

# SURFACING OUR STRENGTHS:

Co-creating Strategic Solutions with  
Women+ At Risk of Violence and  
Homelessness

## Summary Report

Prepared by:

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# Lab Structure

## The Backbone Team



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Director of Research &  
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Lehran Young,  
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## Lead Organization

The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (GVCEH)

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## The Peer Researcher Team



Hilary Marks



Melissa Barnhard



Mandy (Amanda) MacKearney



Malinda

## Alumni



Kelly Roth,  
Executive Director, GVCEH  
(start of lab – 01/2022)



Dana Pengilley,  
Research Analyst, ACEH  
(June 01, 2021-August 31,  
2021)



Meredith Elliott,  
Public Relations  
Coordinator, GVCEH

## The Leadership Team

- Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA): Florentien Verhage
- Capital Regional District (CRD): Gina Dolinsky
- Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC): Christina Kante
- Peer Victoria Resource Society (Peers): Rachel Phillips
- Society of St Vincent De Paul (SVDP): Sasha Harper
- Cool Aid Society: Candice MacDonald
- The Cridge Centre for the Family: Tori Dach
- Persons with Lived Experience: Hilary Marks



**Inter-Cultural  
Association**  
of Greater Victoria



Making a difference...together



## Funding

This project entitled *Surfacing Our Strengths: Co-creating Strategic Solutions with Women+ At Risk of Violence and Homelessness* received funding from the National Housing Strategy under the NHS Solutions Labs.



## Background: Surfacing Our Strengths

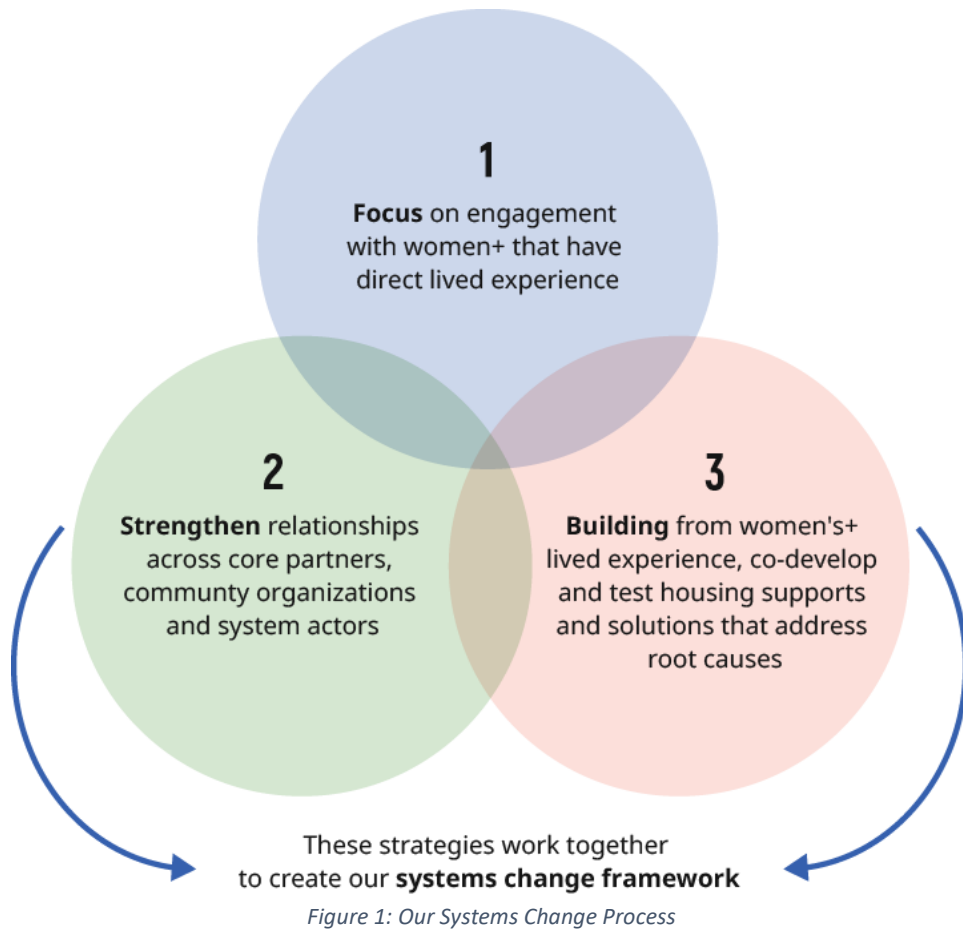
The Surfacing Our Strengths (SoS) Solutions Lab is focused on honouring and centering the voices of Women+ with living/lived experiences of homelessness and violence in order to listen, learn, co-develop, and implement new solutions that address interconnected health, well-being, and housing challenges for this population. Through the lab approach we focus on:

- Engaging **diverse perspectives and roles**, especially those who are most impacted by the issue (i.e., community members with living/lived experience), and other types of knowledge holders,
- **Co-creation, rather than only consultation, in solutions** as solutions need to be owned to be accepted by everyone who plays a part in their implementation,
- Generation of ideas, processes, actions, and projects that **address root causes** and not just symptoms,
- **Learning by doing** by testing out solutions, observing what happens, learning, and adapting,
- Using **participatory and creative** “hands-on” methods and engagement, and
- **Building capacity** of those involved increasing trust, deepening relationships, and taking action together.<sup>1</sup>

Our systems change process involved three, interconnected strategies: focusing on engagement, strengthening our relationships, and building from Women+’s lived experience to co-develop and test solutions.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Fraser, T. and Glass, J. (2020). Bridging the Fields of Feminist & Systems Practice: Building Ecosystems for Gender Equity. System Sanctuary. Retrieved on January 1, 2021 at: <http://systemsanctuary.com/researchsystemspractice>



The five phases for our solutions lab included Definition, Discovery, Development, Prototyping, Roadmapping. During the course of our journey, our understanding of the Solutions Lab process deepened.



# Solutions Lab Phases



Figure 2: SoS Lab Phases

Our lab journey included a variety of workshops and activities, as well as including a joint prototype testing day where all the prototype teams got together to share their prototype presentations and provide supportive feedback.

## Our Lab Journey

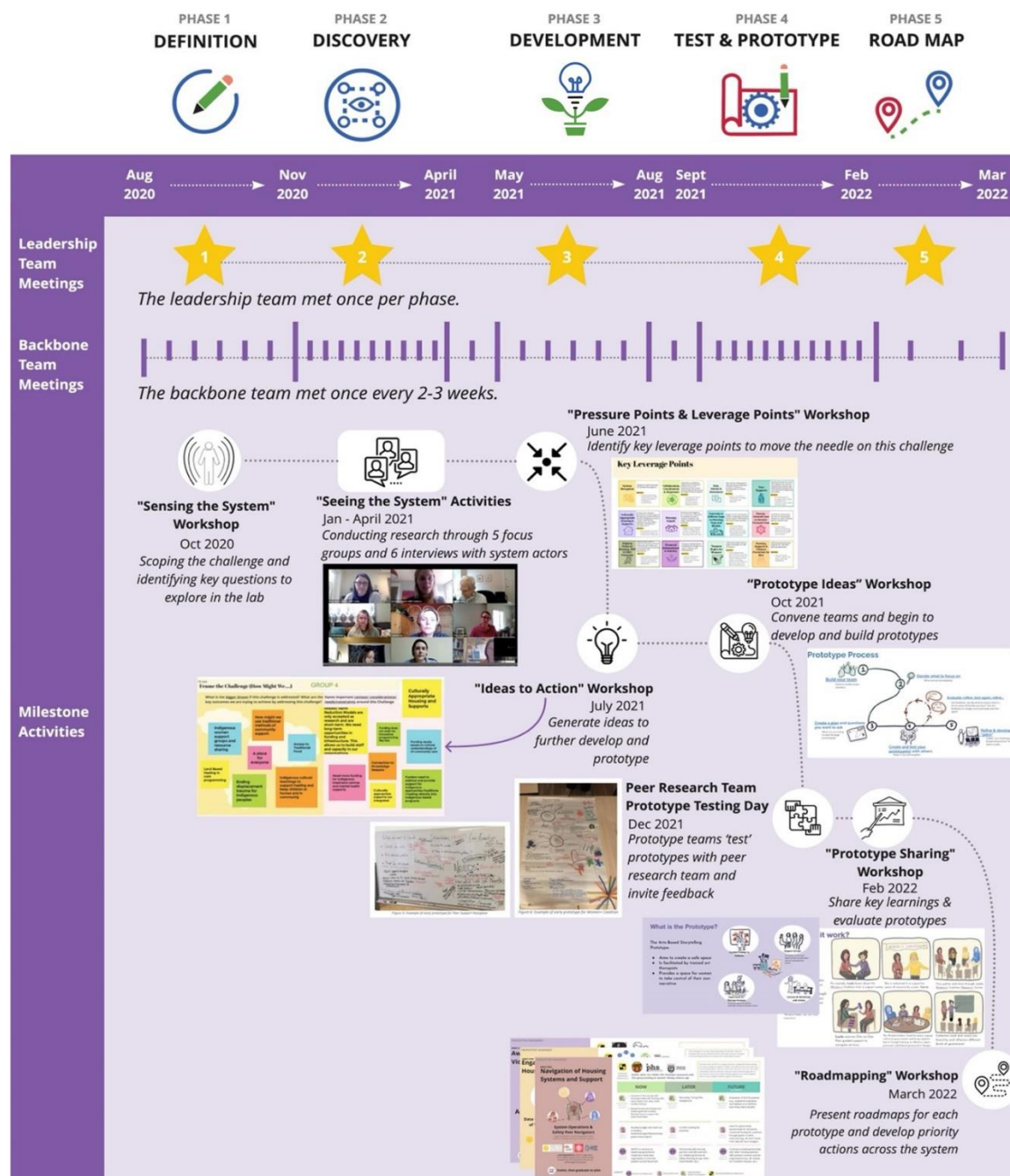


Figure 3: SoS Lab Journey

There have been 8 events hosted through the Surfacing Our Strengths Solutions Lab with 60 participants to date (see [Appendix A](#) for the list of SoS Lab partners and event participants).

## Lab Engagement At a Glance

 **43** ORGANIZATIONS across  
 **11** SECTORS

 **60** PARTICIPANTS engaged

 **1** PEER RESEARCH TEAM with  
 **6+** WOMEN+ PEER RESEARCHERS

 **6** INTERVIEWS and  **5** FOCUS GROUPS

 **1** CHALLENGE PAPER

 **5** PROTOTYPES & ROADMAPS

*Figure 4: SoS Lab Engagement by April 2022*

# Knowledge Products and Dissemination

## Knowledge Products

Many products were created across all phases of the SoS Solutions Lab. Key visual knowledge dissemination products are presented in [Appendix B](#). Descriptions of these key knowledge dissemination products follows.

### [Systems Change Framework](#)

The definition phase grounded the Leadership team in the approach and process of the solutions lab and created a shared understanding of how centering the voices of those with lived experience would be centered in the lab approach.<sup>2</sup> The framework starts with centering the experience and voice of Women+ and culminates in scaling change for the prototypes developed through the Solutions Lab. Ensuring the work is person-centered is at the heart of the SoS Solutions Lab.

### [Discovery Phase Methods](#)

A number of methods were used generate insights about the issue of women+ at risk of violence and homelessness through research, dialogue and engagement.

Through the Discovery Phase we invited, explored, and integrated insights from three main sources:

- Insights from people with lived experience (women+ most affected by violence and homelessness),
- Insights from lab participants (various sectors and stakeholders that have interest and/or influence in the challenge or potential solutions) as they make sense of the challenge, and
- Insights from the literature and various forms of research.

Together with secondary research, the Peer Research work, and engagement with the various persons engaged in the sector, the discovery phase resulted in the identification of some of the **main influences on Women+ at risk of violence and homelessness**.

### [Systems Map for the Greater Victoria Region](#)

During the first two workshops in October and November of 2020, the Leadership team produced a **systems map** designed to answer the question: “Why are Women+ at risk of violence unable to find safe affordable housing and supports in Greater Victoria?”. Seven key areas were identified and mapped. These are

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Fraser, T. and Glass, J. (2020). Bridging the Fields of Feminist & Systems Practice: Building Ecosystems for Gender Equity. System Sanctuary. Retrieved on January 1, 2021 at: <http://systemsanctuary.com/researchsystemspractice>

- Availability of affordable, appropriate housing,
- Fear, safety, and isolation,
- Racism, discrimination, stigma, and hidden homelessness,
- Access, availability, and awareness of supports,
- Barriers to collaboration and coordination across the system,
- Gaps in policies, plans, and strategies, and
- Financial barriers and poverty.

### [Key Intersecting Influences](#)

Together with secondary research and engagement with the Leadership Team, the discovery phase resulted in the identification of some of the **main influences on women+ at risk of violence and homeless** ranging from availability of affordable, safe, appropriate housing to racism, discrimination, and stigma. A full summary report of Discovery Key Learnings was produced in May 2021.

### [At Risk Populations](#)

Through secondary research, interviews, and focus groups the Backbone Team identified **10 at-risk populations of Women+**. Women+ in these populations face higher risk of violence and homelessness. Further, they experience significant barriers to access housing and support services.

### [Analysis and Summary of Key Tensions and Opportunities](#)

Building on key themes identified during the Discovery Phase (Phase 2), the Leadership Team met on April 30, 2021, to learn about the **key themes**, support the identification of **key patterns** surrounding this issue, and explore potential **leverage points** to ‘move the needle’ on this challenge. Following the Leadership team meeting, the Backbone team worked together to analyze findings from the Discovery Phase and the Leadership team meeting. Using an [Iceberg Model for System Change](#), key themes and tensions were mapped onto the Iceberg framework, looking at events, patterns, structures, and mental models.

### [Identification of Key Leverage Points](#)

One of the key outputs from the June 24, 2021 workshop (Pressure Points and Leverage Points) was the development of a summary of key leverage points that were identified to have the most potential to influence action on this challenge. Twelve key leverage points were identified and included a variety of potential leverage points from culturally appropriate housing and supports to tenancy rights for Women+ to aligning policy on housing, violence against women (VAW), and child protection.

### [Prioritization of Key Leverage Points](#)

During the July 07, 2021 ‘Ideas to Action’ workshop participants indicated, from their perspective, which leverage points had the greatest potential to impact systemic change and



would be feasible to act on right away. This exercise allowed the SoS Backbone team to ‘take the temperature’ of leverage points that had the most interest and potential to affect change. From these, five key leverage points were selected and used to develop Solutions Lab prototypes. These key leverage points were (i) structures and support for system navigation, (ii) person-centered care versus service-focused care, (iii) collaboration, coordination, and alignment across sectors and organizations, (iv) data, stories, and awareness raising, and (v) housing supply. Leverage points that were not prioritized continued to influence the SoS Solutions Lab.

### Prototyping, Prototype Examples & Peer Researcher Prototype Testing Day

Prototyping is an iterative process, with each prototyping team adapting and refining their idea as they received feedback, letting go of aspects that didn’t work, choosing which aspects the team decided to continue to evolve, test further, and eventually bring forward for a fully-fledged pilot. As a first step, the SoS Backbone team hosted a Peer Researcher Prototype Testing Day on December 09, 2021.

In addition to the key knowledge dissemination graphic products, a Surfacing Our Strengths Solutions Lab website was created.

<https://victoriahomelessness.ca/surfacingourstrengths/>

The SoS website is currently undergoing revision and will be updated to include the following:

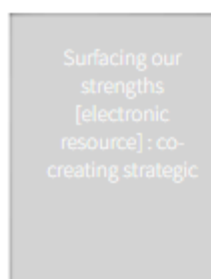
- SoS Final Report specifically created for the website and aimed at partners, policy makers, funders, and the general public.
- SoS Summary Report specifically created for the website and aimed at partners, policy makers, funders, general public
- Key research and report documents on Women+ fleeing violence/at risk of homelessness.



Figure 5: SoS Solutions Lab Homepage (snapshot)

Additional knowledge dissemination products include

- Surfacing our Strengths in Greater Victoria CMHC website posting <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/nhs/nhs-project-profiles/2019-nhs-projects/surfacing-our-strengths-greater-victoria>), and
- Surfacing our Strengths reports posted in the CMHC Expert Community on Housing (ECOH) and library webpage [https://cmhc.ent.sirsiidynix.net/client/en\\_US/CMHCLibrary/search/detailnonmodal/ent:\\$002f\\$002fSD\\_ILS\\$002f0\\$002fSD\\_ILS:122300/one?qu=surfacing+our+strengths&te=ILS](https://cmhc.ent.sirsiidynix.net/client/en_US/CMHCLibrary/search/detailnonmodal/ent:$002f$002fSD_ILS$002f0$002fSD_ILS:122300/one?qu=surfacing+our+strengths&te=ILS)  
 NHS 2-35 - Surfacing Our Strengths
  - Surfacing Our Strengths Challenge Paper
  - Surfacing Our Strengths Phase 1 2 Final Report
  - Surfacing Our Strengths Phase 3 Report



**Surfacing our strengths [electronic resource] : co-creating strategic solutions with women+ at risk of violence and homelessness : the challenge.**

**Author:** Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (B.C.)

**Additional author(s):** Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness.  
Shift Collaborative.

**Publication Date:** 2021

Figure 6: Example from the ECOH library webpage

## Knowledge Dissemination Activities

An outcome of the SoS solutions lab was to create prototypes—a physical or experiential representation of an idea and how it might play out in the real world—of housing and housing supports for women+ at risk of homelessness and violence. Through the SoS solutions lab journey, a variety of engagement activities led to the development of [five](#) unique and innovative prototypes.

Over the course of the SoS Solutions Lab it became evident that it wasn't appropriate to share our knowledge products on social media due to the sensitive nature of this work. Moving forward, we will be leveraging the GVCEH Communications strategy as it is more intentional and provides 'deep engagement' with targeted partners as opposed to sharing information broadly with the public via social media. As we move ahead, there may be specific knowledge products developed through the SoS Solutions Lab that will be promoted more broadly.

Table 1: SoS Knowledge Dissemination Activities

Knowledge Dissemination Activities			
Year	Date	Activity	Participants
2021	April	SoS Website is launched	
	June 06	SoS Update presentation to the GVCEH board	The GVCEH board is comprised of members from the homelessness serving sector in Greater Victoria, including provincial, municipal, and local government participation
	various	SoS Presentations & updates to the Sheltering, Women & Safety Working Group	Members of the Sheltering, Women & Safety Working Group include health, housing, and harm reduction organizations



Knowledge Dissemination Activities			
Year	Date	Activity	Participants
2022	February 02	Prototype Presentation to the Sheltering, Women & Safety	Members of the Sheltering, Women & Safety include health, housing, and harm reduction organizations
	March 07	Prototype, Roadmap, Next Steps Presentation to the Surfacing Our Strengths Leadership Team*	SoS Leadership and Prototype team members

\* Hosted a two-hour workshop/engagement session; focusing on the roadmap and next steps are and sharing back prototypes with many who haven't participated in any activities since 2021

## Future Knowledge Dissemination Activities

We have several activities that will be ongoing, as well as activities that are planned for the near future.

The SoS Backbone team has been asked to present at an Expert Community on Housing (ECOH)-sponsored webinar on our Solutions Lab experience, results and next steps.

The SoS Backbone team has sent a proposal to present the lab process and outcomes to the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) 2022 conference and are waiting to hear back.

The SoS Backbone team will also present information on the Solutions Lab and the five prototypes to the Downtown Service Providers (DSP) and the members of the University of Victoria's Solutions to Homelessness and Health for Older Women (SHHOW) project.

While not yet planned, the SoS Backbone team expects to be presenting information on our Solutions Lab experiences, the five prototypes, and the research on gender-based and intimate partner violence to other groups and organizations whose work intersects with Women+ fleeing violence/at risk of homelessness soon.

## Knowledge Dissemination Strategy

Knowledge products created for this project have taken on a variety of formats with attention paid towards engaging a variety of audiences. With many formal and informal avenues for sharing learnings from the SoS Solutions Lab, knowledge products from this lab are being shared widely throughout our network and its various communications channels. These have included informal convening opportunities, postings on the CMCH website and library, our website, and postings on social media. Future opportunities are expected to include conferences, webinars, and other more formal learning opportunities.

As the implementation of the prototypes is ongoing, we feel it is premature to share our final learnings and outcomes from each prototype area. For now, we will share our initial knowledge dissemination activities and products, general lessons learned about the Solutions Lab process, and preliminary learnings. As we move toward piloting the prototypes, we will be sharing final

outcomes for our prototypes through a variety of engagements and on our website Winter 2022/2023.

## Results

As a result of the SoS Solutions lab and our community engagements, two very promising collaborations with the University of Victoria emerged.

The first project, in collaboration with the Geography Department at the University of Victoria, was a mapping of groups and organizations supporting Women+ in the Greater Victoria region by two students in the Fall 2021 semester of Geography 491A02. Through discussions, connections, and co-creation of an initial list of resources with our collaborators in Geography at the University of Victoria, a second project emerged.

The second project, a collaboration with the computing science department INSPIRE program at the University of Victoria, is the co-development of a systems navigation web app for Women+ fleeing violence/at risk of homelessness and front-line workers/service providers working with these Women+. The program kick-off was May 02, 2022, with GVCEH as the community partner. The web app is expected to enhance the work of Systems Operations & Safety Peer Navigators (SoS-PNs). This project is ongoing and expected to wrap up August 2022, with the resulting app to be shared with partners and others in the homelessness serving sector. We also expect to add a link to app from GVCEH website. We expect that this app will also provide much needed support to Women+ and their supports, as well as front-line workers/service providers in the Greater Victoria Region.

As we continue to work with other members in the community, we expect more opportunities for collaboration and relational work will present themselves, including advancing several of the SoS Solutions Lab prototypes to a pilot stage.

# Road Map Key findings

Beyond the specific challenges addressed in the prototypes, there were three intersecting, cross-cutting areas of action identified as priorities to “move the needle” on this issue moving forward: (i) System Coordination, Connection, and Collaboration; (ii) Collecting and Sharing Data on Women+ at Risk of Violence and Homelessness; and (iii) Prioritization of Women+ at Risk of Violence in Housing Policy. We have developed a roadmap for action and next steps in these three priority areas of action as well as for each prototype (see [Appendix C](#)).

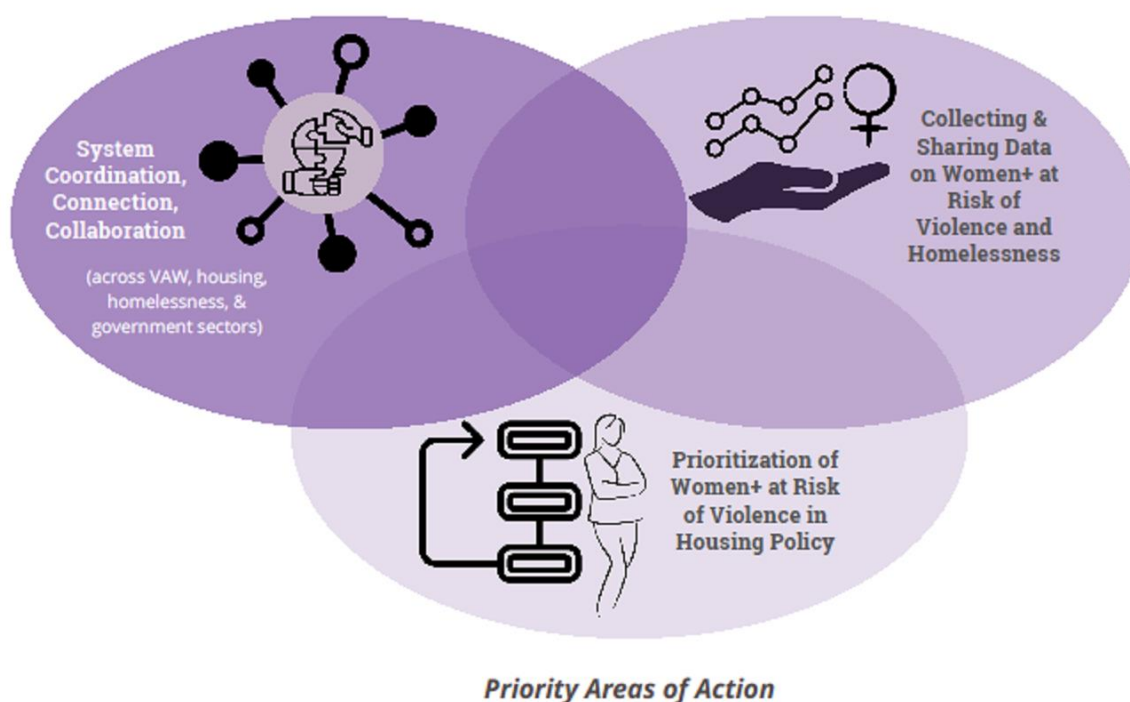


Figure 7: SoS Solutions Lab - Identified Priority Action Areas

# Lessons learned

While this report serves as the final deliverable for the SoS Solutions Lab CMHC funding, this project will continue. We will implement the SoS Roadmap to evolve and advance prototype ideas, seek resources to develop pilots, and continue nurturing existing partnerships and creating new partnerships and collaborations. As well, we will continue to share our knowledge dissemination products through engagements, our website, social media, and other avenues.

The lessons we learned as we journeyed through the Solutions Lab are focused around SoS Solutions Lab process and methods, lab engagement, and themes cutting across multiple aspects of the Solutions Lab.

Lab participants and the leadership team indicated four main areas where we made progress:

- **Taking a Systems Lens to this Challenge**  
By supporting learning about the challenge through identification of the underlying influences and the gaps and barriers that exist, as well as taking a 'systems view' of this challenge we were better able to understand the 'lay of the land'. Further, multiple voices engaged in the lab provided insights into 'pockets of information' that no one organization was holding but, when looked at together, became clearer.
- **Making Progress in Systems Navigation**  
Through the SoS Solutions lab we are now closer to being able to map, and therefore understand patterns and gaps, of systems and services that 'touch' the issue of Women+ at risk of violence and homelessness.
- **Foundations for Future Engagement**  
Relationships, partnerships, and prototype ideas developed in the lab will form a framework towards future collaborative work in this region to address this challenge.
- **Unexpected Outcomes**  
Beyond the five prototypes developed in the lab, there were also unexpected projects that emerged, such as a partnership with the University of Victoria to create an app that will support navigation of housing supports and services for Women+ fleeing violence/at risk of homelessness in the Greater Victoria region.

## Lab process and methods

### *Lab format*

Due to COVID, most lab engagement activities were done virtually; there was appreciation for creative and engaging virtual methods. This did make participation in the process possible for those living outside of the Greater Victoria Region (e.g., Sooke, Salt Spring Island, Vancouver, and Ontario).

*"Engagement has been strong given the way we are working in the pandemic in this sector / in some ways easier to bring more people along because we aren't confined to a space, have been able to engage more."*

However, virtual meetings were not without their challenges. Virtual engagement meant shorter more focused workshops as opposed to longer in-person sessions that often allow for unstructured time for reflection and networking. As the pandemic dragged on, Zoom fatigue increased and participants missed the relational, in person aspects of the work. Prototyping was challenging to do virtually.

#### *Lab structure / timeline*

While the five phases of the lab provided a necessary structure to what is otherwise a very emergent process, it did prove to be challenging for some participating to commit to such an emergent process (e.g., “they don't know what's next”).

We found that there is a tension in doing relational work that is committed to centering people with lived experience in such a timebound process. Several of the SoS Solutions Lab participants indicated they would have appreciated longer timeframes, particularly for prototyping.

*“Tension between linear timelines, and reality that this work does not happen in a linear way.”*

*“Building capacity takes more time than the Solutions Lab timelines allows for.”*

#### *Lab activities*

During the Challenge and Discovery phase of the SoS Solutions Lab there was appreciation for clear questions describing what we were interested in learning, as well as the ability to build new relationships with organizations and individuals through the discovery process leveraging information from interviews and focus groups.

*“What worked well was] the ability to see which questions need to be asked, the way things start to come into focus, where we can start influencing change.”*

However, given project timelines, ‘scrappy research’ meant that time could not be allotted for in-depth engagement or analysis. Given the complexity of the challenge, at times we felt that we were just ‘scratching the surface’ before we had to move on to the next phase of the lab.

During the second and third phases of the Solutions Lab, where we were seeing the system and identifying our leverage points, there was appreciation for bringing a systems lens to our challenge as we were able to see patterns and gaps more clearly. Specifically, there was appreciation for creating systems maps and personas.

*“[what worked well were] the patterns and focus are becoming sharper.”*

*“I liked the persona exercise as it helped provide focus into the experiences the population being served might have.”*

On the downside, there were times when there were feelings of overwhelm and frustration with the scale and complexity of the challenge and a feeling of ‘stuckness’ when it came to

influences within the system, especially when it came to ‘moving the dial’ on policy and funding.

During the Prototyping Phase SoS lab participants found that the process was effective in creating new ways of thinking about this challenge and possible solutions.

*“Having a **diverse prototype team** allowed us to build a robust prototype.”*

*“Having **clear steps** made it easier to identify the different issues and allowed us to develop more specific solutions for them.”*

*“Gathering perspective / participation from a **wide variety of individuals**, including those with lived experience, was also key to creating meaningful ideas and proposals.”*

*“We were able to go through **two prototype testing phases** which allowed us to create a stronger prototype”*

The main challenges for this phase included

- The number of meetings and commitment needed to create prototype was difficult to maintain,
- More time for this phase would have been desirable as prototype development, testing, and refinement needed to be completed, and
- Testing prototypes was challenging as all testing needed to be done virtually as we needed to limit in-person contact due to the COVID19 pandemic.

*“Most of my group is **very busy** and so the number of meetings we needed to have was difficult to maintain.”*

*“**Timeline for the prototyping phase was ... short** - especially when factoring in capacity, the need for flexibility when working with people with lived experiences, COVID, etc. “*

*“My biggest criticism is the **timeframe involved**. It is a quick turn around and takes a lots of time away from other projects .”*

*“The most challenging part was the **testing process** as COVID made it difficult to connect with many people “*

### **Lab engagement**

The lab ‘opened the door’ for building relationships with new partners, including a start to build relationships between the transition houses and the homelessness serving sector. Overall, there is a sense that there was a good mix of partners throughout the process and appreciation for hearing diverse voices.

*"I feel that the diverse partnership and participants help us have a wider understanding of the issues with different perspectives, therefore allowing a variety of solutions."*

Although the SoS Solutions Lab provided a space to build relationships with old and new partners alike, several participants would have liked to see more representation from specific sectors, namely: government, transition houses, housing sector and funders.

*"I believe that there are more people in the community in critical roles in this area that could be at the table."*

*"I think we need more of a government presence than just CRD. We need policy makers in the room during the developmental stages in order to either explain current policies or help drive forward new ones."*

*"I think we are missing the voice of someone from the housing sector/development in order to include the limitations (policy, budgets, and city planning) to solutions we come up with."*

We found that there was strong appreciation for the Peer Research team's (PRT) leadership and involvement throughout the process, especially on the leadership team and in the prototyping process with members of the PRT provided leadership to every prototype team.

*"I loved that you included the voices of people with lived experience – very, very valuable."*

*"Maybe an outcome will be this structure of a Peer Research team as an ongoing structure - this might be a success that they can support engagements moving forward beyond the lab."*

On the downside, COVID created challenges for engagement with people with lived experience, which was planned to happen in-person. Further, we did not have capacity to bring in the PRT into the leadership until Phase 2. **One of our key learnings is to involve the PRT at the very beginning of the Solutions Lab.**

*"Learning - having voices in the room from the beginning is important."*

*"Working with Peer researchers...it would have been nice to engage more, tangible hands-on experience with them would have been nicer."*

## **Cross-Cutting Themes**

### *Capacity Challenges Due to COVID*

The pandemic exacerbated challenges of homelessness, and particularly for women+ at risk of violence. However, it also put added pressures on an already stretched non-profit sector that supports insecurely housed populations in Greater Victoria. Many lab partners were faced with

competing priorities and reduced staff capacity. For many partners, this meant participating in the lab while juggling increasing and competing demands on their time and schedules.

#### *System Fragmentation / Silos / Lack of Collaboration*

One of the main learnings from the lab was that, while this issue is on the radar of many organizations, there is often a lack of cohesion across various sectors to address this issue effectively, namely: housing and homelessness, violence against women, and government. The lab, through a shared understanding of the priority issues to be addressed, built some capacity to 'move forward together' in a more structured way. One of the outcomes of the lab is the potential for creating more strategic and structured collaborations (e.g., working group) focused on Women+'s housing in the sector.

#### *Systems Innovation is Relational Work*

The aspiration of the SoS Lab has been to address the roots of the complex challenges of housing for Women+ at risk of violence and homelessness and ultimately to create the conditions for systems change. It became clear in this lab that at the heart of creating innovation for systems change is working with people—people with lived experience and people that play diverse roles in the challenge and the potential solutions. And, this work is inherently relational. It requires trust and safety where participants can express themselves freely, be vulnerable, and connect with each other.

As the SoS Solutions Lab comes to a close we are looking at ways to continue to maintain the momentum, leveraging our existing relationships. As NHS funding dries up, we are also finding new and innovative ways to fund our work. However, as a small team with limited funding this is a continuing concern.



# Next Steps: Implementing the Road Map

We will be continuing with evolving and advancing the prototypes. The next steps identified in the roadmap action plan are to:

## **Workshop the SoS Solutions Lab findings**

- Convene partners from across the system (non-profits, gender-based violence organizations, housing organizations, government organizations) to share the SoS Roadmap for our prototypes and seed commitment for next steps.

## **Ground truth mandates**

- Given the lab findings, convene a workshop to explore the intersection of organizational mandates with potential for strategic leadership, identify gaps, and make a plan for addressing gaps.

## **Organize a coordinated “funding pitch”**

- Coordinated pitch to potential partners to support the prototypes  
This pitch could happen sooner for “shovel ready” projects identified in the identified in the Roadmap for Priority Areas of Action.

## **Continue strategic dialogue with local and regional governments**

- Continue dialogue regarding funding (e.g., Reaching Home funding) and policy mandates to support Women+ at risk of violence and homelessness.

## **Continue knowledge dissemination across a wide variety of audiences, through our networks and communication channels**

- We will continue to communicate and share learnings as the prototypes are implemented.

Additionally, the SoS Backbone team will be hosting a ‘next phase’ launch event with lab participants, partners in the housing and VAW sectors, different levels of government (Victoria region and Province of BC) and potential funders on September 13, 2022. The purpose of the event will be to socialize the findings of the lab, advance our shared understanding through keynotes and a panel on housing and gender-based violence recently completed in the Greater Victoria region, and explore opportunities to advance the five prototypes and the Women+ fleeing violence/at risk of homelessness sector.

The SoS Backbone team will also be looking at additional partners and other funding streams to support the piloting and sustaining the prototypes created through the Solutions Lab.

## Anticipated Impacts

The SoS Solutions Lab allowed us to create a cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder, systems-wide approach to develop strategies to support safe and stable housing for Women+ experiencing homelessness, who may have experienced or be at-risk of violence. We were able to build on local knowledge and efforts as we worked to address this issue. We were able to support a culturally appropriate, person-centred response to create prototypes to address safe and stable housing for Women+ experiencing homelessness, a population that is in greatest need, vulnerable, and having distinct needs not currently being addressed by the current systems. We had expected to employ a gender-based analysis+ approach in our Solutions Lab and, although adhering to the principles of gender-based analysis+, were not able to employ this method of analysis to our work.

We were successful in bringing together a cross-sectoral group to participate and learn from others in the system, centralizing the voices of Women+ with lived experience.

In all, we were successful in fulfilling the milestones and key activities we outlined in our initial NHS Solutions Lab proposal, albeit with a later start and use of virtual rather than in-person meetings due to the global COVID19 pandemic.

## Replication and uptake potential

We firmly believe that many aspects of the SoS Solutions Lab can be replicated with other organizations, particularly across BC and in light of similar issues and recommendations being reported by other organizations such as the British Columbia Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH). As well, various groups and organizations in the Greater Victoria region are interested in supporting and/or leveraging the prototypes as we begin to pilot them. As is often seen in this sector, additional steps and needs for success generally rest on the need for personal (particularly given the scarcity of persons entering into this sector at this point in time) and the need for sustainable funding and funding sources.

# Appendices

## Appendix A

### Solutions Lab Outreach (Partners & Participants)

Surfacing Our Strengths Solutions Lab		
Lab Partners		
Sector	Organization	Name
Leadership/ Backbone	Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (GVCEH)	Sylvia Ceacero Janine Theobald Michelle Vanchu-Orosco Meredith Elliot
	Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society (ACEH)	Coreen Child Lehran Young
	Society of Saint Vincent De Paul (SVDP)	Sasha Harper
	Intercultural Association	Florentien Verhage
	Victoria Cool Aid Society (Cool Aid)	Candice MacDonald
	Persons with Lived Experience (PWLLE) & board of Women's Housing and Homelessness Network	Hilary Marks
	Capital Regional District (CRD) Housing Initiatives & Programs	Gina Dolinsky
	Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC)	Christina Kante
	The Cridge Centre for the Family	Tori Dach
	BC Housing	Michele Powell
	Island Health	Echo Kulpas
Peer Researchers	Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (GVCEH)	Lisa Crossman
		Laural Gaudette
		Malinda Riffle
		Emily Jackson
		Melissa Barnhard
		Mandy MacKearney

## Surfacing Our Strengths Solutions Lab

### Lab Participants

Sector	Organization	Name
Nonprofit / Service Providers: Violence Against Women (VAW)	BC Society of Transition Houses (BCSTH)	Amy S. FitzGerald
		Tanyss Knowles
	Sistering Lab (based out of Toronto)	Aoife Mallon
		Manisha Rampersad
	Victoria Sexual Assault Centre	Catherine Day
	Salt Spring Island - Islanders Working Against Violence (SSI-IWAV )	Kisae Peterson
		Heather Picotte
Nonprofit / Service Providers: Outreach and/or supports for People with Lived Experience	Victoria Multi-Faith Society	Janine Theobald
	Peers Victoria Resource Society	Lacey Jones
	Pacifica Housing	Cyril Morris
	Portland Hotel Society (PHS)	Bernice Kamano
Nonprofit / Service Providers: Housing, legal and tenancy supports	Together Against Poverty (TAPS)	Antonia Mah
Housing: Shorter term (Emergency shelters or temporary/transition)	Arbutus Shelter (Women's only)	Avery Taylor
	Sandy Merriman House (Women+ only)	Christine O'Brien
		Joanne
	Cridge Transition House for Women	Candace Stretch
	Victoria Women's Transition House Society	Makenna Rielly
	Rosalie's Village Transitional Housing Program	Sasha Harper
	Sooke Womens Transition House	Crystal Gelsinger
	Victoria Women's Transition Hous	Hannah Cunnigham
Housing: Indigenous Housing	Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH)	Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi
	Spaken House (ACEH)	Coreen Child
	Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC)	Jen Wilde
	M'akola Housing Society	Kevin Albers
		Charla Huber
	L'uma Native Housing Society	Colin or Andrea
	Prince George Native Friendship Centre	Manon Desjarlais
		Barb Ward-Burkitt

## Surfacing Our Strengths Solutions Lab

### Lab Participants

Sector	Organization	Name
Housing: landlords, housing operators, developers	Landlord BC	David Hutniak
		Hunter Boucher
Regional/Local Government	CRD staff	John Reilly
		Gina Dolinsky
	Capital Regional Housing Corp	Kate Lambert
	BC Housing	Lois Gabitous
		Heidi Hartman
	City of Victoria	Nicole Chaland
Provincial/Federal Government	MLA, Gender Equity	Grace Lore / Constituency Office assistant (Alex ?)
	BC Housing	Sairoz Sekhon
	MLA, Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)	Mitzi Dean
	Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction (MSDPR)	Kim Grantham
	Minister's Advisory Council for Indigenous Women	Barb Ward -Burkitt
	Gender Equity Office	Anika Sparling
		JJ Jones
	MP, House of Commons of Canada	Laurel Collins
	BC Housing (Provincial)	Sairoz Sekhon
	Ministry of Municipal Affairs (Housing Policy Branch)	Sarah Petrescu Hannah Rabinovitch
Health: 1st responders, urgent care, primary care, mental health	Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC)	Christina Kante
	First Nations Health Authority (FNHA)	Kari Wuttunee
University	University of Victoria	Denise Cloutier
		Ruth Kampen
		Audrey Tung
Gender-based violence: Sheltering, women, and safety	Her Way Home	Sonya Gracey
	Umbrella	Nicole Grivin
	Our Place	Rachel Klopp
	PEERS	Leigh Elliot
	Women, Shelter and Safety Working Group	Sadie Gallant

## Surfacing Our Strengths Solutions Lab

### Lab Participants

Sector	Organization	Name
Indigenous	Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society (ACEH)	Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi
	Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC)	Jen Wilde
		Cristina Kante
	Minister's Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (MACIW)	Barb Ward-Burkitt
	FNHA	Kari Wuttunee
Transition Houses	Greater Victoria Women's Shelter Society	Catherine Day
	BC Society of Transition Houses	Amy FitzGerald / <b>Tanyss Knowles</b>
	SSI - IWAV	Kisae Peterson / <b>Heather Picotte</b>
	Sooke Women's Transition House	Crystal Gelsinger
	Cridge Transition House for Women	Marlene Goley
	Rosalie's Village Transitional Housing Program	Sasha Harper
Non-profit: programs for women	Bridges for Women Society	Patricia Lawson
	University of Victoria	Casey Lake
Provincial/Fed Government	MLA	Grace Lore
	MSDPR	Kim Grantham
	Ministry of Municipal Affairs (Homelessness partnerships and policy branch)	Sarah Petrescu
	Homelessness partnerships and policy branch	Brynn Warren
	Ministry of Municipal Affairs	Hannah Rabinovitch
	BC Housing (provincial)	Sairoz Sekhon
	Gender Equity Office	Anika Sparling or JJ Jones
	MP	Laurel Collins
	MCFD	Mitzi Dean
		Faith Scanlan
		Hannah Mariko Bell

## Surfacing Our Strengths Solutions Lab

### Interviews

Sector	Organization	Name
Provincial/Fed Government	MP, House of Commons of Canada	Laurel Collins
Nonprofit / Service Providers: Housing, legal and tenancy supports	Together Against Poverty (TAPS)	A. Mah
Health	Island Health	Echo Kulpas
Nonprofit / Service Providers: Intercultural	Intercultural Assoc.	Florentien Verhage
Housing: landlords, housing operators, developers	Victoria Cool Aid Society (Cool Aid)	Candice MacDonald
Front line workers	K1	
	F1	
	A1	
	L1	
	J1	
Women+ with lived/living experience	A_1	
	K_1	

# Appendix B

## Knowledge Products

### Systems Change Framework

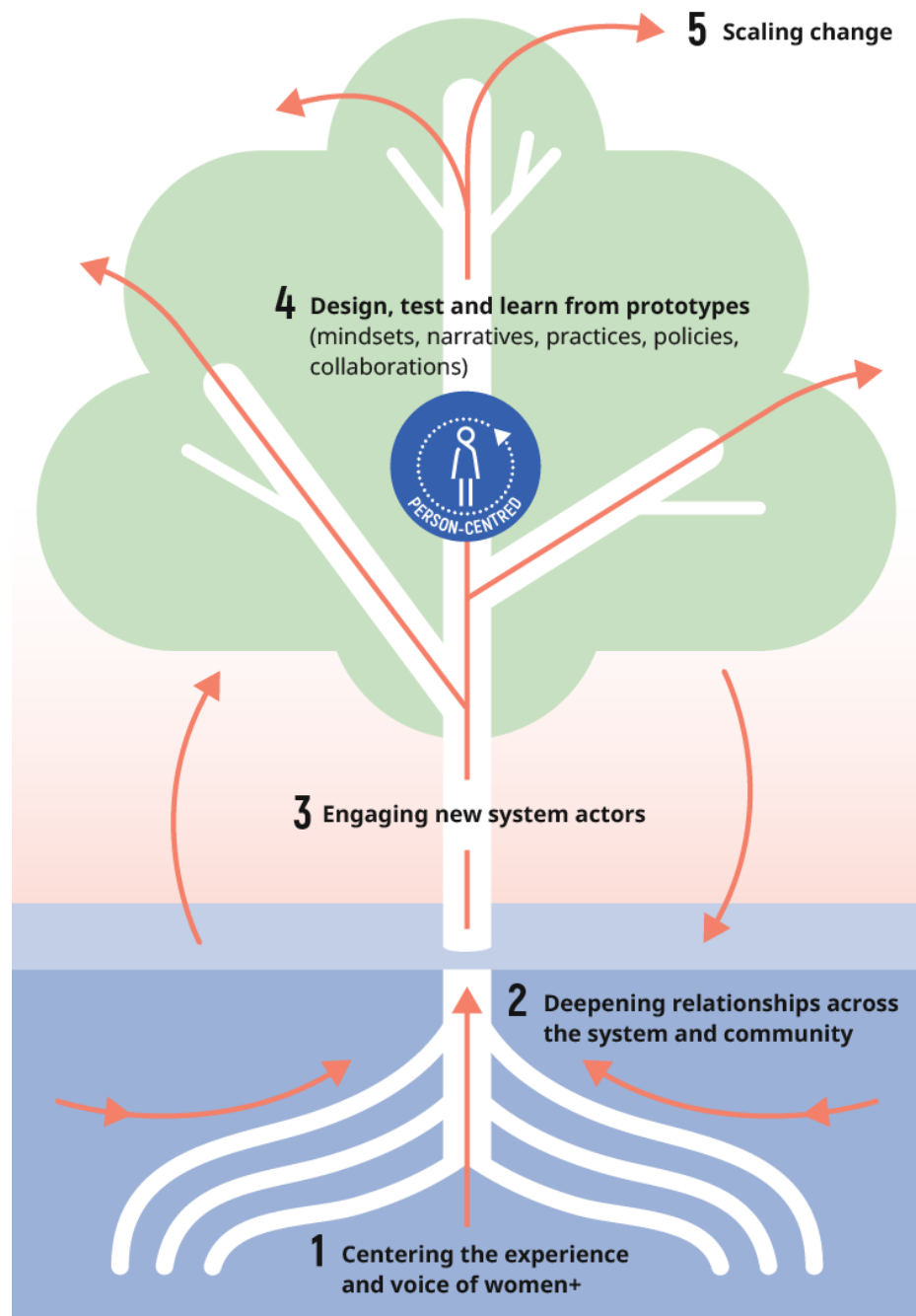


Figure 8: Surfacing Our Strengths Systems Change Framework



# Discovery Phase Methods



Figure 9: Methods to Generate Insights

# Systems Map for the Greater Victoria Region

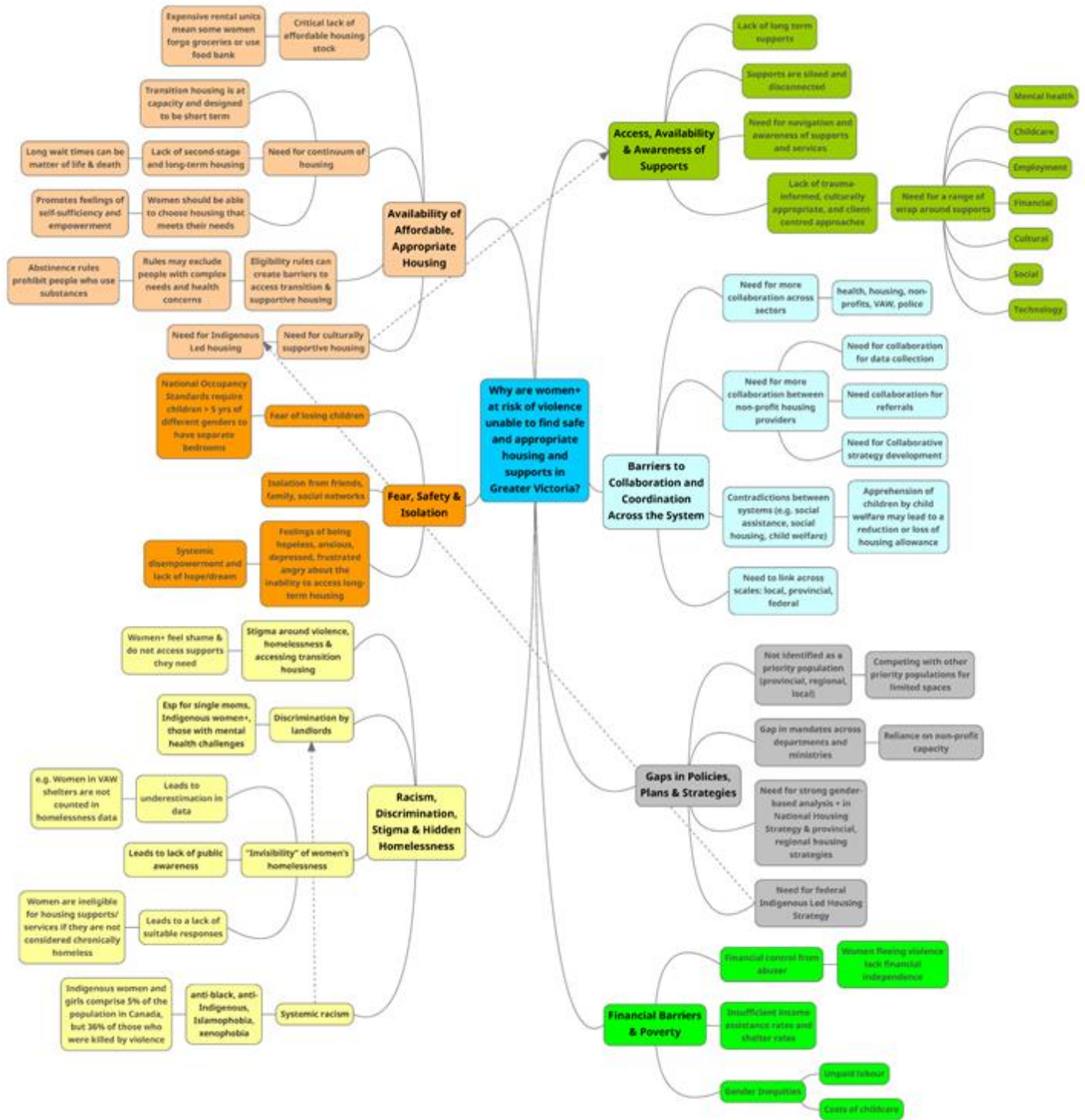


Figure 10: Surfacing Our Strengths Systems Map

# Key Intersecting Influences



Figure 11: Key Influencing factors for women+ at risk of violence & homelessness

## At Risk Populations



Figure 12: Women+ At Risk Populations

# Analysis and Summary of Key Tensions and Opportunities

## Iceberg PDF (High level themes)

**Problem:** Women+ at risk of violence in Greater Victoria currently lack an adequate supply of safe, affordable and appropriate housing and supports to meet their needs.

**4%**

Percentage of women able to leave transition houses for an affordable home in BC.

While approximately 25% find housing (mostly beyond their means), about 75% remain temporarily sheltered or return to their abuser (BCSTH)

**33%**

respondents identified as a woman in Victoria's 2020 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Homeless survey.

More Indigenous women+ are homeless than non-Indigenous women

**100%**

ALL Indigenous women in Victoria's "Priority One" cohort cited intimate partner violence as the key reason for their housing loss.

"Priority One" - individuals experiencing chronic homelessness who have not experienced increases in housing stability or program participation within the existing intervention landscape

**3.5x**

Indigenous women 15 years and older are 3.5 times more likely to experience violence than non-aboriginal women (Native Women's Association of Canada)

## events



Invisibility of women's homelessness



Lack of continuum of affordable appropriate housing



Intersection with risks of child apprehension



Lack of long-term supports integrated with housing



Fragmented siloed system is difficult to navigate

## patterns

### BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURES



Lack of Unified / Coordinated System to Track and Prioritize Women+ At Risk of Violence for Supportive & Long-Term Subsidized Housing



Gaps in government mandates



Lack of Collaboration between VAW & Housing/Homelessness Sectors



Prioritization in local / regional housing policy

### INSUFFICIENT SUPPORTIVE STRUCTURES



Lack of Peer Support Programs



Need more integration of long term trauma-informed wrap-around supports



Need for expansion and centering of Culturally Appropriate Housing and Supports For Indigenous Women+ At Risk Of Violence

## structures



### STIGMA

of experiencing violence; of being homeless



### URGENCY

"I'm too busy": I can only deal with what's right in front of me - leads to lack of collaboration, strategic responses.



### RACISM & DISCRIMINATION

for Indigenous women+, LGBTQ2S+, newcomers/immigrants, those with mental health challenges, disabilities (e.g. brain injury)



### ADDRESSING SYMPTOMS VS SYSTEMS

under-resourced constantly in crisis response vs able to zoom out and see big picture



### "IT'S NOT MY MANDATE"

violence & homelessness intersects with many mandates, but does not fit neatly in one department, ministry or organization.

## mental models

Figure 13: Systems Iceberg (High level themes)

**Problem: Women+ at risk of violence in Greater Victoria currently lack an adequate supply of safe, affordable and appropriate housing and supports to meet their needs.**

**4%**

Percentage of women able to leave transition houses for an affordable home in BC.

While approximately 25% find housing (mostly beyond their means), about 75% remain temporarily sheltered or return to their abuser (BCSTH)

**33%**

respondents identified as female in Victoria's 2020 Point-in-Time (PIT) Count Homeless survey.

More Indigenous women are homeless than non-Indigenous women

**100%**

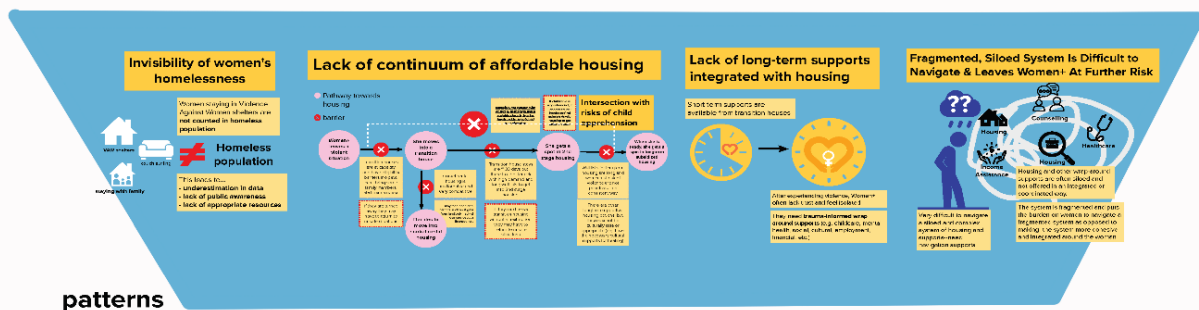
ALL Indigenous women in Victoria's "Priority One" cohort cited intimate partner violence as the key reason for their housing loss.

"Priority One" - individuals experiencing chronic homelessness who have not experienced increases in housing stability or program participation within the existing intervention landscape

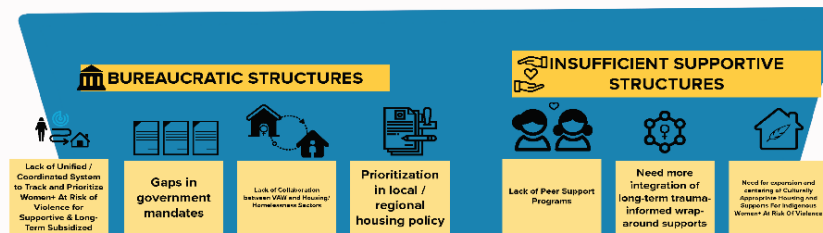
**3.5x**

Indigenous women 15 years and older are 3.5 times more likely to experience violence than non-aboriginal women (Native Women's Association of Canada)

## events



## patterns



## structures



## mental models

Figure 14: Systems Iceberg (in detail)



# Identification of Key Leverage Points

## Key Leverage Points



Figure 15: Summary of Key Leverage Points

## Prioritization of Key Leverage Points

Pick the top 3 leverage points that have the greatest potential to impact systemic change AND are feasible to take action on right away.

Mentimeter

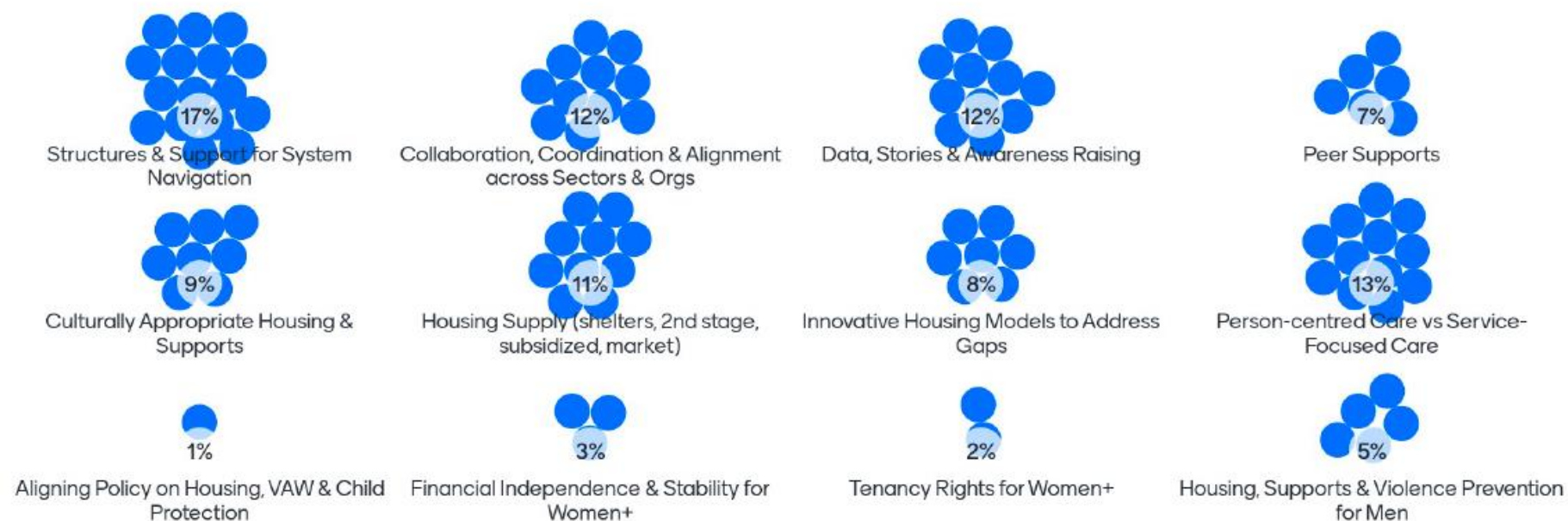


Figure 16: Prioritization Exercise for Leverage Points



## Prototyping, Prototype Examples & Peer Researcher Prototype Testing Day

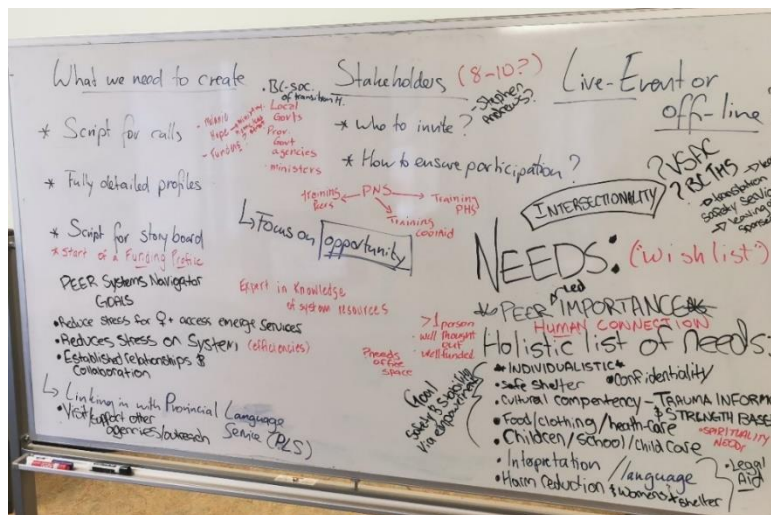


Figure 17: Example of early prototype for Peer Support Navigator

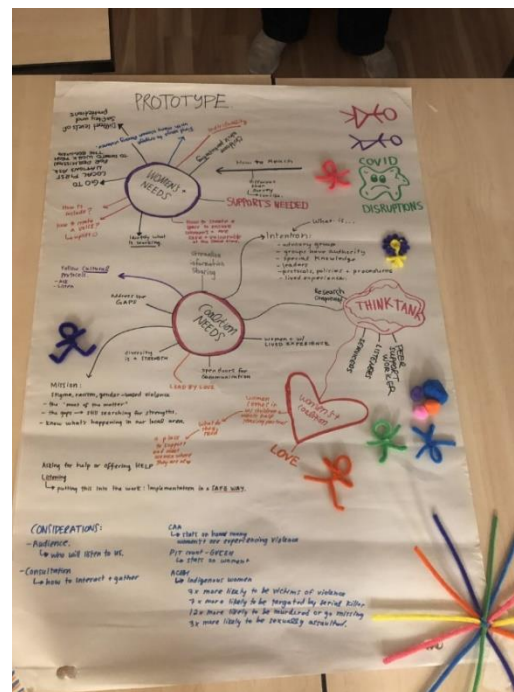


Figure 18: Example of early prototype for Women+ Coalition

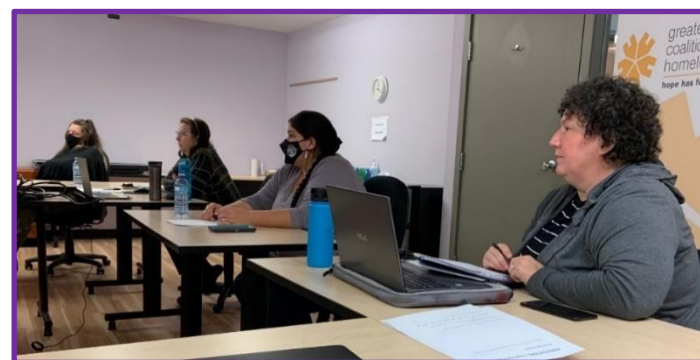


Figure 19: Peer Researcher Prototype Testing Day

# Appendix C Roadmap

## Looking Across the System

### OVERALL ROADMAP

#### Priority Areas of Action

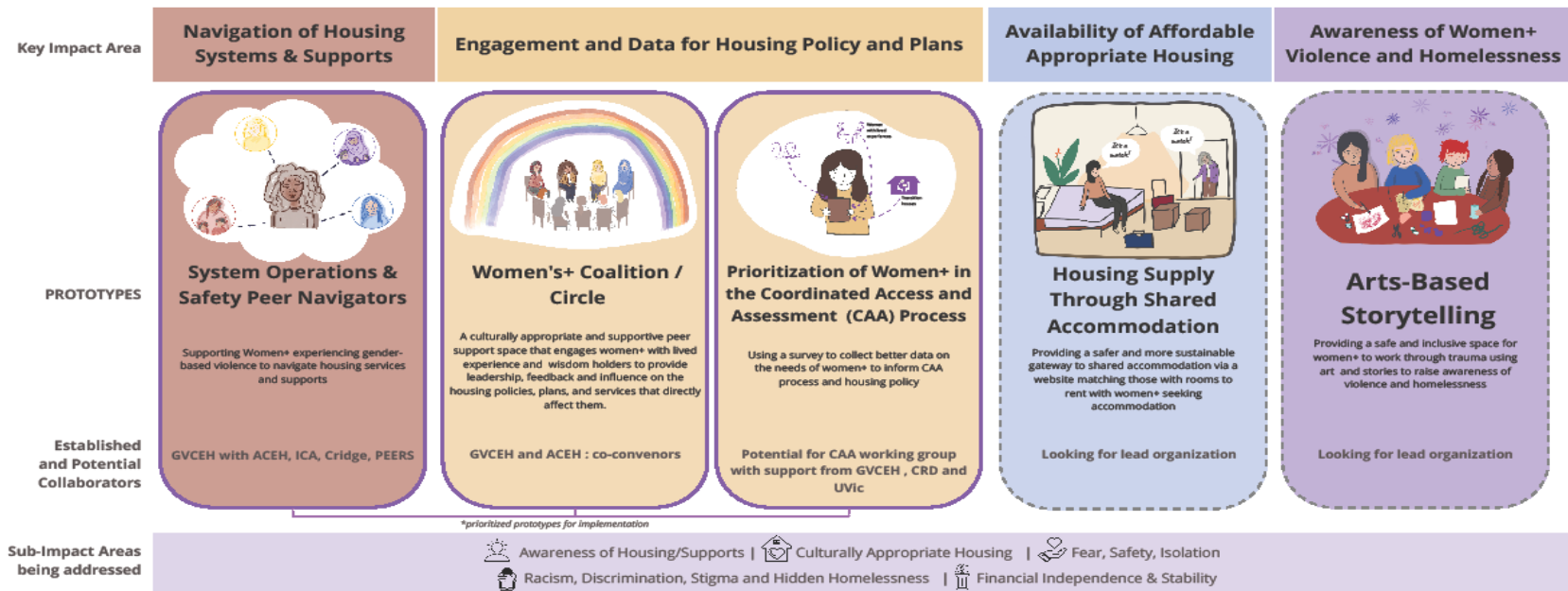
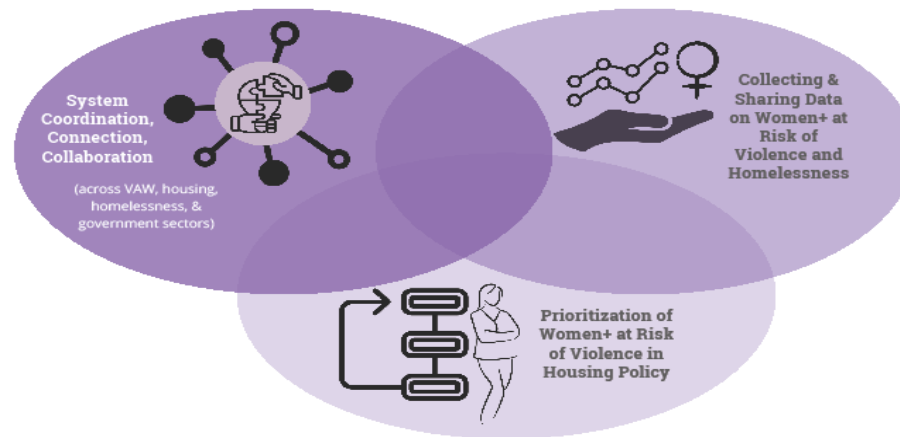


Figure 20: Looking Across the System

'PRIORITY ACTIONS ACROSS THE SYSTEM' ROADMAP

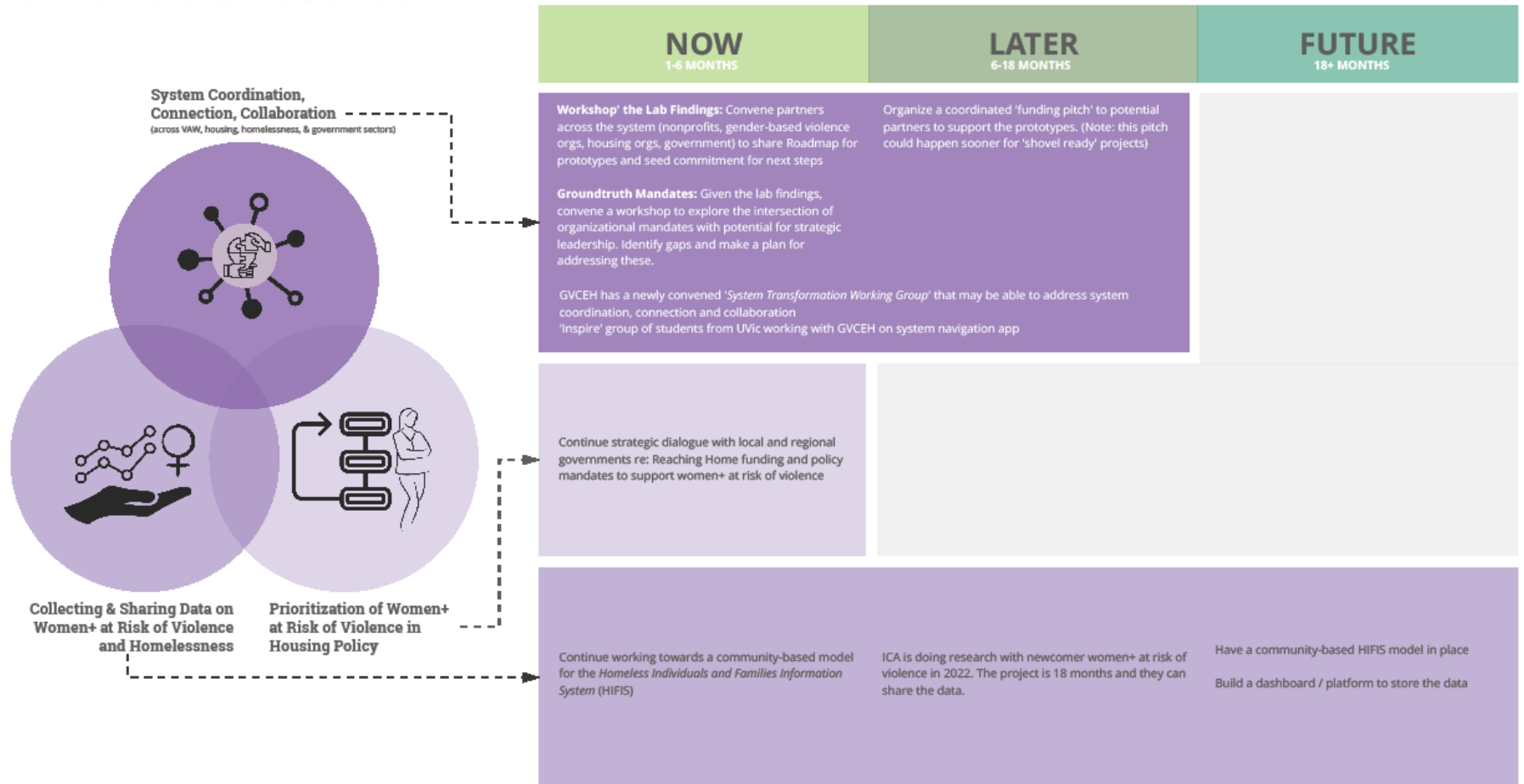


Figure 21: Roadmap for Priority Areas of Action

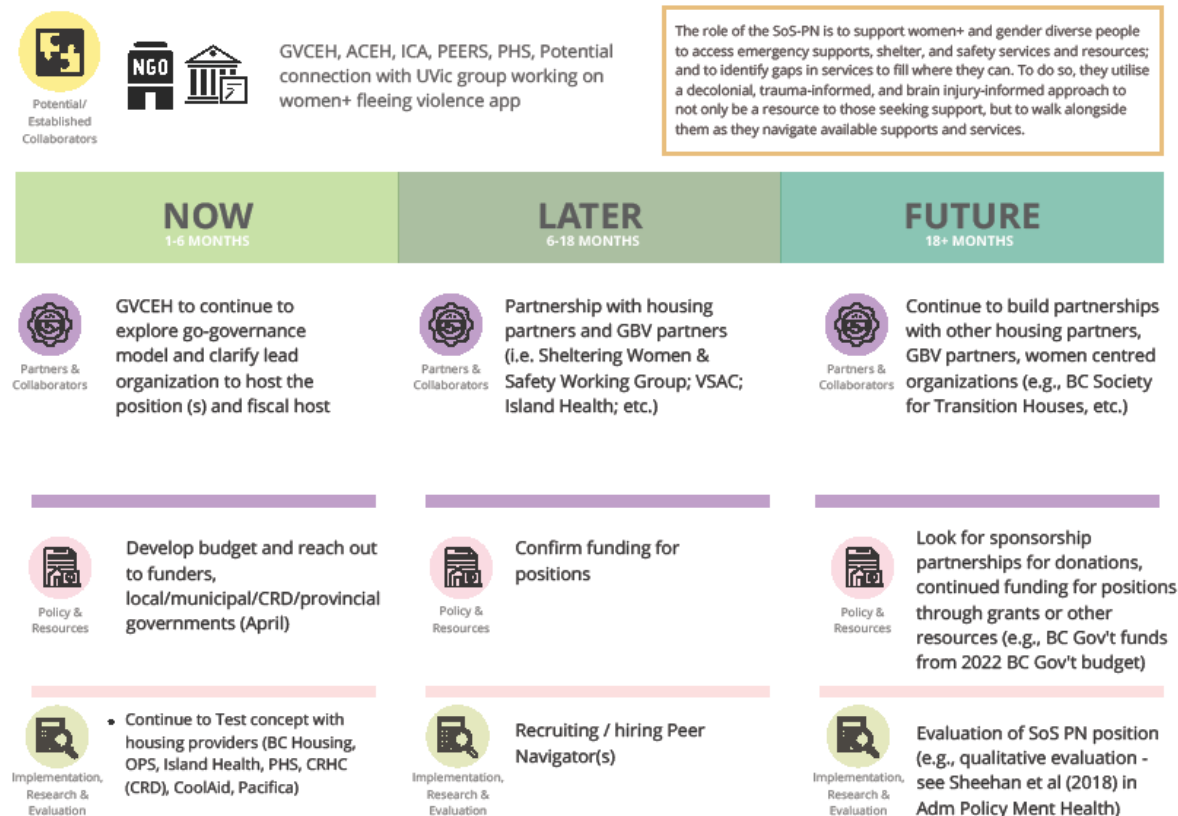
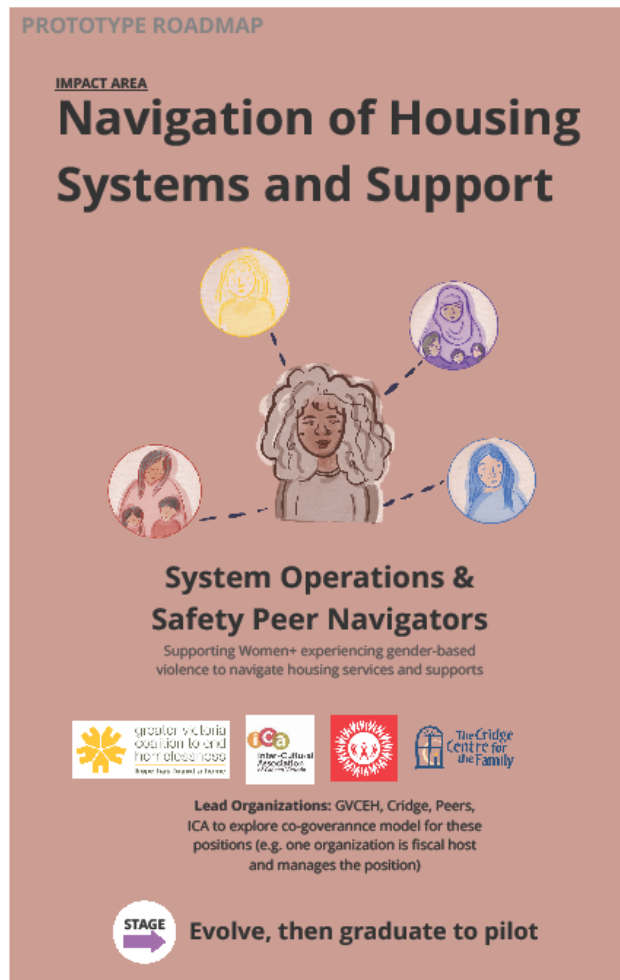


Figure 22: Systems Operations & Safety Peer Navigators

## PROTOTYPE ROADMAP

### IMPACT AREA

# Engagement & Data for Housing Policy and Plans



## Women's+ Coalition / Circle

Culturally Appropriate Safe Space and Engagement Framework for Women+ in Housing Solutions



**Lead Organizations:** GVCEH and Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH) can be co-convenor/incubators for this concept to continue evolving



**Keep testing, then graduate to pilot**



Potential/  
Established  
Collaborators



GVCEH (Peer Research Team), ACEH, Wisdom Holders (women+), funders, 4 levels of gov't reps (FN, local, regional, provincial) Peer Support Workers

A culturally appropriate and supportive peer support space that welcomes and engages wisdom holders (women+ with lived experiences of violence and or homelessness) to share information and be empowered to provide leadership, consultation and influence on the housing policies, plans, and services that directly affect them.

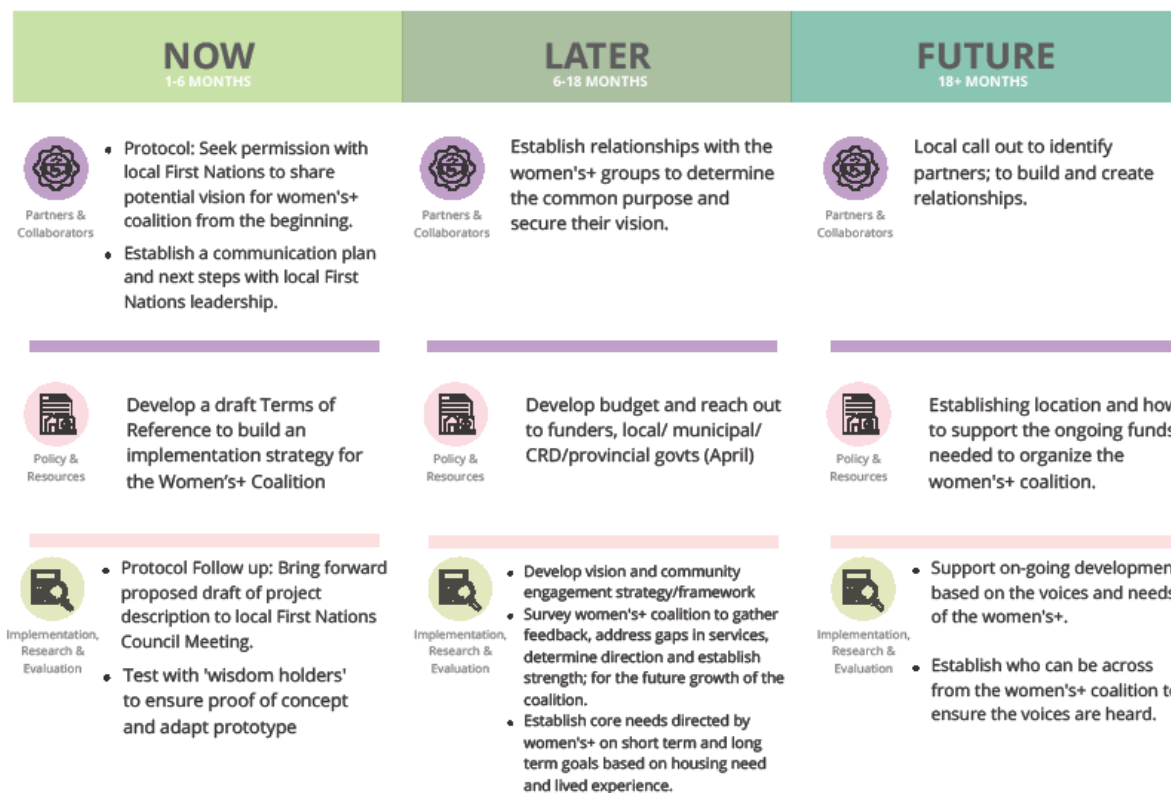


Figure 23: Women's+ Coalition / Circle



## PROTOTYPE ROADMAP

### IMPACT AREA

# Engagement & Data for Housing Policy and Plans



## Prioritization of Women+ in the Coordinated Access and Assessment (CAA) Process

Using a survey to collect better data on the needs of women+ to inform CAA process and housing policy



**Lead Organizations:** Potential for CAA working group with support from GVCEH, CRD and UVic



**STAGE** Evolve and keep testing



CAA Working Group (GVCEH, ACEH, BC Housing, Island Health, etc) would eventually take this project on once survey is developed. Potential research support from UVic, Community Social Planning Council

This prototype is a survey made specifically for Women+ who are homeless that can be inserted into the CAA intake process. The goal of this prototype would be to create more robust data to better understand the experiences, preferences and needs of homeless Women+ experiencing violence, which can then be used to develop safe housing and supports for Women+ who aren't accepted or turned away from women's transition houses. The data can further be used to influence housing policy.

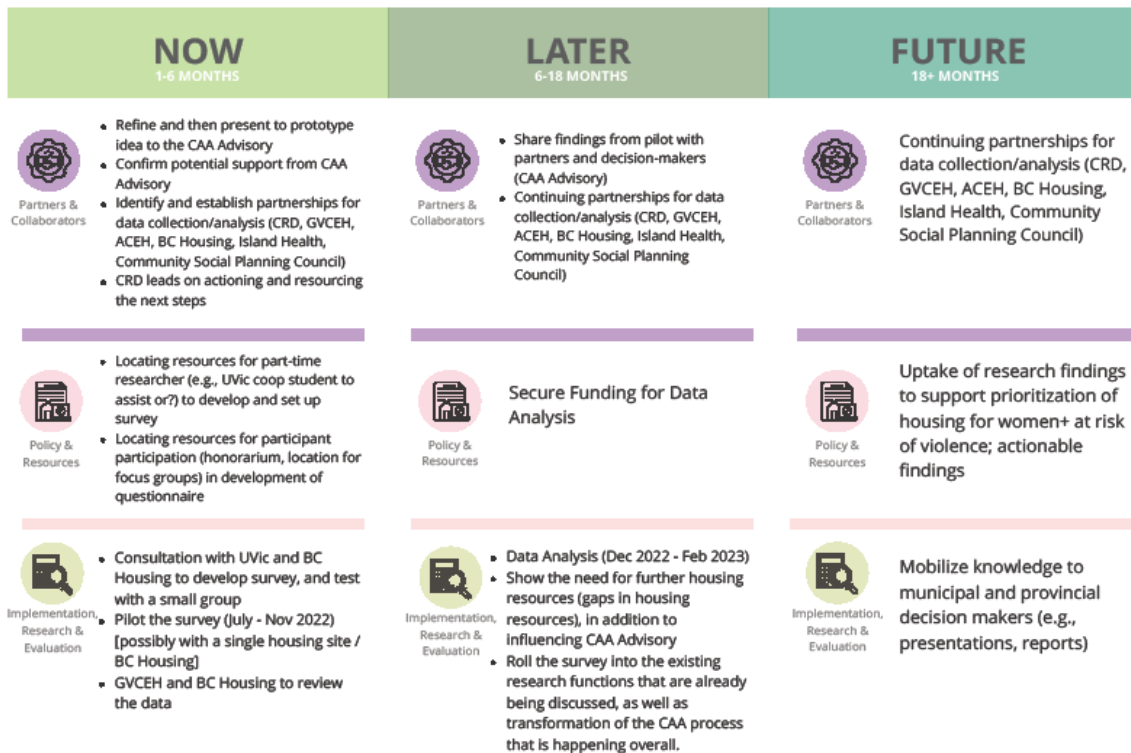


Figure 24: Prioritization of Women+ in CAA Process

## PROTOTYPE ROADMAP

### IMPACT AREA

# Availability of Affordable Appropriate Housing



## Housing Supply Through Shared Accommodation

Providing a safer and more sustainable gateway to shared accommodation via a website matching those with rooms to rent with women+ seeking accommodation.



**Lead Organizations:** GVCEH to follow up with potential lead organizations to discuss capacity for exploring relationship/partnership development with Happipad.



**Evolve and test**



Potential/  
Established  
Collaborators



LandLordBC, Happipad, Referral organizations (other second and third stage housing), Homeowners and/or organizations who link them (eg seniors org)

Working in partnership with Happipad, women's support organizations can provide a safer and more sustainable gateway to shared accommodation, through assessments and screenings of both parties before move in, lowering risk and increasing the chances of a successful outcome.

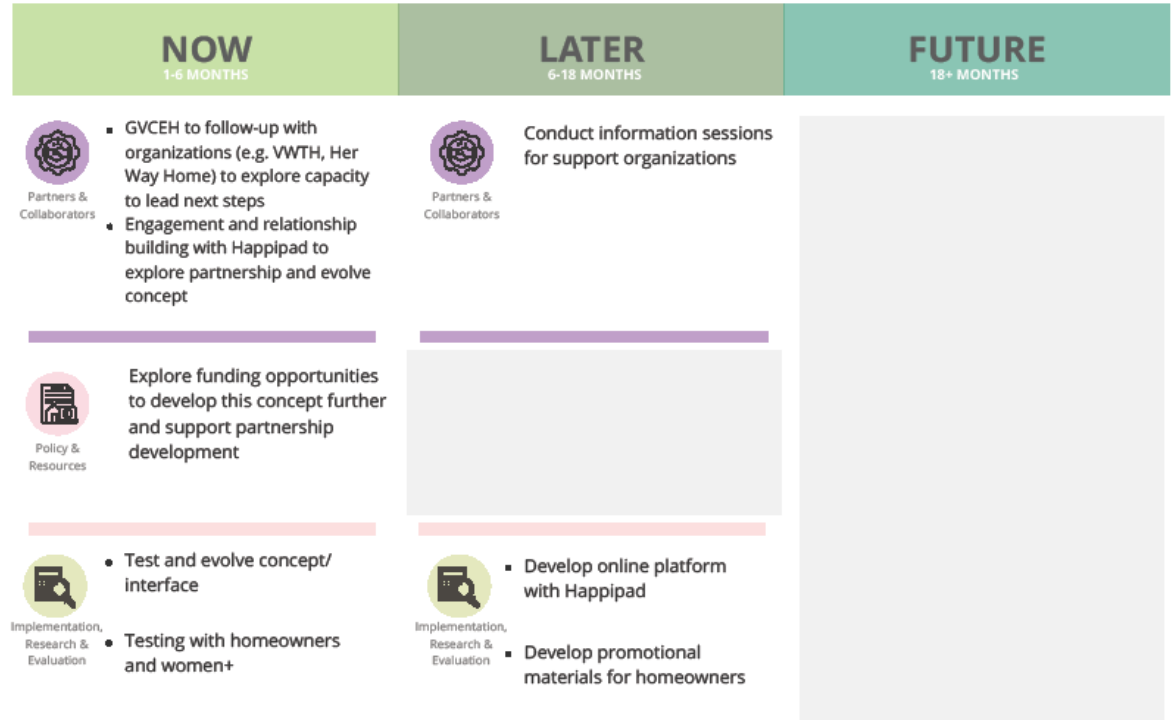


Figure 25: Housing Supply Through Shared Accommodation

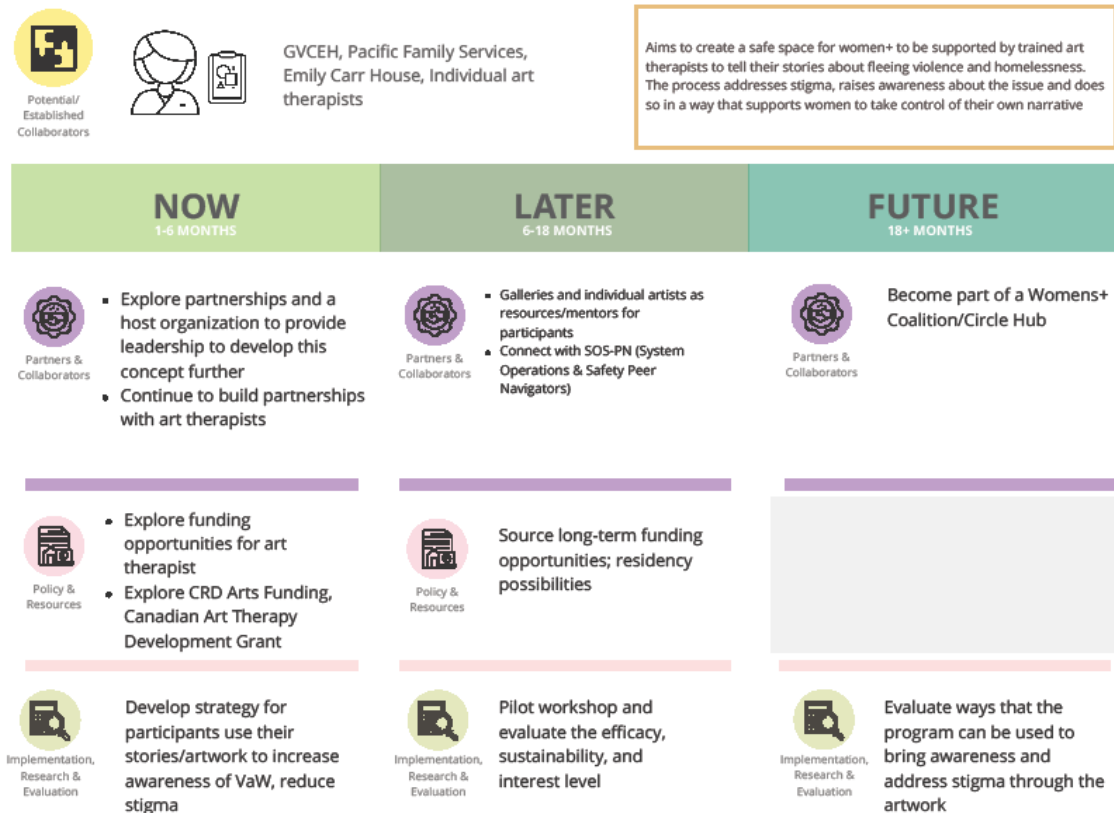
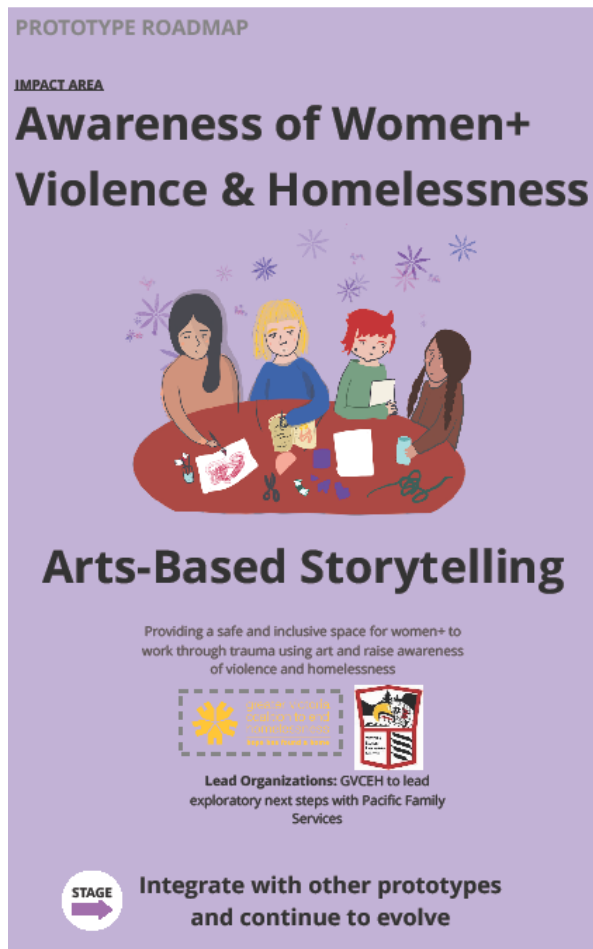


Figure 26: Arts-Based Storytelling



# Appendix D

## Glossary

### WOMEN+

All women, including people with diverse gender identities who are at risk of, or are experiencing homelessness and violence.

### HOMELESS

The situation of an individual or family that does not have a permanent address or residence; the living situation of an individual or family who does not have stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it.

It is often the result of what are known as systemic or societal barriers, including a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination.

<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/nhs/guidepage-strategy/glossary>

### CULTURALLY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Elder support, cultural activities, healing circles, the native medicine garden, and cultural foods are all part of the ACEH's Dual Model of Housing. In addition, Family Members (those residing in the ACEH operated houses) have access to Decolonized Harm Reduction services to support healing and recovery.

<https://acehsociety.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Housing-Transitions-Report-2020-21-.pdf>

### DUAL MODEL OF HOUSING

The Dual Model of Housing incorporates both Culturally-Supportive Housing model including traditional foods, plants and medicines, Elder support, cultural activities, traditional healing practices, building community, family reunification, and a Decolonized Harm Reduction Framework, with Indigenous Harm Reduction programming for alcohol and substance use. Programming strengthens Indigenous self-identity, builds a sense of place, family, community and purpose.

<https://acehsociety.com/housing/>

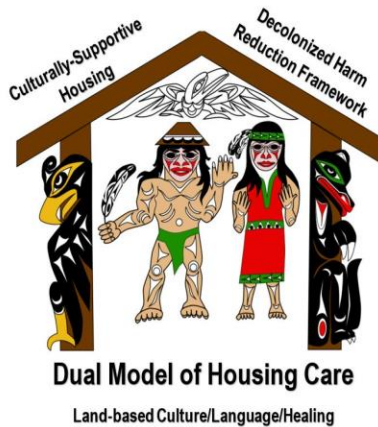


Figure 27: Dual Model of Housing Care  
 Artistry by Doug LaFortune, <https://acehsociety.com/our-work/#reports>

## DECOLONIZED HARM REDUCTION FRAMEWORK (DHRF)

The Decolonized Harm Reduction Framework (DHRF) provides pathways to healing and recovery and includes land-based healing camps based on Indigenous ways of knowing and being, which incorporates culture, language, and healing. The DHRF approaches programming holistically towards physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness.

<https://acehsociety.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019-07-Roundtable-Recommendations-and-Priorities-Report-comp.pdf>

## INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS

Indigenous homelessness is a human condition that describes First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing. Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships (Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012).

<https://www.homelesshub.ca/IndigenousHomelessness>

## HIDDEN HOMELESSNESS

According to the Canadian Definition of Homelessness, the "hidden homelessness" population falls under the category of "provisionally accommodated." It refers specifically to people who live "temporarily with others but without guarantee of continued residency or immediate prospects for accessing permanent housing." Often known as "couch surfing," this describes people who are staying with relatives, friends, neighbours or strangers because they have no other option. They generally are not paying rent and it is not a sustainable long-term living arrangement, but they do not have the ability to secure their own permanent housing immediately or in the near future. This population is considered to be "hidden" because they

usually do not access homeless supports and services even though they are improperly or inadequately housed. Because they do not access services, they do not show up on standard statistics regarding homelessness. Typically experienced by Women+ at risk of homelessness or fleeing a violent partner.

<https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/population-specific/hidden-homelessness>

## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

IPV has been identified as a major global public health concern, linked to intergenerational violence and harmful physical, emotional and economic impacts on victims, witnesses and society as a whole. Intimate partner violence includes violence against spouses and dating partners in current and former relationships. The violence associated with IPV can be particularly terrifying and threatening when the abuser has access to a firearm.

Intimate partner violence and sexual violence are serious and widespread problems worldwide. Apart from being violations of human rights, they profoundly damage the physical, sexual, reproductive, emotional, mental and social well-being of individuals and families.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54893/03-eng.htm>;

[https://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/publications/violence/9789241564007\\_eng.pdf](https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/violence/9789241564007_eng.pdf)

## MISSING MURDERED AND INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ PEOPLE (MMIWG)

The Missing Murdered and Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People (MMIWG) human-rights crisis disproportionately affects Indigenous peoples in Canada and the United States, notably those in the First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Native American communities. This violence amounts to a race-based genocide of Indigenous Peoples, including First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, which especially targets women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. This genocide has been empowered by colonial structures, evidenced notably by the Indian Act, the Sixties Scoop, residential schools, and breaches of human and Inuit, Métis and First Nations rights, leading directly to the current increased rates of violence, death, and suicide in Indigenous populations.

<https://sis.tcu.edu/wgst/initiatives/mmiw/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missing\\_and\\_murdered\\_Indigenous\\_women](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missing_and_murdered_Indigenous_women)

[https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/MMIWG\\_Lexicon\\_FINAL\\_ENFR.pdf](https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/MMIWG_Lexicon_FINAL_ENFR.pdf)

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW)

Violence against women is a major public health and human rights concern, with intimate partner violence and sexual violence the most common forms of violence against women. It is also a power (and oftentimes) gender-based crime, usually by a partner, directed at a female partner.

At the centre of violent relationships is a pattern of power and control. Individual events may not appear violent or abusive but added up and experienced over time they result in one person in a relationship holding the power and having control over the other.

Incidents at first may not seem serious, but usually escalate over time, leading to women feeling degraded, isolated and having little control over their lives.

<https://www.who.int/news/item/19-11-2020-who-stands-up-the-right-to-health>

## SAFE HOME

Safe Homes are private homes in smaller, often rural, communities where there is no transition house program. Safe homes usually provide a safe place to stay for a few days to a week.

<https://bcsth.ca/resources/frequently-asked-questions/>

## TRANSITION HOUSE

A Transition House is a safe residence for women and children to go to if they have been abused. The addresses of transition houses are kept confidential so that women (and children) cannot be found. Transition houses are usually regular houses that are available in most communities and cities across B.C. Transition house stays are usually for up to 30 days, and sometimes longer, under certain circumstances. There are no costs associated with staying at a transition house. Women can call a transition house for support and information and DO NOT need to stay in a transition house to get support and information. Most transition houses have staff available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.

<https://bcsth.ca/resources/frequently-asked-questions/>

## SECOND AND THIRD STAGE HOUSES

Second Stage Houses provide short-term, safe, affordable, and independent housing, and some services similar to those provided in transition houses. Second stage house stays are generally for 6 months to a year. Third Stage Houses offer independent longer-term housing for 2 to 4 years.

<https://bcsth.ca/resources/frequently-asked-questions/>

## SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Supportive housing is housing that provides a physical environment that is specifically designed to be safe, secure, enabling and home-like, with support services such as social services, provision of meals, housekeeping and social and recreational activities, in order to maximize residents' independence, privacy and dignity.

[https://eppdscrmssa01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprodcontainer/files/pdf/glossary/nhs-glossary-en.pdf?sv=2020-02-10&ss=b&srt=sco&sp=r&se=2024-03-30T20:07:16Z&st=2021-03-30T12:07:16Z&spr=https&sig=zphoCuN3v1pBI42RCAX1EaitvCCwi6S7%2BcL5IgMH2RY%3DFFORDABLE HOUSING](https://eppdscrmssa01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprodcontainer/files/pdf/glossary/nhs-glossary-en.pdf?sv=2020-02-10&ss=b&srt=sco&sp=r&se=2024-03-30T20:07:16Z&st=2021-03-30T12:07:16Z&spr=https&sig=zphoCuN3v1pBI42RCAX1EaitvCCwi6S7%2BcL5IgMH2RY%3DFFORDABLE%20HOUSING)

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing generally means a housing unit that can be owned or rented by a household with shelter costs (rent or mortgage, utilities, etc.) that are less than 30 per cent of its gross income.

<https://eppdscrmssa01.blob.core.windows.net/cmhcprodcontainer/files/pdf/glossary/nhs-glossary-en.pdf?sv=2020-02-10&ss=b&srt=sco&sp=r&se=2024-03-30T20:07:16Z&st=2021-03-30T12:07:16Z&spr=https&sig=zphoCuN3v1pBI42RCAX1EaitvCCwi6S7%2BcL5IgMH2RY%3D>