not intend to return home to their spouse or partner. One-fifth (21%) of women leaving on April 14, 2004 planned to go to another shelter²⁵ (up from 11% of women departing on the 2002 snapshot day). Another 18% left for new accommodations without their spouse or partner, one woman in ten (11%) went to stay with friends or relatives, and 5% returned home without their spouse or partner. These figures are comparable to those from the 2001/02 THS. Nearly one-tenth (7%) of departing women left for some other housing arrangement (down from 19% on the 2002 snapshot day). Finally, on the THS snapshot day in 2004, as in 2002, it was unknown where a quarter of women (27%) were going to reside upon leaving the shelter (Figure 4).

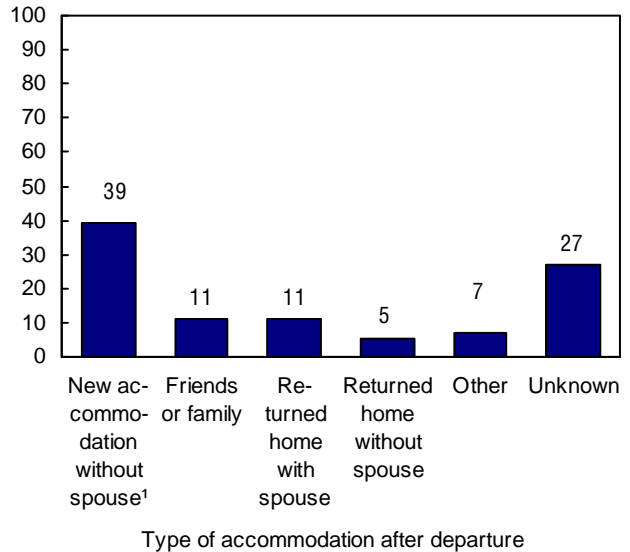
Among women leaving emergency-type shelters, the largest number were departing for another shelter

Where women went upon leaving a facility differed somewhat, depending on the type of shelter from which they were departing. On April 14, 2004, most departures were from transition homes (46%), followed by women's emergency centres and general emergency shelters (19% and 18%, respectively). About 15% of those leaving a shelter on snapshot day, left a second stage house. For the largest proportion of those leaving a transition home (40%), it was unknown where they planned to go upon their departure. Another 21% intended to find new accommodations or return home without their spouse or partner and equal proportions left to stay with friends or go to another shelter, 9% each. Almost one in ten (9%) women leaving transition homes planned to return to their spouse or common law partner. However, women leaving emergency-type shelters on April 14, 2004 were most likely departing for another shelter (44%), while less than a third (30%) planned to find new accommodations or return home without their spouse or partner and 9% went to stay with friends or family. About one woman in ten (12%) leaving an emergency-type shelter intended to return to her spouse or common law partner.

Figure 4



Percentage of women



1. New accommodation without spouse includes second stage housing, another emergency shelter and other new accommodations without spouse.
 Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2003/04.

One in five facilities had to turn away persons seeking shelter on April 14, 2004

Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, shelters may not be able to accommodate or accept all those who need or request their residential services. Consequently, shelters may be forced to refer people to other facilities or sources of assistance. On April 14, 2004, one-fifth of all shelters (93) referred 221 women and 112 children elsewhere.²⁶ This figure represents a slightly smaller proportion of shelters referring women and children elsewhere on snapshot day in 2002, when 24% shelters reported doing so. The most common reason given for referring women and children elsewhere was because the shelter was full, cited by 62% of shelters (a decline from previous years when 75% of shelters in 2001/02 and 71% in 1999/00 reported being unable to accommodate women and children because the shelter was full). The decrease in the percentage of shelters reporting that they were unable to accommodate women because they were full may be reflective of the growth in shelters. Finally, people were also turned away because of drug and alcohol issues (11% of shelters), mental health issues (10%), because the person was on a caution or non-admit list (5%) or for other reasons (20%).²⁷ These figures are comparable to those from the 2001/02 survey cycle.

25. This figure includes second stage housing, another emergency shelter or an out-of-province/territory shelter.
 26. A person may be referred elsewhere more than once on snapshot day.
 27. Percentages will not add to 100% due to multiple responses.

Box 5: The need for long-term and affordable housing

The need for long-term housing (especially second stage housing) and affordable permanent housing, are issues that have been identified by shelters as ongoing challenges (see Box 4). Affordable housing is often limited and waiting lists for subsidized housing can range from weeks to years. For example, a recent quality of life study of 20 Canadian communities²⁸ by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), reported that wait times for social housing in the city of Toronto are among the longest in the country, and ranged from seven to ten years in 2002. In contrast, maximum wait times were under two years for Calgary, Edmonton and Saskatoon (Federation of Canadian Municipalities 2004: 11). The FCM study also found that waiting lists for social housing²⁹ grew between 1991 and 2001. Restricted growth in the construction of new social housing³⁰ coupled with an inadequate supply of new rental housing units (which in turn, contributed to low vacancy rates and rising rents), contributed to a shortage of affordable rental housing. This shortage of subsidized and rental housing, in turn, resulted in longer waiting lists for affordable housing. The need for affordable housing was felt most acutely by groups such as lower income families, lone-parent families and singles (FCM 2004: 10).

The need for affordable housing has also been highlighted in provincial-level studies of shelters for women escaping abuse. For example, studies in Alberta, Ontario and Saskatchewan generally found that women residing shelters frequently encountered difficulty finding affordable housing and as a consequence, they often stayed in shelters for extended periods of time, were on waiting lists for social housing for years, had to accept substandard housing or contemplated staying in their abusive relationships (Alberta Council of Women's Shelters 2004; Woman and Abuse Welfare Research Project 2004; Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services (PATHS) of Saskatchewan 2005).

In addition, a report describing the recent trends, causes and conditions of family homelessness in ten major Canadian cities was prepared by the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C. and published by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).³¹ This report, *Family Homelessness: Causes and Solutions* (2003), showed that 40% of homeless families had left home because of domestic violence, which often occurred in conjunction with other precipitating events. The findings from this study, again, highlight the critical need for affordable housing among victims of domestic violence (CMHC 2003).

For more information see: Alberta Council of Women's Shelters. 2004. "Women and children escape abuse to find themselves homeless." Media Release. March 3. Available at <http://www.acws.ca>

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). 2003. "Family homelessness in Canada: Causes and solutions." *Research Highlights — Socio-economic Series*. Ottawa. Available at <http://www.cmhc.ca>.

Federation of Canadian Municipalities. 2004. *Quality of Life in Canadian Communities. Theme Report #1: Incomes, Shelter and Necessities*. Ottawa. Available at <http://www.fcm.ca> (accessed November 18, 2004).

Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services (PATHS) of Saskatchewan. 2005. *Toward a Better Understanding of the Needs of Shelter Users: A Consultation with Shelter Residents and Workers*. Regina, Saskatchewan. Available at http://www.abusehelplines.org/past_projects.html.

Woman and Abuse Welfare Research Project. 2004. *Walking on Eggshells: Abused Women's Experiences of Ontario's Welfare System*. Available at <http://www.dawn.thot.net/abuse.html>.

28. The communities include: Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Halton, Hamilton, Kingston, London, Niagara, Ottawa, Peel, Québec, Regina, Saskatoon, Sudbury, Toronto, Vancouver, Waterloo, Windsor, Winnipeg and York.
 29. Wait times for subsidized housing vary according to a number of factors. Victims of family violence, for instance, are given priority in some jurisdictions.
 30. These reductions in affordable housing development followed funding cuts by the federal government for social housing in 1993. British Columbia and Quebec were the only provinces to maintain a notable level of social housing development. However recently, new federal and provincial/territorial social housing initiatives have emerged in other jurisdictions (FCM 2004: 10).
 31. This study consisted of a literature review, telephone interviews with 74 key agencies, and face-to-face interviews with 59 currently or formerly homeless families across 10 cities: Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Peel Region, Toronto, Montréal, Québec, Saint John and Halifax.

Facility profile

Many shelters provide service to a broad community

Nine out of every ten shelters served an urban or suburban population, close to half (46%) provided service to a rural population and one-third (31%) served a reserve, in 2003/04 (Table 5). Among shelters providing services to rural and reserve populations, about one in ten (10% and 9%, respectively) served these types of populations exclusively.

Table 5

	Percentage of shelters serving:		
	Urban/ suburban ¹	Rural/ village ²	Reserves ³
	%		
Canada	91	46	31
Newfoundland	100	50	8
Prince Edward Island	75	100	25
Nova Scotia	84	63	47
New Brunswick	94	63	31
Quebec	91	42	18
Ontario	92	41	27
Manitoba	87	70	74
Saskatchewan	89	78	67
Alberta	95	48	50
British Columbia	88	35	30
Yukon	67	100	0
Northwest Territories	100	20	20
Nunavut	100	0	0

Note: Percentages will not add to 100% due to multiple responses.
 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
 1. Urban/suburban areas have minimum population concentrations of 1,000 and a population density of at least 400 people per square kilometre.
 2. Rural areas include small towns, villages, and other populated places with less than 1,000 population.
 3. Reserves is defined by a tract of land set aside by the federal government for the use and benefit of a First Nations Band which is governed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2003/04.

Services provided by residential facilities for victims of spousal violence

The services offered by shelters are aimed at meeting a multitude of needs. These needs may be psychological, emotional, medical, financial, physical and/or spiritual. Moreover, shelters must often deliver their services to a diverse population (see Box 6). Frequently, shelters for abused women provide an extensive range of services not only to the women and children residing within their facilities, but also to those who are former residents and/or those who have never been residents. In addition, a number of shelters offer services to abusive partners. Shelters may provide these services directly to clients (i.e., 'in-house') or they may be referred to outside agencies for services. Outreach activities are also an important component of the service delivery programs of many shelters across the country.

Box 6: Meeting the needs of a diverse population: The unique vulnerabilities and barriers of an abused woman who is an immigrant, visible minority or living in a rural community

According to the 2003 *Final Report of the Ad Hoc Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group Reviewing Spousal Abuse Policies and Legislation*, meeting the needs of women from diverse and rural communities who are victims of domestic violence is critical. The Federal government's *Family Violence Initiative's Year Five Report* (2002) affirms, with regard to family violence, that providing for the unique needs of specific communities within Canada's diverse population continues to be a "pressing challenge" (p. 45).

Several studies have examined the unique barriers faced by abused women who are immigrants and/or a visible minority (Roboubi and Bowles 1995; Baobaid 2002 and Smith 2004). In addition, the obstacles encountered by abused women living in rural or small communities have garnered attention from researchers, as well as policy and program developers (Lunn 2001 and Purdon 2004). Some of these challenges include:

Immigrant and visible minority women

- **Language barriers** (i.e., can limit women's ability to disclose their abuse, limit their access to information and services).
- **Immigration and the Justice System/Institutional issues** (i.e., women may fear deportation or loss of sponsorship if they seek help; they may be unfamiliar with Canadian laws and their legal rights).
- **Social and cultural issues** (i.e., women may be at greater risk of isolation; they may risk being ostracized by their family and/or ethnic community if they seek outside assistance; experiences of racism and discrimination may compound their problems).
- **Economic constraints** (i.e., women are often over-represented in low-skill, low-wage jobs; language barriers may block access to training and employment; employers may not recognize foreign credentials).

Women living in rural or small communities

- **Geographic isolation** (i.e., women in rural and remote settings may be at greater risk because they often live some distance from neighbours, family, friends and social service agencies).
- **Limited access to social services** (i.e., social services such as emergency shelters, transition homes, long-term and affordable housing, and childcare are often limited).
- **Lack of confidentiality and anonymity** (i.e., women may fear that others will find out about the abuse or that information will get back to their partner; they may have difficulty avoiding their abuser).
- **Economic constraints** (i.e., employment and training opportunities are frequently limited; jobs may be often poor-paying and/or part-time).
- **Cultural issues** (i.e., women may see seeking help as a sign of failure, since self-sufficiency has long been a characteristic of rural culture).

Sources: Baobaid, Mohammed. 2002. "Access to women abuse services by Arab-speaking Muslim women in London, Ontario. Background investigation and recommendations for further research and community outreach." Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children. Available at <http://www.crvawc.ca>.

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Smith, Ekuwa Dr. 2004. *Nowhere to Turn? Responding to Partner Violence Against Immigrant and Visible Minority Women*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development. Available at <http://www.ccsd.ca>.

Nearly 9 out of 10 shelters offered advocacy services and short-term counselling to women residents

Advocacy (89%) and individual short-term counselling (87%) were the in-house services most frequently provided to women residing in shelters, followed closely by housing referral services (84%) (Table 6). Additionally, about three-quarters of facilities provided services to help residents improve their parenting skills (77%) and life skills (73%). About two-thirds of shelters offered women residents legal services (69%), financial or welfare assistance (66%), services for women with disabilities (65%), crisis telephone lines (64%), culturally sensitive services for Aboriginal women³² (64%), culturally sensitive services for ethno-cultural and visible minority women³³ (63%), lesbian sensitive services (62%), and group counselling (61%). More than one-half also provided to residents mental health services (56%). Except for group counselling services, which dropped from 65% to 61% of shelters in 2003/04, the proportion of shelters offering each of the in-house services was quite similar in 2001/02 and 2003/04, varying by only one or two percentage points.

For some shelters, cuts to welfare and other social assistance programs may result in increased demands for additional services. In one study, shelters in Ontario indicated that cuts to welfare rates meant that low-income women escaping abusive situations were often unable to afford things they needed to set up a new home. Therefore, shelters were more

often providing items such as clothing, furniture, money for utility hook-ups and toys for their children (Woman and Abuse Welfare Research Project 2004).

This type of assistance is quite common among shelters. The THS found that 79% of shelters provided clothing, 56% furniture and more than a third (34%) of shelters had food bank services for residents. A similar proportion of shelters provided these services in 2001/02.

Shelters and other social agencies often work in a co-ordinated effort to provide victims of domestic violence with the constellation of services they need. Fully three-quarters of shelters indicated that they directed women residents to other agencies for mental health services and the same proportion referred women to outside agencies for assistance with job training and employment. Many shelters also referred residents to outside agencies for addiction counselling (73%), legal services (73%), and financial assistance or welfare services (71%).

32. Culturally sensitive services for Aboriginal women include services that recognize traditional healing methods, services that use spiritual elders and teachers, accessibility to language interpreters and Aboriginal language materials, and recognition and understanding of Aboriginal cultural norms and beliefs.

33. Culturally sensitive services for ethno-cultural and visible minority women include accessibility to language interpreters, resource materials in various languages, and counsellors who are familiar with immigration issues and parenting styles in different cultures.

Table 6



In-house services¹ provided by shelters to women residents, non-residents and ex-residents, Canada, 2003/04

	In-house services provided by shelters to women:					
	Residents		Non-residents		Ex-residents	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Advocacy	419	89	292	62	319	67
Individual short-term counselling	413	87	303	64	313	66
Housing referral	397	84	213	45	216	46
Parenting skills	362	77	187	40	218	46
Life skills	347	73	146	31	186	39
Legal services	326	69	232	49	245	52
Financial assistance/welfare	314	66	198	42	216	46
Services for women with disabilities	307	65	177	37	178	38
Crisis telephone line	305	64	339	72	308	65
Culturally sensitive services for Aboriginal women	301	64	193	41	198	42
Culturally sensitive services for ethno-cultural and visible minority women	298	63	176	37	183	39
Lesbian sensitive services	292	62	188	40	182	38
Group counselling	290	61	179	38	190	40
Mental health services	266	56	180	38	179	38
Recreation services	226	48	49	10	88	19
Medical services	225	48	130	27	142	30
Addiction counselling	203	43	125	26	137	29
Specialized services for older women (55+)	162	34	91	19	95	20
Individual long-term counselling	160	34	157	33	180	38
Job training/employment search	121	26	54	11	71	15
Family counselling programs	78	16	46	10	51	11
Other ²	102	22	72	15	84	18

1. Service reported as a percentage of 473 responding facilities.

2. 'Other' may include services such as support groups, education workshops, literacy programs, services for transgender women and sexual assault counselling/programs.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2003/04.

Providing service to the children of women escaping domestic violence was also a focus of programming offered by many facilities. For example, more than three-quarters of shelters provided at least some in-house services for child residents. In 2003/04, outdoor recreation spaces (79%), indoor recreation spaces (76%), individual counselling (65%) and programs for child witnesses or victims of abuse (57%) were among the services most frequently offered to resident children.

Services to non-residents and former residents³⁴ most often included 24-hour crisis telephone lines, individual short-term counselling and advocacy

On snapshot day, 351 shelters received a total of 3,990 requests (11 per shelter, on average) for assistance from non-residents (including former residents) in the form of phone calls, emails, letters, faxes and/or in-person visits. On a monthly basis, the average number of non-resident contacts was 191 per shelter. The majority of these inquiries pertained to non-housing related issues such as requests for emotional support, accompaniment to court or general information, or someone in crisis seeking information or police assistance (as opposed to a need for accommodation because of housing problems or abuse).

Services frequently offered to non-residents of shelters included 24-hour crisis telephone lines (72%), individual short-term counselling (64%), advocacy (62%), legal services (49%) and housing referral (45%). The following services were among the most commonly offered to former residents: advocacy (67%), individual short-term counselling (66%), 24-hour crisis telephone lines (65%) and legal services (52%) (Table 6).

In 2003/04, almost 5% of shelters offered in-house treatment or counselling services to non-resident, abusive partners and more than one-in-three shelters (37%) referred partners to other agencies for counselling. These figures remained virtually unchanged from two years prior, when the THS was last conducted.


Outreach work, such as supplying individuals with information, participating in drop-in centres and meeting with women to discuss their options and providing assistance to those in need can also promote awareness of the shelter and domestic violence issues in general. In 2003/04, 473 shelters were dedicating over 19,000 hours a week to outreach activities. Per shelter, this would equal a weekly average of 41 hours, or the equivalent of about one full-time shelter worker.

34. A non-resident is someone who had never resided in the shelter but was receiving services, while a former or ex-resident is someone who had resided in the shelter in the past and was receiving follow-up services.

Since the mid-1990s, many shelters have participated in the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Shelter Enhancement Program, thereby improving the accessibility of their facility (Code 2003). The Shelter Enhancement Program provides financial assistance for physical repairs and improvements to shelters for women, children and youth fleeing domestic violence, as well as the acquisition or construction of new shelters where needed. In 2003/04, nearly two-thirds (65%) of all reporting shelters indicated that they offered services to women residents with disabilities. Well over half of shelters were accessible to those in wheelchairs, to at least some degree. For example, nearly three-quarters (72%) of shelters had wheelchair accessible entrances, 63% had wheelchair accessible bathrooms and 59% had wheelchair accessible bedrooms. About one in five shelters offered at least some services for deaf people or hearing impaired individuals: 21% had TTY/TTD equipment, 19% offered sign language or interpretation services and 10% provided some other service. A smaller proportion of shelters offered services to blind or visually impaired people: 17% had large print reading materials available, 4% had reading materials available in Braille and 9% provided some other service.

Finally, many shelter staff and/or volunteers provide services in a range of languages, in addition to English (96%) and French (63%). Spanish (26%), Cree (17%), German (16%), Polish (13%) and Punjabi (13%) were among the more commonly spoken languages amongst shelter staff (Table 7).

Table 7

		
	Number	Percentage
English	452	96
French	296	63
Spanish	124	26
Cree	81	17
German	74	16
Polish	60	13
Punjabi	60	13
Italian	48	10
Ojibway	47	10
Ukrainian	45	10
Chinese	44	9
Arabic	41	9
Portuguese	39	8
Dutch	38	8
Tagalog	33	7
Greek	25	5
Vietnamese	24	5
Inuktitut	19	4
Other	103	22

1. Percentages will not add up to 100% due to multiple responses.
Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2003/04.

Most shelters permitted male youth accompanying their mothers, but had age restrictions

Since many women in shelters are fleeing the abuse of a male partner, being in a shelter with male youth (i.e., aged 14 and

over) may prove difficult for some residents. Therefore, some shelters place restrictions on the admission of male youth who might accompany their mothers to the shelter. Age, physical size and behaviour are examples of admittance criteria that shelters might use.

Almost all shelters (94%) allowed the admission of male youths, however, of these shelters, more than three-quarters (76%) placed an age limit on the admittance of male youth. Whether it was a predetermined age limit or one determined on a case-by-case basis, in general, age limits ranged from 12 to 19 years of age. Age limits between 16 and 18 were the most common. Among shelters with an age limit for male youth, one-third set the age limit at 16 years of age and nearly a quarter (23%) had an age limit of 17 years.

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of reporting shelters indicated that they refer male youth elsewhere. Of the 295 shelters that refer male youth elsewhere, most referrals were to family or friends (81%), followed by social services (65%) and youth shelters (39%). Youth centres, family service centres and other organizations were each mentioned by about one-fifth of shelters.

Aboriginal victims of domestic violence and shelters located on reserves

Aboriginal women are at greater risk of experiencing domestic violence than non-Aboriginal women

National victimization surveys have found that Aboriginal women are at greater risk of experiencing domestic violence than are non-Aboriginal women. Findings from the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization indicated that one-quarter of Aboriginal women experienced assault by a current or ex-partner in the five years prior to the survey, a rate that was three times greater than the rate for non-Aboriginal women (8%). While not a statistically significant difference, the spousal assault rate for Aboriginal men (about 13%), was nearly double that of non-Aboriginal men (7%) (Trainor and Mihorean 2001).³⁵

Statistics on spousal violence compiled by Aboriginal organizations (e.g., Ontario Native Women's Association; Native Women's Association, Nova Scotia; Indian and Inuit Nurses of Canada) on a local or regional basis tend to suggest even higher rates of spousal violence among Aboriginal individuals than those reported on the 1999 GSS. Some studies have found that the proportion of Aboriginal women who have experienced spousal violence to be as high as 80% or 90% in some communities (Lane, Jr., Bopp and Bopp 2003: 27).

Among spousal abuse victims, Aboriginal victims experienced more severe forms of violence, according to the 1999 GSS. Nearly half (48%) of Aboriginal victims reported being beaten,

35. Caution should be taken when considering these findings as data from the Northwest Territories, The Yukon Territory and Nunavut, (areas where high concentrations of Aboriginal people reside), were not included in the 1999 GSS. In the 1999 GSS, Aboriginal people represented 2% of the population aged 15 and over in the 10 provinces, a similar proportion to that of the 1996 Census. Also, as the identity of the perpetrators is unknown, assumptions about the cultural identity of perpetrators should not be made.

choked, threatened with a knife or gun or sexually assaulted by a current or ex-partner, compared to less than a third (31%) of non-Aboriginal spousal violence victims. Furthermore, Aboriginal people suffer disproportionately from spousal homicide, the most extreme form of domestic violence. According to the Homicide Survey, the spousal homicide rate from 1991 to 1999 was more than eight times higher for Aboriginal women compared to non-Aboriginal women (47.2 per million couples vs. 5.8 per million couples) (Trainor and Mihorean 2001).³⁶

Transition Home Survey findings indicate that while 31% of all shelters served reserves, 7% were actually located on reserves

Of all responding shelters, 148 or 31% indicated that they served reserve populations in 2003/04, including 26 (5%) that were operated by a band council and 24 (5%) that were owned by a band council. Culturally sensitive services such as programs that recognize Aboriginal culture and norms as well as traditional healing methods, the use of spiritual elders and teachers, and access to resource materials in Aboriginal languages were offered to Aboriginal women by two-thirds (64%) of all shelters and were available to Aboriginal children in nearly half of these shelters (48%). Cree was spoken in 17% of shelters, Ojibway in 10% and Inuktitut in 4%.

While 148 facilities indicated that they provided services to reserve populations, there were just 31 shelters (7% of all shelters) surveyed that were actually located on reserves in 2003/04 (Table 8). The majority of these on-reserve facilities were transition homes (42%), over one-third were emergency-type shelters (women emergency centres and general emergency shelters) and 16% were second stage houses. The remaining shelters were Family Resource Centres. Compared to shelters off reserves, a larger proportion of emergency-type shelters were found on reserves, 19% off-reserve versus 35% on-reserve.

On reserves, a larger proportion of annual admissions were to emergency shelters, compared to off-reserve shelters

In 2003/04, annual admissions to shelters located on reserves represented 4% all admissions. Specifically, there were admissions of 1,847 women and 1,672 dependent children to on-reserve shelters between April 31, 2003 and March 31,

36. The Statistics Canada Homicide Survey has collected police-reported data on homicide incidents, victims and accused persons since 1961. It should be noted that prior to 1997, if a force did not collect data on race and ethnicity, the survey question on Aboriginal status was routinely left blank. Therefore, homicides for Aboriginal victims may have been undercounted prior to 1997.

Box 7: Some of the circumstances unique to Aboriginal victims of domestic violence

According to the 1996 report of the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, domestic violence in Aboriginal communities is characterized by three distinctive features, when compared to mainstream society. These include the following:

1. The importance of community

Among many Aboriginal communities, domestic violence does not affect just the individual or certain households or families but the community as a whole (and in many instances is an intergenerational problem). In their report *Aboriginal Domestic Violence in Canada* (2003) for the Aboriginal Healing Foundation Research Series, Lane, Jr. et al., note the following:

...there are important profound cultural differences that distinguish Aboriginal family life from life in (many) non-Aboriginal families in Canada, ... [with] the most significant of these characteristics [being] the tendency of relatives within an extended family to think and behave much more like an inter-related system, than as separate and disconnected parts (p. 47).

Therefore, as a result of this interconnectivity, domestic violence is more likely to affect many more people in an Aboriginal family than that of a non-Aboriginal family. Further, it is argued that domestic violence has become institutionalized in many Aboriginal communities, whereby it is so prevalent that it is accepted as a 'normal' part of life. Lane, Jr. et al. (2003) refer to this normalization or infusion of violence into community life as the development of a "culture of violence" (p. 49).

Domestic violence in Aboriginal communities is also uniquely defined by the power structures within these communities. For instance, typically, only a small number of individuals hold power within an Aboriginal community. How the community responds to domestic violence may thus, depend on the families involved and their respective positions within the community. If an abuser has ties to those with authority in the community, his or her abusive behaviour may be tolerated (Lane, Jr. et al. 2003: 53). Similarly, the community response to domestic violence as a social ill and the priority granted to this problem will hinge on the attitudes and support given by the community's leadership (Lane, Jr. et al. 2003: 56).

The physical location of a many Aboriginal communities has an impact on responses to domestic violence (see Box 3). A number of Aboriginal communities are located in areas that are geographically or socially isolated from neighbouring communities. As such, abuse victims' access to programs and services, transportation, communication, money and other resources may be limited. While these concerns are encountered by a number of non-Aboriginal victims of domestic violence, they are issues which are faced by a greater proportion of Aboriginal victims.

2. The impact of history

It has been reported that the devastating effects of colonization and the destructive impact of residential schools and other state interventions designed to force assimilation have eroded Aboriginal communities, families, culture and identity (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996 and Lane, Jr. et al. 2003). According to the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996), "...the failure in family functioning can be traced in many cases to interventions of the state deliberately introduced to disrupt or displace the Aboriginal family" (p.57). Lane, Jr. et al. (2003) also state that the effects of the colonial experiences of Aboriginal people are still felt today and "continue to impair the healthy functioning of many families" (p. 65). Moreover, both victims and abusers share this legacy. Therefore, "...from an historic stand point it is difficult to separate the victims and the abusers because of the profound history of abuse of Aboriginal people" (Ursel 2001: 3).

3. Marginalization and racism

The 1996 report by the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* notes that "...violence within Aboriginal communities is fostered and sustained by a racist social environment" (p. 57). Further, Lane Jr. et al. (2003), find that "there is considerable consensus that the marginalization of Aboriginal people in Canadian society has put them at greatly increased risk of high rates of family violence and abuse" (p. 69). As a group, Aboriginal people suffer disproportionately from extreme poverty, low levels of education, high rates of unemployment, substance abuse and family breakdown. They have also been the targets of racist attitudes and discrimination (Lane, Jr. et al. 2003). Such marginalization and racism demean and devalue Aboriginal men and women and affect their interactions with mainstream Canadian society, its institutions and with one another (Lane, Jr. et al. 2003).

Table 8

 **Number of shelters located on reserves, by provinces and territories, 2003/04**

	Number
Canada	31
Newfoundland and Labrador	0
Prince Edward Island	0
Nova Scotia	2
New Brunswick	0
Quebec	2
Ontario	12
Manitoba	2
Saskatchewan	1
Alberta	6
British Columbia	6
Yukon	0
Northwest Territories	0
Nunavut	0

0 true zero or a value rounded to zero

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Transition Home Survey, 2003/04.

2004. Annual admissions were up from 3,262 women and children admitted to 31 on-reserve shelters in 2001/02. More than a third (34%) of 2003/04 admissions were to transition homes but nearly as many (30%) were to general emergency shelters and another 26% were to women's emergency centres. Overall, annual admissions to emergency-type facilities constituted more than half of all admissions to shelters on reserves. In comparison, over half (52%) of all annual admissions among off-reserve shelters were to transition homes and 39% were to the emergency-type facilities.

On April 14, 2004, there were 173 women and children in shelters on reserves (159 were in shelters on April 15, 2002). These women represented nearly 3% of Canadian women in shelters on snapshot day. Over three-quarters (78%) of these women and children in shelters on reserves were fleeing abuse — 61 women and 74 children. Three in ten women in on-reserve shelters on snapshot day had been there in the past, as had a similar proportion of women in off-reserve shelters. Most women (71%), with parenting responsibilities brought their children with them to the shelter. This figure is similar to the proportion of women admitted with their children to off-reserve shelters. Similar to the children accompanying their mothers to off-reserve shelters, two-thirds of children admitted to on-reserve shelters were under the age of 10 years.

On snapshot day, 70% of the abused women in shelters on reserves were under the age of 35 and nearly one-quarter (23%) were under 25 years of age. Women in off-reserve shelters were comparatively older with just 53% under the age of 35 years and 18% less than 25 years of age. However, this age difference between these groups of residents may be attributed to the fact that the female Aboriginal population, in general, is younger than the non-Aboriginal population. According to the 2001 Census, almost half (48%) of the

Aboriginal female population were aged 15 to 34 years, in comparison, less than one-third (32%) of the non-Aboriginal population of females aged 15 and over fell into this age category.

According to the 2003/04 Transition Home Survey, four in ten abused women in on-reserve shelters had reported their most recent abusive incident to police; charges were laid in 62% of these cases and protection orders issued in over half (52%). In comparison, just three women in ten in off-reserve shelters had reported their abuse to police, making women in shelters on reserves more likely to have reported to police. Women in off-reserve shelters had charges laid and orders of protection issued in the same proportions as women in on-reserve shelters. Research suggests that many Aboriginal persons are reluctant to report incidents to police due to feelings of mistrust and/or discrimination by police and the justice system (Lane, Jr. et al. 2003). In this light, the fact that a larger proportion of women in shelters on reserves reported their abuse to police, relative to women in off-reserve shelters, may indicate violence of a greater severity or smaller communities where police were more apt to find out about the violence.

Data sources

Transition Home Survey

The Transition Home Survey was developed under the federal government's Family Violence Initiative in consultation with provincial/territorial governments and transition home associations. The objectives of the survey are to collect information on residential services for abused women and their children during the previous twelve months of operation as well as to provide a one-day snapshot of the clients being served on a specific day. In 1991/92, Statistics Canada began collecting basic information on transition home services and clientele. A more comprehensive survey was developed and administered in 1992/93 and was repeated, with some changes, in 1994/95, 1997/98, 1999/00, 2001/02 and 2003/04.

The Transition Home Survey is a mail-out/mail-back census survey of all residential facilities providing services to abused women and their children. Shelters that may serve a broader population, in addition to women escaping domestic violence, such as those providing residential services to male victims of spousal abuse, and men and women seeking refuge for reasons other than abuse, are included. Facilities that *exclusively* serve male victims of spousal abuse fall outside the scope of this survey. At the time of this survey, one such facility was known to be in operation. Of the 543 residential facilities providing services to abused women and their children, 473 returned their questionnaires for a response rate of 87%. Separate questionnaires were completed for facilities that had two or more residences under the same name or address. However, in a small number of cases it was not possible to obtain separate questionnaires for each shelter and information for more than one shelter type had to be included on one questionnaire. In such cases, the determination of shelter type was based on the main focus of the facilities' activities.

The General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization

The General Social Survey is an annual survey that monitors changes in Canadian society and provides information on specific policy issues of current or emerging interest. Each year, the GSS focuses on various regular topics (including time use, social support, the family, technology and victimization). In 1999, Statistics Canada conducted the victimization cycle of the GSS for a third time. Previous cycles were conducted in 1988 and in 1993. The objectives of the survey are to provide estimates of the prevalence of eight offence types (based on the Criminal Code definitions for these crimes) in the population, to examine factors related to the risk of victimization, victims' willingness to report crimes to the police, reasons for not reporting, and to measure public perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system.

The GSS is a telephone sample survey covering the non-institutionalized population aged 15 years or more in the ten provinces. In 1999, a total of approximately 26,000 people were interviewed with a response rate of 81%.

An overview of the findings from the 2004 GSS will be released in the Summer of 2005. Further results from the 2004 GSS will be available and presented in the annual publication *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile, 2005*, also to be released in the Summer of 2005.

Incident-based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR2)

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey was developed by Statistics Canada with the co-operation and assistance of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. The aggregate UCR Survey, which became operational in 1962, collects crime and traffic statistics reported by all police agencies in Canada. The UCR survey data reflect reported crime that has been substantiated through police investigation.

Police reported incident-based crime statistics are collected through the UCR2 Survey. This survey allows detailed examination of accused, victim, and incident characteristics. Collection of these micro data began in 1988. In 2002, there were 123 police agencies in 9 provinces reporting to the UCR2. Data on spousal violence came from the UCR2 Research database, a non-representative subset of the UCR2 database, accounting for 56% of the national volume of crime in 2002. The UCR2 Research database includes 94 police agencies in 9 provinces. The incidents contained in the 2002 Research database were distributed as follows: 39% from Ontario, 30% from Quebec, 12% from Alberta, 5% from British Columbia, 5% from Manitoba, 5% from Saskatchewan, 2% from Nova Scotia, 1% from New Brunswick, and 1% from Newfoundland and Labrador.

The UCR2 Trend Database contains historical data that permits the analysis of trends in the characteristics of incidents, accused and victims, such as the victim-accused relationship. This database currently includes 78 police services that have reported to the UCR2 Survey consistently since 1998. These respondents accounted for 46% of the national volume of crime in 2002.

Homicide Survey

The Homicide Survey began collecting police-reported data on homicide incidents, victims and accused persons in Canada in 1961 and began collecting data on family related homicides in 1974. Whenever a homicide becomes known to police, the investigating police department completes a survey questionnaire, which is then forwarded to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. The count for a particular year represents all homicides reported in that year, regardless of when the death actually occurred. In 1991 and 1997, the survey was revised and expanded to include additional variables, such as previous conviction histories of the accused and victim, employment of the accused and victim, victim's use of force at the time of the incident, and Shaken Baby Syndrome as a cause of death.

The Homicide Survey also contains a narrative section, where investigating officers insert additional details on the homicide that are not included in the questionnaire portion of the survey. These additional details include such information as the presence/absence of a restraining order and the attempted suicide of the accused. However, generalizations cannot be made to all homicides, since the availability of this supplementary information varies between homicide reports.

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