

# Women's Housing Needs & Homelessness

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# THE STATE OF WOMEN'S HOUSING NEED & HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA

## Executive Summary

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Challenges &  
Opportunities for  
Change

# Homelessness Amongst Women, Girls and Gender Diverse Individuals is a Crisis in Canada

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- In all provinces and territories, women, girls, and gender diverse peoples experience some of the most severe forms of housing need.

# Homelessness Amongst Women, Girls and Gender Diverse Individuals is a Crisis in Canada

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- Black women, women of colour, Indigenous women, gender diverse peoples, (dis)abled women, poor women, LGBTQ2S+ peoples, sex workers, incarcerated women, newcomer women, and younger and older women are all disproportionately affected.





# The Face of Homelessness

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Although the visibility of women's homelessness has increased in recent years, the prominence and greater visibility of men in the homelessness sector has led to a male-centric policy and service environment, creating the conditions for women's homelessness to remain invisible.



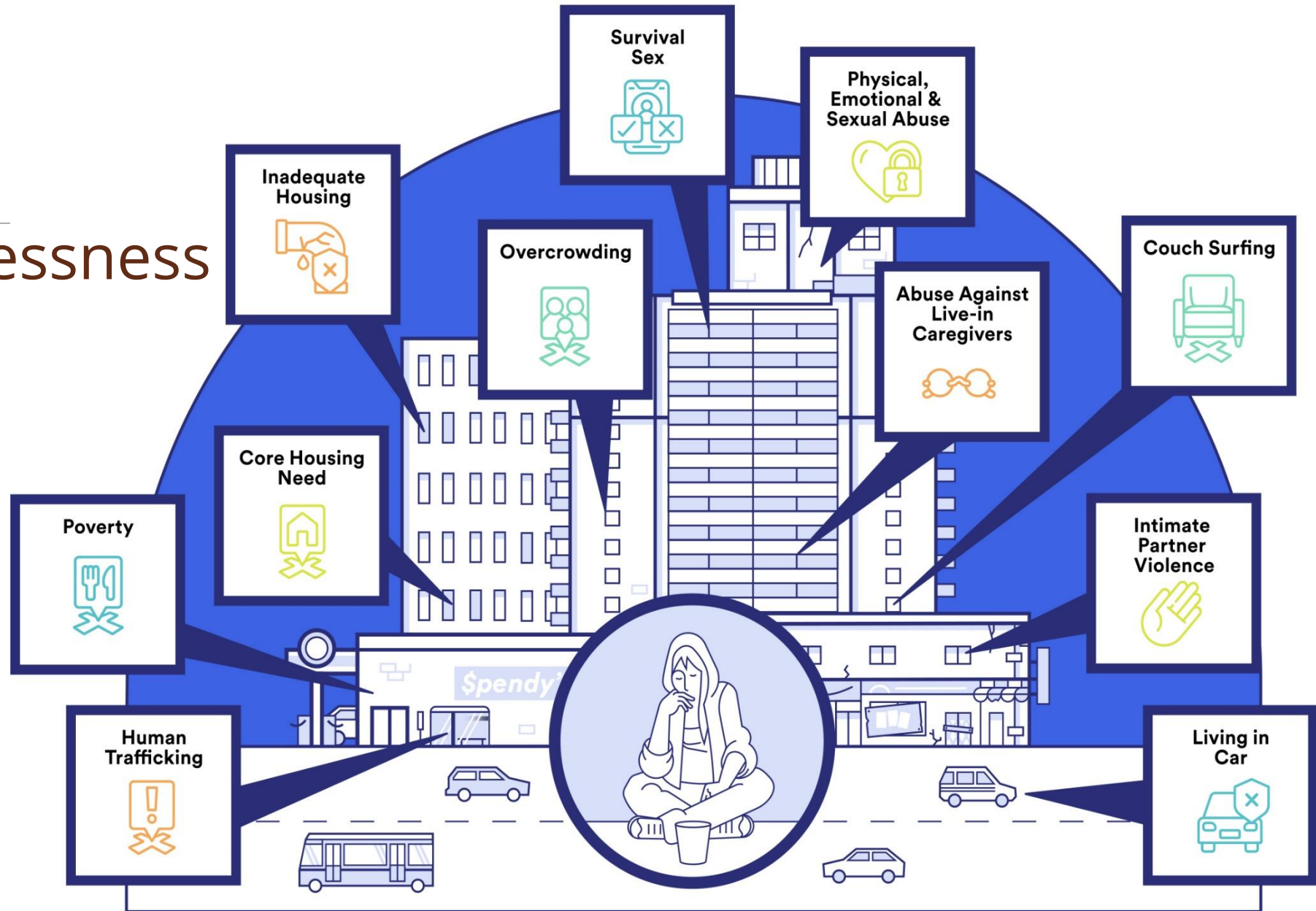
# Hidden Homelessness

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- Best available estimates of women's homelessness and housing insecurity is undercounted, in part due to the often hidden nature of their homelessness.
- Women are less likely to appear in mainstream shelters, drop in spaces, public spaces, or access other homeless-specific services, and are more likely to rely on relational, precarious, and dangerous supports to survive such as sleeping on friends' couches or trading sex for housing.

# Hidden Homelessness



# Profound Lack of Safe, Affordable, Adequate and Appropriate Housing

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- In the absence of access to safe, adequate, and affordable housing, women across Canada are driven into emergency systems that are insufficient and do not meet their needs. In many cases, these emergency systems are overwhelmed with demand and chronically underfunded, and thus regularly turn away women experiencing violence, homelessness, and extreme forms of marginalization.
- There is an acute lack of women-only, trauma-informed housing services.



# Profound Lack of Safe, Affordable, Adequate and Appropriate Housing

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As per the 2023 NB PiT Count:

- 37% of female respondents identified as either being pregnant or having been pregnant while homeless. This adds an obvious layer of stress and barriers that is unique to women and those assigned female at birth who are experiencing homelessness.



## The Real Scale of Women's Homelessness & Housing Need

21% of single mothers in Canada Raise their Children in Poverty.

7% of women-identifying Canadians have experienced hidden homelessness at some point in their lives.

28% of women-led households are in core housing need.

# Lack of Appropriate Support Systems

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- Existing support systems fail to transition women and girls out of homelessness quickly (if at all), and in many cases they are left with no option but to return to situations of violence, precarity, and marginalization.
- Women and gender diverse peoples face profound violence on the streets and in public systems and are regularly separated from their children because of their housing status and exposure to violence.



# Lack of Appropriate Support Systems

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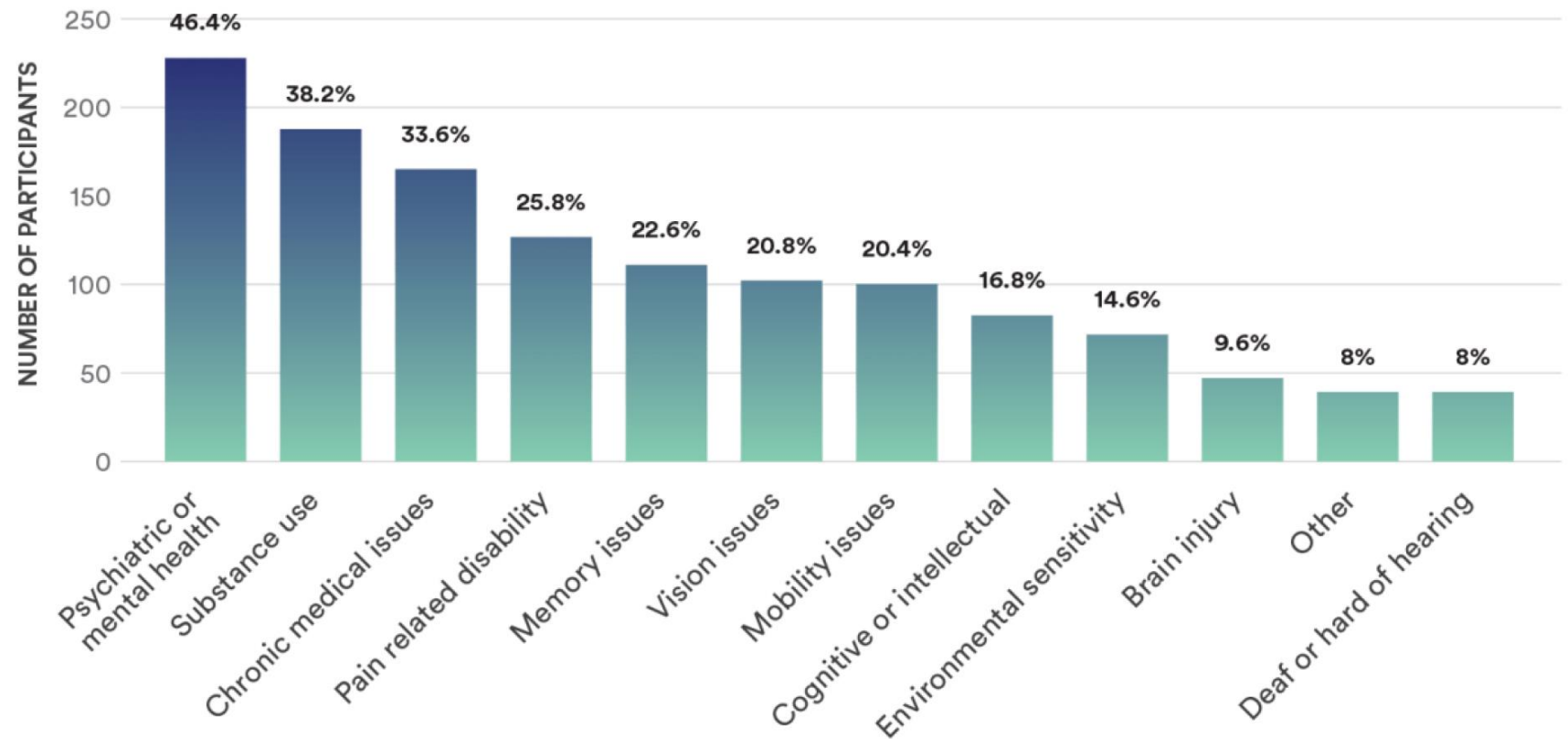


- There is a profound lack of emergency services for women and gender diverse peoples with disabilities.
- There are limited culturally appropriate services for Indigenous and newcomer women, girls, and gender diverse peoples.
- There is a lack of services and supports for gender non-conforming and LGBTQ2S+ peoples within both VAW and homelessness services – only 53% of VAW shelters provide supports for gender non-conforming peoples.



# Lack of Appropriate Support Systems

- 79% of women and gender diverse people experiencing housing need or homelessness report having a disability.
- On average, they report having 3 disabilities.



# Lack of Appropriate Support Systems

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- Across Canada, there are fewer women-specific emergency shelter beds – 68% of shelter beds are co-ed or dedicated to men, compared to 13% dedicated to women.
- Despite the profound violence and trauma that women and their children face on the streets, each day many are turned away from homeless and VAW shelters due to not having the number of beds needed to meet demand.

