SURFACING OUR STRENGTHS:

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

Final Report for Phase 1 - Definition & Phase 2 – Discovery

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Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness
Shift Collaborative

Message from the Lab Co-Hosts

The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (GVCEH) was formed in 2008 with a mission to end homelessness in the Capital Region. GVCEH consists of local housing, health, and social service providers; non-profit organizations; all levels of government; businesses; the faith community; people with a lived or living experience of homelessness; and members of the general public. As a backbone organization GVCEH facilitates information sharing, relationship building, research and strategic planning to ensure the collective efforts of stakeholders are making the greatest possible difference.

The Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH) engages Indigenous voices to frame the questions and solutions to Aboriginal homelessness in Victoria, BC with goals to work collaboratively across Vancouver Island. The work of the ACEH is centered on the voices of Indigenous peoples with lived experience who have shared their immediate needs, systemic and structural barriers, gaps in services, as well as their hopes, dreams, and perspectives on solutions. The ACEH seeks to create a community of love and care to help Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness reconnect with families and culture, and ultimately, become stably housed.

Collaborating with GVCEH and ACEH members and other agencies across the sector, all centred-around the voice and equitable participation of lived and living experience, is the pathway to achieving collective impact on this wicked problem of cyclical violence and homelessness for women+. Through this lab we will amplify successful approaches, and collectively identify and dissolve ongoing systemic, structural, and personal barriers blocking pathways to home. Inclusion of experiential voices and peer leadership is imperative to finding and creating pathways for women+ to step out of the intersection of experiences of violence and homelessness.

Through walking this journey, we hope to demonstrate pathways, out of transition, and into permanent safe and stable, loving homes and lives for women+. This is possible, when women+ come together, and surface our strengths.

Table of Contents

An Introduction to
the Lab

An Introduction to the Lab

Violence plays a pivotal role in experiences of homelessness for women, and especially for Indigenous women due to the ongoing impacts of colonialism. The homelessness-serving sector and domestic violence sector currently operate quite separately, presenting challenges to providing responsive, person-centred and culturally appropriate supports and housing options. Women's Shelters Canada notes that, "while there is a general recognition of the link between violence against women (VAW), housing, and homelessness, the VAW shelter sector has had limited involvement with the housing and homelessness sectors." As a result, many women+ are "poorly served by both, or not served by either – especially Indigenous women and others with multiple marginalizations".[1]

This lab is focusing on creating **accessible, safe, and appropriate** housing supports and solutions for women+ at risk of violence and homelessness in Greater Victoria.

> While Victoria's 2020 Point-in-Time (PiT) Count found that 33% of its homeless survey respondents identified as female, the proportion of women experiencing homelessness is likely higher, but not currently captured by conventional approaches. Further, Indigenous women experience disproportionate rates of homelessness; among Indigenous Victoria PiT Count respondents, 44% were women.

The invitation

How might we co-develop **equitable, safe and culturally supportive responses** to the housing needs of women+ who have been/are at risk of experiencing violence and homelessness in Greater Victoria?

How might we co-develop solutions in a way that **protects the dignity and cultural identity** of women+?

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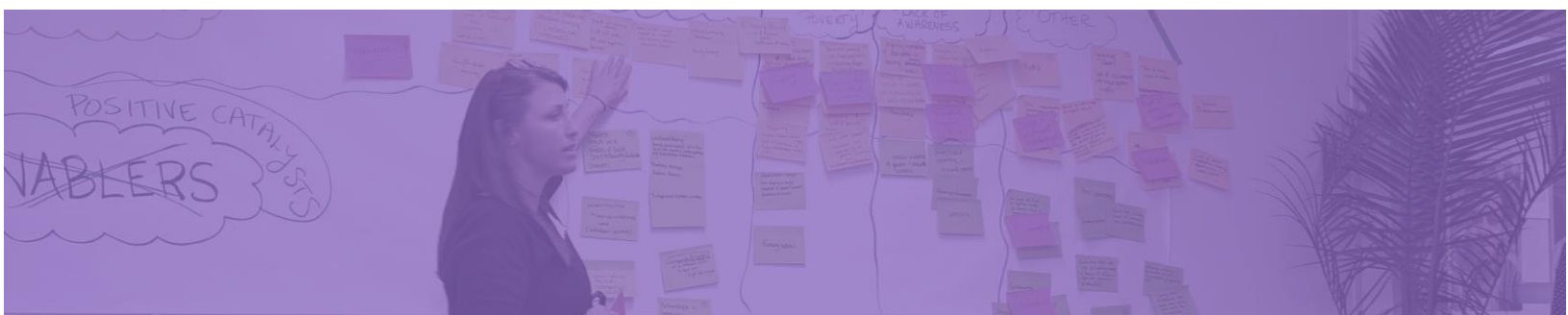
[1] Maki, K. (2017). Housing, Homelessness, and Violence Against Women: A Discussion Paper. Women's Shelters Canada: Ottawa. ON. Retrieved from http://endvaw.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Housing-Homelessness-and-VAW-Discussion-Paper-Aug-2017.pdf

Lab Structures and Partners

Surfacing Our Strengths is developed, facilitated and supported by leadership from organizations and individuals in the region that support women+ who are directly impacted by violence and/or homelessness. Within these structures an effort has been made to include those with personal lived experience of violence and homelessness.

Leadership Team
Provides high-level strategic support, direction and long-term stewardship for the project, including identifying stakeholders and partners to be engaged ensuring the project is rooted in sound principles.

Management Team / Backbone
Manages the project including the budget, workplan, and contracts, including liaising with CMHC for all reporting requirements, supporting coordination and logistics of the project and coordinating project communication and reporting activities.

Design / Facilitation Team
Stewards the design and facilitation of the lab, including supporting designing & implementing an engagement strategy with community partners and designing/overseeing facilitation of lab activities. The design team also harvests key insights from lab activities and facilitates sense-making with Leadership Team.

Lab Participants
A collective of people and organizations that are impacted by or influencing the issues of supporting women+ at risk of violence and homelessness. They participate in various lab activities (workshops, research, prototypes, etc.). This includes women+ with lived experience and representation from people that sit in different places in the 'system'.

Peer Research Team
Includes people with lived experience of violence and homelessness to engage with women+ and other agencies supporting women+ to increase understanding of the assets, barriers, needs and ideas for developing solutions and creating change.

Figure 1. Overview of Lab Structures and Roles

Introducing the Backbone Team

Kelly Roth,
Executive Director, GVCEH

Coreen Child,
Associate Director, ACEH

Janine Theobald,
Inclusion & Collaboration Manager, GVCEH
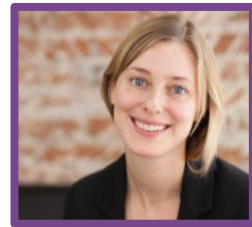
Kerri Klein,
SHIFT Collaborative

Stacy Barter,
SHIFT Collaborative

Michelle Vanchu-Orosco,
Director of Research & Data Analysis, GVCEH

Introducing the Leadership Team

- Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA)
- Capital Regional District (CRD)
- Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC)
- Peer Victoria Resource Society (Peers)
- Society of St Vincent De Paul (SVDP)
- Cool Aid Society
- Persons with Lived Experience

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.

Our
Approach

Our Approach

This Lab is focused on honouring and centering the voices of women+ with 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 will focus on:

- Engaging **diverse perspectives and roles**, especially those who are most impacted by the issue (i.e., community members with lived experience), and other types of knowledge holders.
- **Co-creation, not consultation:** Solutions need to be owned to be accepted by everyone who will play a part in their implementation, which demands co-creation with everyone involved.
- Generating ideas, processes, actions and projects that can **address root causes** (not just symptoms).
- **Learning by doing**—testing out solutions, observing what happens, learning and adapting.
- Using **participatory and creative** "hands-on" methods and engagement; and
- **Building capacity** of those involved to increase trust, deepen relationships, and take action together. [2]
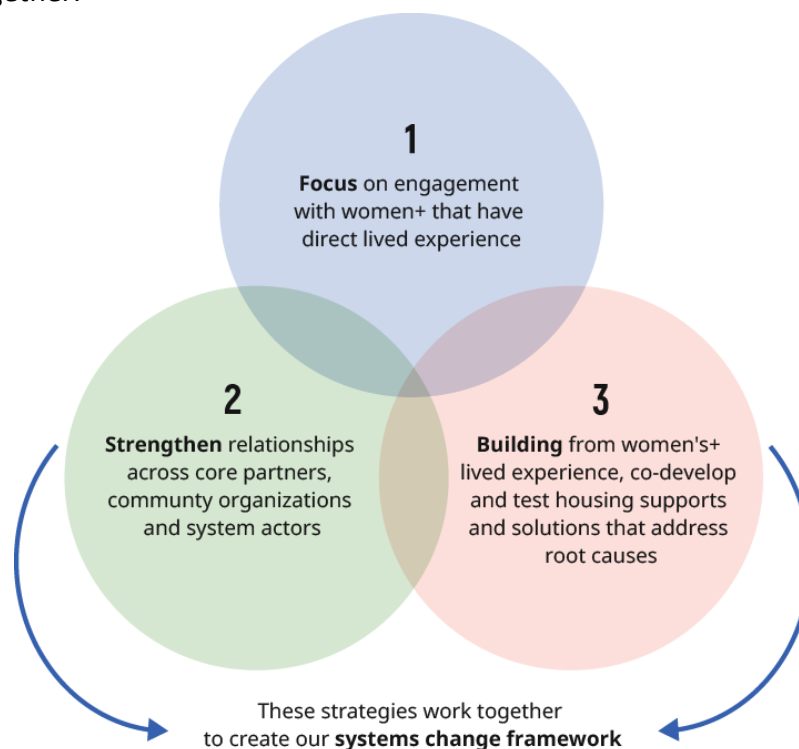

Figure 2. Our Systems Change Process

Our Guiding Principles

We believe that the process of this lab is as meaningful as any end products or prototypes. As such, we are guided by the following principles.

- **CENTERING LIVED EXPERIENCE:** This project will honour and centre the voices of women+ who have lived experiences of homelessness, violence, and exclusion.

- **EQUITY & INTERSECTIONALITY:** This project considers the multiple, overlapping intersections of gender, race, class, ethnicity, ability, and sexual identity that affect how some women+ are disproportionately affected by violence and homelessness. We recognize that homeless Indigenous, Black, women of colour and non-binary people are disproportionately at risk of violence and will prioritize solutions that reduce these inequities. This includes aligning this project with Article 22 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which commits to ensuring that Indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.

- **SYSTEMIC AND STRUCTURAL:** This lab will strive to identify and work on root causes, aiming to address factors that systematically marginalize women+ from accessing equitable housing supports and services.

- **TRAUMA-INFORMED:** We recognize that participants in this project may have experienced or are experiencing trauma that affects their mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional wellbeing. We also recognize trauma can be triggered. This project will create culturally, emotionally, and physically safe spaces for project participants, including providing appropriate supports to allow women+ to participate fully.

- **STRENGTHS-BASED:** In this lab we will focus on the individual and community strengths that support self-determination and resilience; these strengths will be valued, respected, and nurtured.

- **HONOURING INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING & PROTOCOLS:** This lab will honour and acknowledge the protocols of the unceded Lekwungen (Songhees and Esquimalt) territory, where the project is taking place. Through our governance, engagement, and collaboration we will work to create culturally safe spaces that honour, respect and include Indigenous Knowledge and approaches.

- **COLLABORATION ACROSS SECTORS:** We believe the wisdom generated from the coming together of a diverse collective helps us to get more thoughtful solutions. Together we build opportunities to learn from others, co-design with community and test our ideas with people on the front lines to ensure the solutions we suggest will actually work.

Our Activities

Our Activities
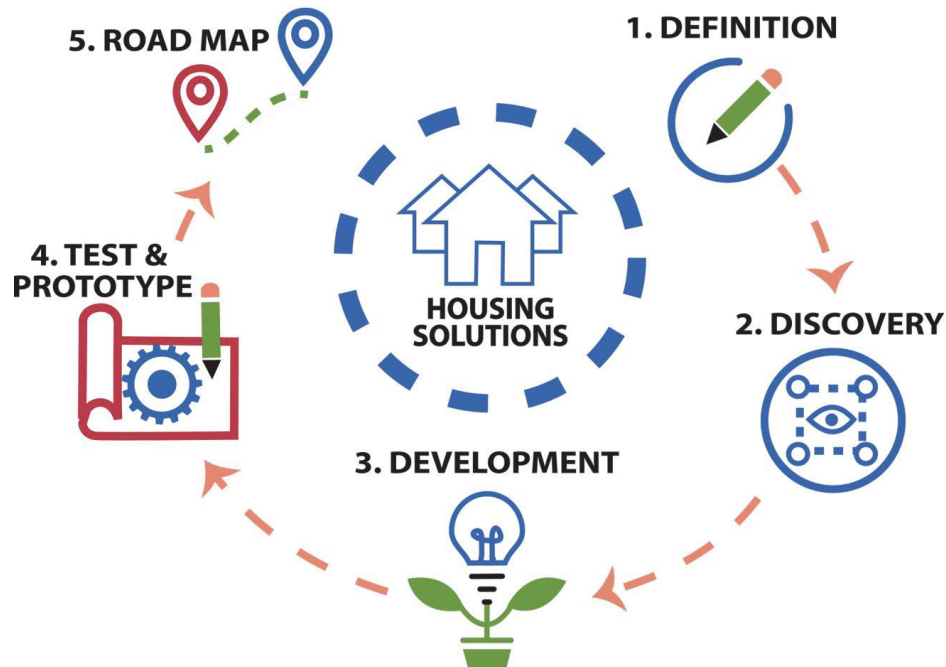
Figure 3. Surfacing Our Strengths Lab Phases

Phase 1. Definition (August – November 2020)

Phase 1. DEFINITION

Establish the scope, frame the Lab Challenge and what we are seeking to learn through the Lab.

Engage the community, in providing guidance and direciton.

Set up agreements, protocols, roles, structures, and overall Lab design.

Phase 1 activities consisted of the following milestones:

- Designing lab structures and roles
- Recruiting the Lab Leadership Team
- Convening 2 Lab Leadership Team Meetings (1 x in-person and 1 x virtual)
- Producing a Project Backgrounder, including a "How Might We" question for the lab
- Developing a Lab Engagement and Recruitment Strategy (see Appendix B)
- Starting to Identify Learning Questions to Guide the Lab Discovery Phase (see Appendix B)
- Refining our project timeline and work plan

Much of the definition phase was spent on outreach, recruitment and engagement with the Lab Leadership Team and Backbone Team. Sessions focused on developing an understanding of the challenge, the current landscape of housing supports and services (strengths, gaps, and barriers) and ensuring the lab is building on existing work (and lessons learned) from what has happened to address this issue in the past.
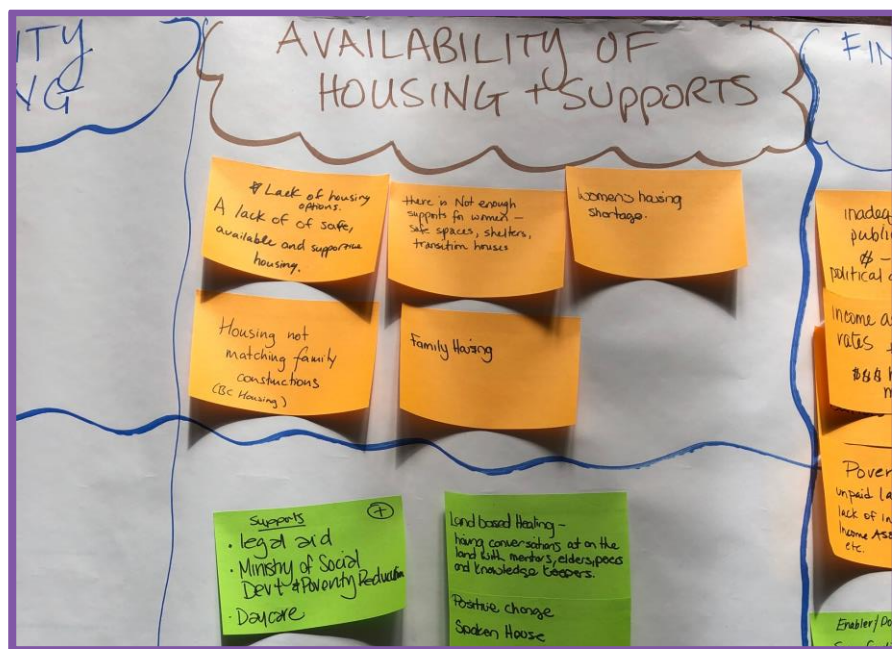
Figure 4. Inhibitors and Catalysts for Housing Supports for Women+
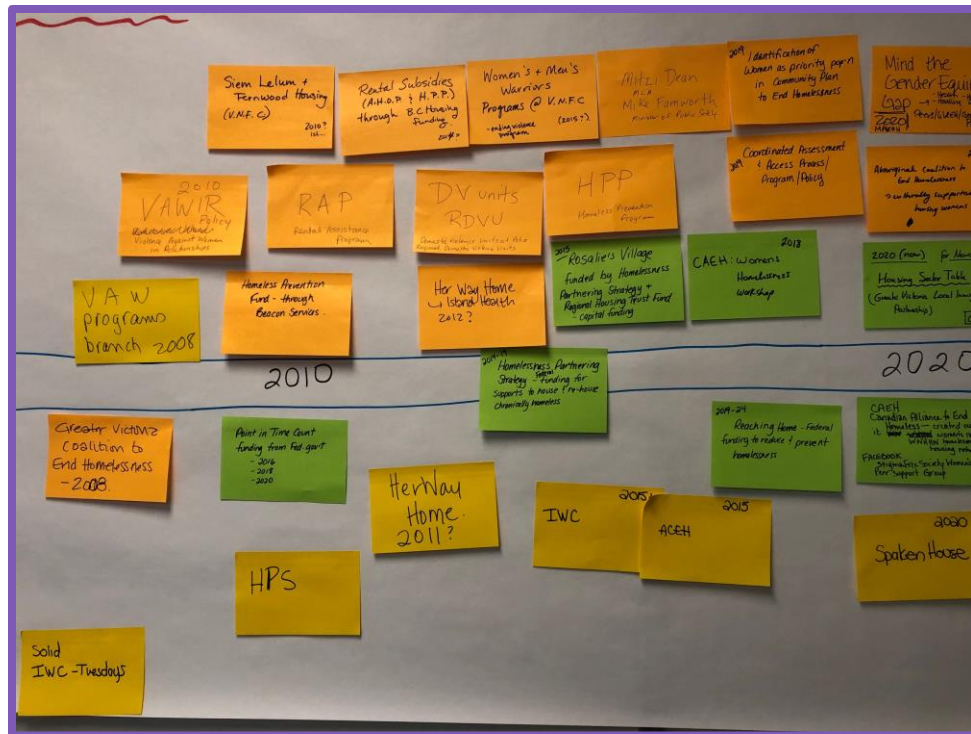
Figure 5. Landscape of Supports and Projects in Greater Victoria

Figure 6. Lab Leadership Team Meeting Oct 26, 2020

The definition phase also grounded the Leadership team in the approach and process of the solutions lab and created a shared understanding of how a centering the voices of those with lived experience would be centered in the lab approach.[3]

5 Scaling change

4 Design, test and learn from prototypes (mindsets, narratives, practices, policies, collaborations)

PERSON-CENTRED

3 Engaging new system actors

2 Deepening relationships across the system and community

1 Centering the experience and voice of women+
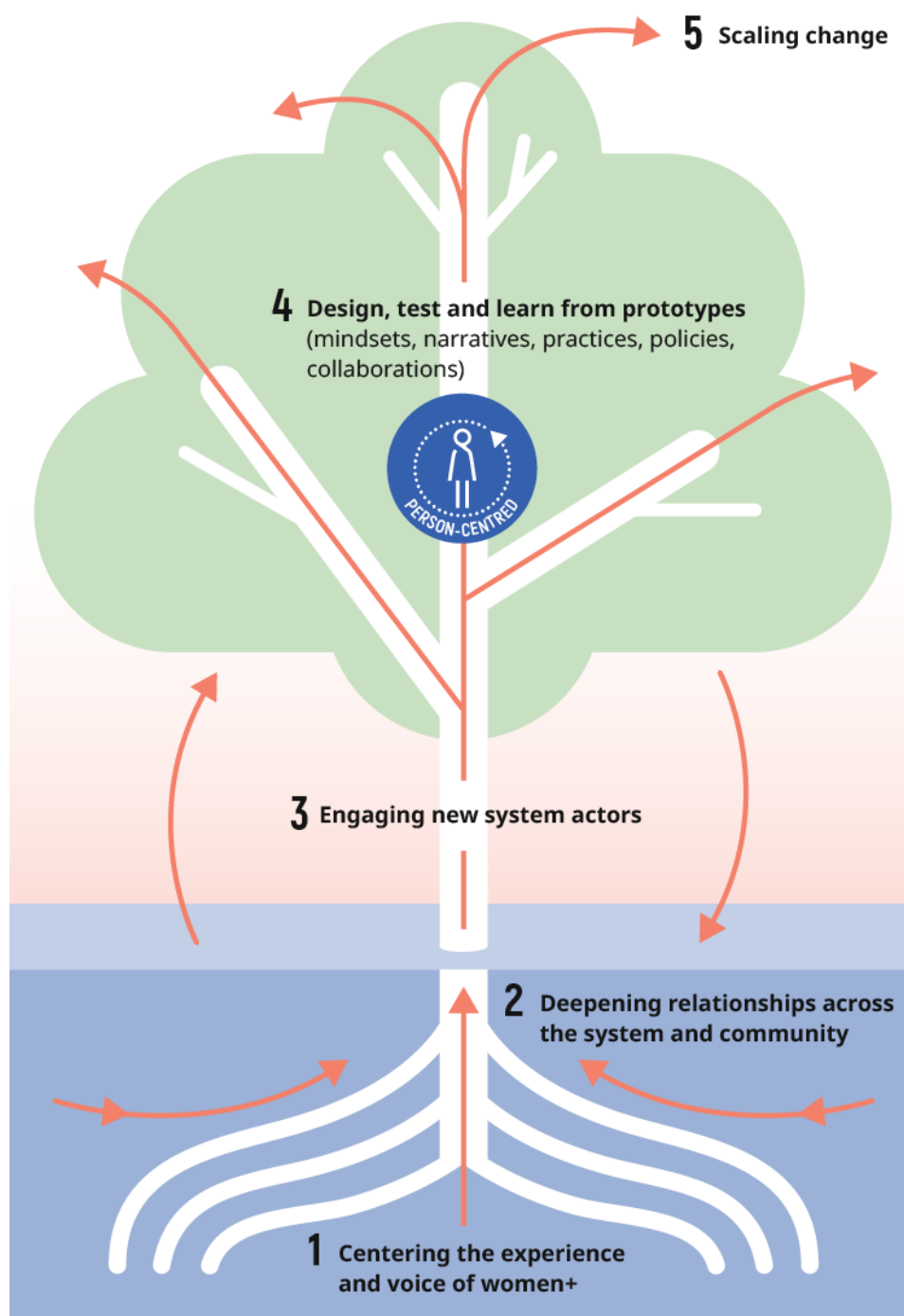
Figure 7. Surfacing Our Strengths Systems Change Framework

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[3] 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

Phase 2. Discovery Phase (November 2020 – April 2021)

Phase 2. DISCOVERY
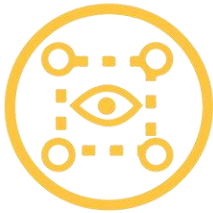
Generate insight about the issue through data and lived experience.

Understand the **current state of the issue** based on a range of **participatory research** methodologies.

Phase 2 activities consisted of:

- Finalizing learning questions, methods and strategies for the **Discovery Phase Engagement and Recruitment Strategy** (see Appendix A)
- Convening two **Leadership Team meetings** (Nov 26 + upcoming meeting April 30, 2021)
- Planning and facilitating **'sensing the system'** activities with diverse community partners to better understand the key influences on the challenge and opportunities for innovation (engaged 31 representatives from the community)
- Recruiting and orienting the **Peer Research Team**: 6 women+ with lived experience who will design and facilitate engagement with diverse populations of women+ in the Greater Victoria region
- Creating a learning agenda and **developmental evaluation framework** for the project (see Appendix B)
- Collective **sense-making and theming** from discovery phase research, engagement, and data collection
- Development of a **systems map**
- Bi-weekly Backbone team meetings
- Development of personas and systems maps by Peer Researchers (see Appendix C)
- Launching the **Surfacing Our Strengths project website** (April 2021) and communications materials,

Figure 8. Focus Group with Transition House

Discovery Phase Methods and Activities

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 this 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.

Peer Research
Stories and experiences of the lived experience of diverse women+ at risk of violence and homelessness
Needs around accessing / navigating wrap-around supports
Input and ideas for supports and solutions

Secondary Research
Data summarizing context and needs
Summary of Regional Housing Plans Strategies. Needs Assessments and Policies related to women+ at risk of violence
Identified inspirational promising examples of housing models / stories

Mini Workshops / Focus Groups
Five mini 'seeing the system' workshops were held with a number of representatives from different departments or organizations representing similar sectors (e.g. provincial government) for group discussions about the influences. challenges and opportunities related to this challenge

Interviews
With a select group of six people that represent diverse sectors that influence the challenge who provided unique insights and observations from their vantage point in the system

Surfacing Our Strengths
Discovery Phase Methods
(Jan – April, 2021)

Mini Workshops / Focus Group	Five focus groups were designed and facilitated in February and March 2021 engaging 29 people: • Transition Houses (6 participants) • Provincial Government Focus Group (6 participants) • Local/Regional Government Focus Group (6 participants) • Peer Research Team Focus Group (7 participants) • Organizations that serve Indigenous Women+ (4 participants) One more focus group is planned for May 2021: for staff that do direct outreach with Indigenous Women+ in the community. Focus groups have been an incredible opportunity to both introduce the project and the project team to diverse partners in the community, create an opportunity for meaningful dialogue with each other, and generate important insights about the lab challenge.
Key Informant Interviews	Five interviews were held with representatives from organizations that offer supports for women+ in the community such as the Inter-cultural Association, elected officials (e.g., MP for Victoria), legal and tenancy support organizations, and organizations that support homeless populations and sex workers.
Secondary Research	The discovery phase explored existing relevant research and data on the experience, needs, and status of housing supports and services for women+ at risk of violence and homelessness. This included connecting with existing projects addressing this issue in BC, nationally, and internationally.
Peer Research	The Peer Research team has been meeting bi-weekly to design peer research outreach and engagement strategies, tools, and questions. The Peer research work will be woven through all phases of the lab.

Discovery Phase Outcomes

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.** A full summary report of Discovery Key Learnings will be produced in May 2021.

Surfacing Our Strengths:
Co-creating Strategic Solutions with Women+ At Risk of Violence and Homelessness

DISCOVERY PHASE KEY THEMES (APRIL 2021)

Availability of Affordable Appropriate Housing

Racism, Discrimination, Stigma & Hidden Homelessness

Access, Availability & Awareness of supports

Why are **women+ at risk of violence** unable to find safe and appropriate housing and supports in Greater Victoria?

Gaps in Policy, Plans & Strategies

Fear Safety & Isolation

Financial Barriers & Poverty

Barriers to Collaboration and Coordination Across the System

* While these are presented as distinct themes, an __intersectional lens__ recognizes that there are inextricable links between the lack of housing, homelessness, poverty, economic insecurity, colonization, racism, ableism, child intervention, and violence against women.

Figure 9. Key Influencing factors for women+ at risk of violence & homelessness

Throughout the discovery phase engagement, we have explored these themes more fully, in each focus group and interview:
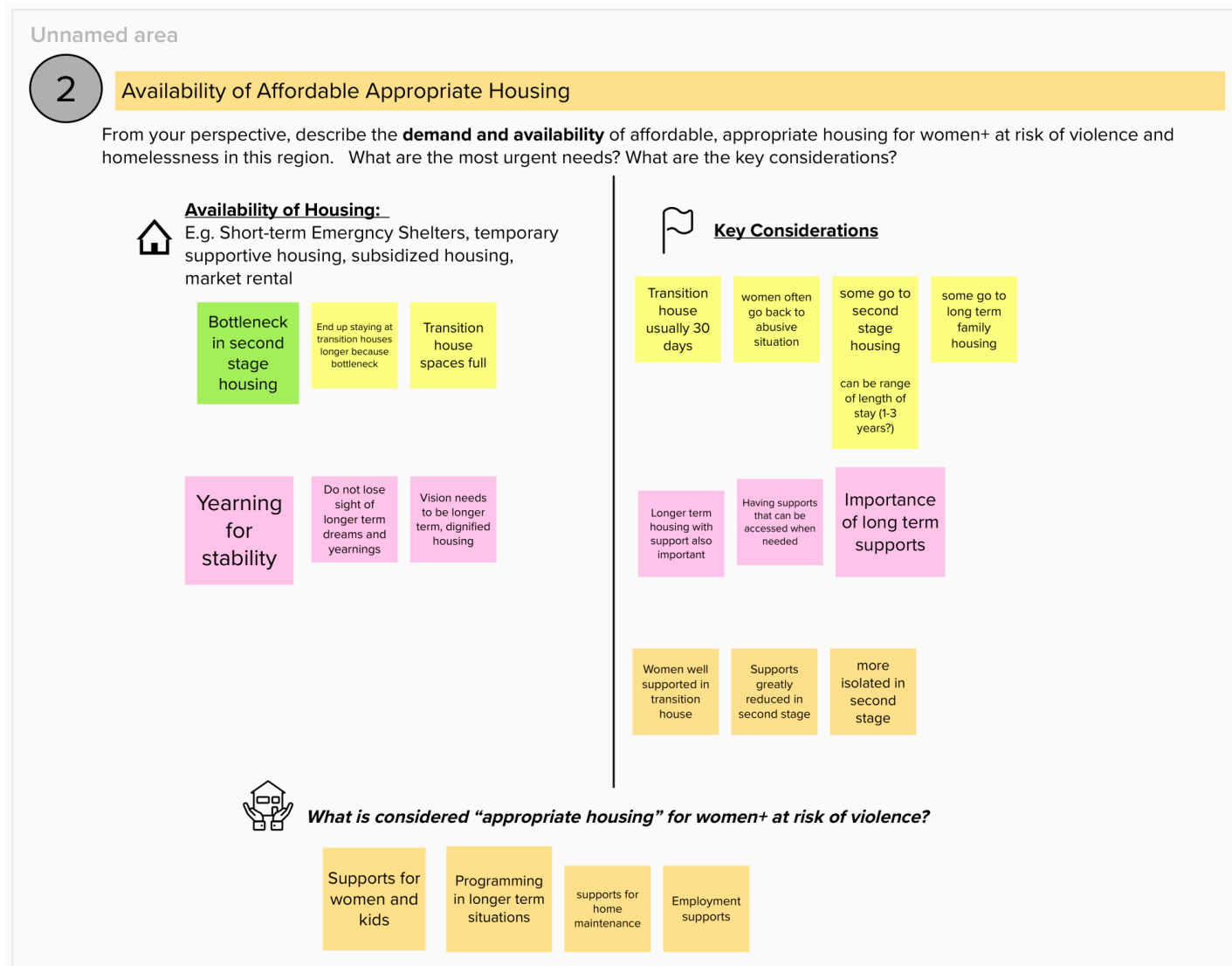
Figure 10. Transition House Focus Group Notes

Through engagement with the Leadership team, we have also produced a **systems map** (to be further explored in future lab work):
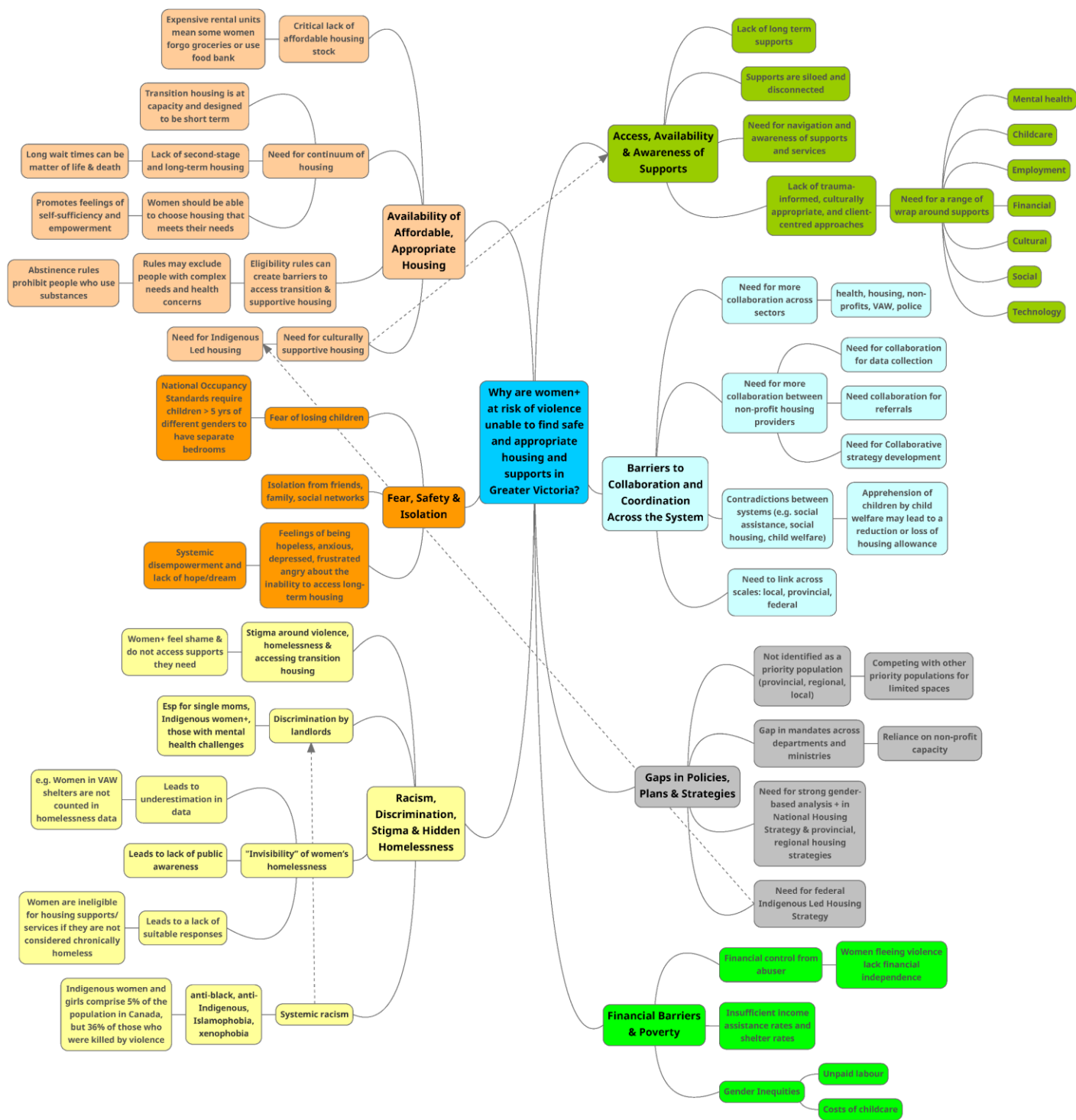
Figure 11: Surfacing Our Strengths Systems Map

Through secondary research, interviews, and focus groups we identified eight 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.
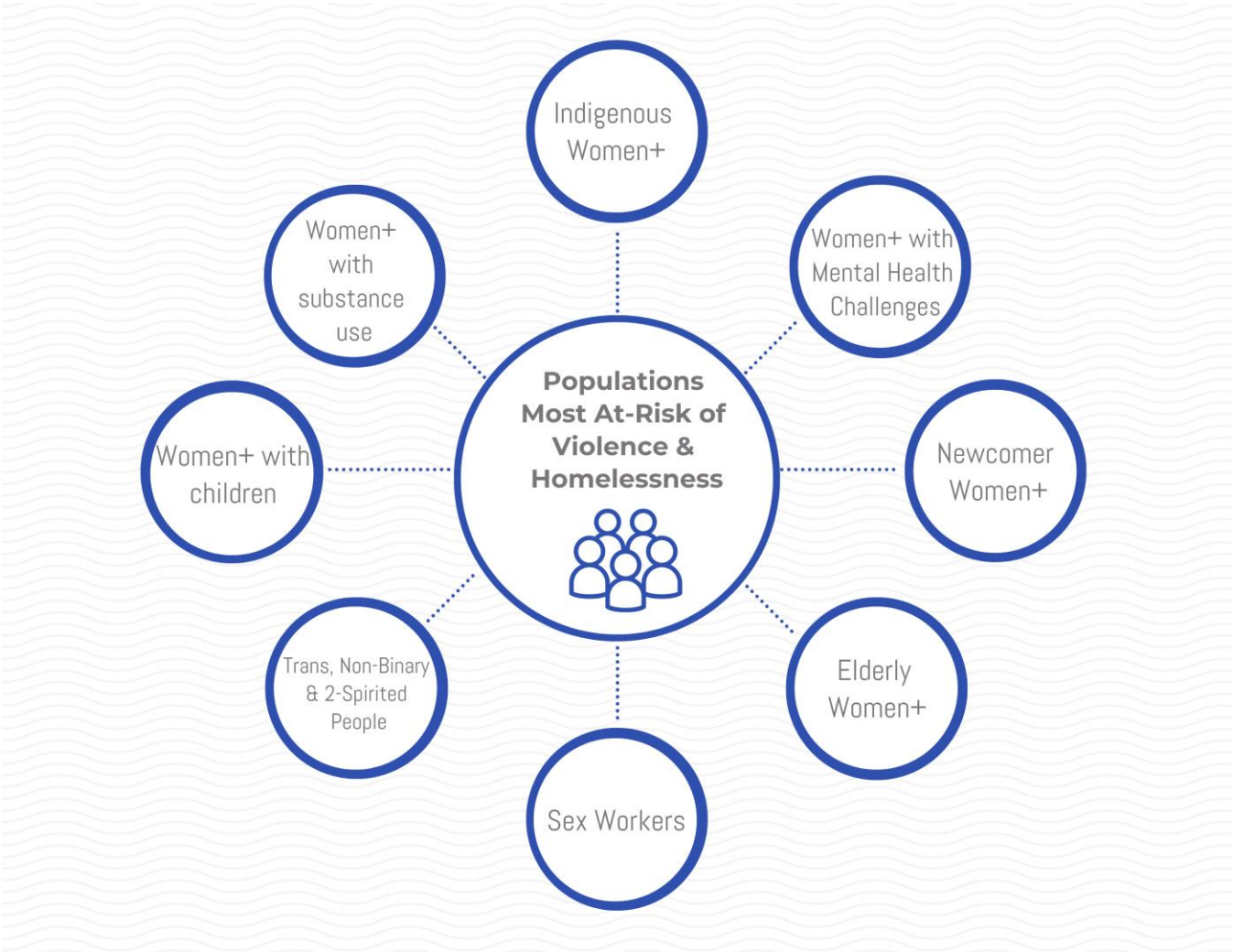
Figure 12: Women+ At Risk Populations

Key Themes from the Discovery Phase[4]

The following are key themes that have emerged from the discovery phase. They will be developed into a concise report of key learnings to inform the Develop Phase.

1. Populations Most At-Risk of Violence & Homelessness

The most common named populations at greatest risk of violence and homelessness were:

Indigenous Women+

- Face much harder challenges due to colonialism, discrimination, and trauma

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[4] Numbered key themes presented align with Figure 9 (Key Influencing factors for women+ at risk of violence & homelessness. Two additional themes (not numbered), "Promising Examples to Learn From" and "Ideas for Solutions & Possible Prototypes", are also presented.

- Disproportionately face child apprehension
- Face racism and discrimination from landlords in trying to find housing
- Need for long-term culturally appropriate supports
- Need for Indigenous-Led Housing

Women with Mental Health Challenges
- Can be challenging to access transition houses and live communally

Women with Substance Use Issues
- often difficult to access high barrier shelters

Women with children
- Women+ are afraid of child apprehension (esp. Indigenous women+) if they cannot find suitable housing
- Women+ are afraid of putting children in unsafe situations in temporary housing
- Vicious Cycle that keeps women+ in abusive situations: Women flee violence, cannot find appropriate long-term housing→lose their children→lose their ability to find family housing (application gets bumped)→lose their monthly child subsidy payment→ less resources to find suitable housing→less chance of getting children back.

Newcomers
- Often were sponsored by spouse
- Often have large families
- Language barriers;
- Don't know about services available to them
- Feel isolated

Other populations at risk named
- Senior women+: Often financially dependent on their partner
- Youth aging out of care
- Sex Workers: face discrimination and have to perform sex work in their own home, making it dangerous and risk losing housing
- Trans, Non-binary, 2 spirited: Trans masculine people also face barriers to find housing when fleeing violence. (Will transition houses be open to trans or non-binary people?)

An Intersectional lens needed—women can belong to many different population groups

2. Availability of Affordable Appropriate Housing
The lack of affordable housing stock has hit a critical point in this region
- There is a serious need for housing for women+ at risk of violence in this region (e.g., VNFC had 25 applications in 1 week from women+ looking for housing fleeing an abusive situation)
- Currently we have a 'patchwork' of housing, but often not appropriate options for women fleeing violence when they need it
- As a result, you're forcing people into housing that they don't want and doesn't suit them
- Women+ feel pressured to stay in unsafe situations because there are no other housing options (only other option is street)

- Women need **hope and a dream**: Need to have a vision that goes beyond lack of stability, having to move every few months and living with roommates. Need to have a long-term vision of dignified housing; can't lose sight of this end goal and dream.

Need for Continuum of Housing for Women+ at Risk of Violence

- People are at different stages (of recovery, independence, safety), so we need a **variety of types of housing** for women at risk of violence—short and long-term
- **Long term housing** is needed especially: it's difficult to become stable when always moving around. Being in short term housing puts the pressure and stress on right away. Every time go through a transition, go through loss all over again. Complex dynamics of loss; community is built in each you place stay.

EMERGENCY SHELTERS

- The current homelessness response system is not necessarily safe or free from violence. There is also opportunity to transform existing emergency housing stock to make it safer for women+.

TRANSITION HOUSES

- All are operating at capacity and more have recently opened to respond to increasing demand during the pandemic
- Transition house stays are typically ~ 30 days
- Women end up staying at transition houses longer b/c there is a **bottleneck in 2nd stage housing**. There is nowhere for them to go. This creates challenges in the entire continuum of housing.
- Some felt there is a need for more low barrier transition housing
- Challenges if women have large families or older children that are dependents (rules may not allow this); limitations intergenerational living

2ND STAGE HOUSING

- Second-stage housing assists women who have left abusive relationships make plans for independent living. In Victoria, provided by Cridge, Greater Victoria Women Shelter Society (Margaret Laurence House)
- Some go to 2nd stage housing (1-3 years) and some go to long term housing if they can find it.
- If 2nd stage housing is not available women+ often go back to an abusive situation.
- We need subsidized/supportive housing for singles and intergenerational housing and large units to accommodate families, especially those with larger families (esp. for Indigenous families)
  - Need more 3-bedroom units and units that can host extended family—sometimes there is multiple generations that need housing together (grandmother, mother, grandchild)—esp. for Indigenous women+

LONG TERM SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

- Historically, subsidized housing was built for families
- The registry prioritizes **families, seniors and those with disabilities**

- On top of these priority populations (family, senior, disability) one can complete another form that asks if you are fleeing violence that can move your application up. But the access point to the subsidized housing list in the first place is senior, disability or family. (Supportive housing is different)
  - There are **side agreements** between Transition house and subsidized housing providers—this makes it really hard to understand the extend of the challenge or waitlist (multiple waitlists and throws the data).
- Need for long-term strategies and move past 'perpetual pilot'—this becomes onerous to prove

INDIGENOUS-LED HOUSING

- Need for Indigenous-led housing strategies that offer long-term cultural supports

Other considerations named

COMPETITION FOR LIMITED SPACES

- There's so much pressure to apply for limited housing—women+ fleeing violence are dealing with stress, trauma and identity confusion plus the added stress of feeling like they are being 'assessed'—need to compete to win for the few spots available
- Women+ often now have an advocate or outreach workers with them to support their applications (e.g., VNFC, PGNFC)

REFERENCES TO ACCESS HOUSING

- Landlords require **references**, but if women are coming from a shelter or transition house they will not have references.
- Or, the home they left was in the name of their abuser

HOUSING FOR MEN AND ABUSERS

- If men don't have anywhere to be, the easiest way to get housed is to move into subsidized housing with a single mom.
- It may seem counterintuitive, but one of the best ways to stop women being in violent situations is actually to provide housing for men.

PETS

- If women can't take their pets with them, this is a barrier to leaving.

3. Financial Barriers

Gender based violence also often involves financial abuse

- Financial dependence is a main factor for staying in abusive situation, esp. for elderly women+
- If women+ flee quickly, they may forfeit their damage deposit→ leads to lack of financial ability to rent another home→ homelessness→poverty
- Shelter allowance is $375/mo, but apartments in this region rent for $1000/mo

4. Racism, Discrimination, Stigma, & Hidden Homelessness

- Women+ are the '**invisible homeless**', women+ with children even more so. Women will couch surf, stay with friends or family and are not counted as part of 'homeless' population.

- Some women perceive they are 'hanging dirty laundry in public' if they ask for support (esp. older women)
- Lack of awareness of the **human stories** and the 'face' of women staying in transition houses
- Overall, there is a stigmatizing narrative around homelessness, especially during COVID; there is a certain type of homeless population that is much more visible.
- Media contributes to this narrative and it creates fear
- There's stigma associated with going to **transition house**. Language of transition home needs to change to be more strengths based
- Indigenous women+ and esp. single mothers face **discrimination from landlords** in trying to rent housing.

5. Access, Availability & Awareness of Supports
Access to supports
- Do women need to actively be 'homeless' before they can access certain housing supports? What if women are trying to leave an abusive situation and be proactive? Do they need to become homeless first?
- There is often the sense that others are 'more in need'; accessing housing spots and supports can be so competitive.

LONGER TERM SUPPORTS
- There are supports available in short term, but not in long term
- Women need 6 month-year place to get on their feet, access supports, access childcare, where they don't have to move for a while.
- While transition houses provide excellent supports (counselling, food, social supports), women are more isolated at 2nd stage housing and supports are greatly reduced, if at all.

COORDINATED MULTIDISCIPLINARY SUPPORTS
- There is a need or supports that can be coordinated and integrated—not offered in a siloed way (e.g., counselling, health, accessing income assistance, employment, etc.)
- There is a need for bridges from transition houses to other community/cultural programs (friendship centres)

Types of Wrap Around Supports Needed
CHILDCARE
- Essential for women to have time for healing from trauma, self-care, appointments, seeking employment and become financially independent.
- Childcare needs to be free and culturally safe
- Need to have supports for children as well

COUNSELLING & MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT
- Trauma Informed Counselling
- Needs to be free and longer term

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS
- Opportunities for low-barrier employment (difficult to find work when dealing with trauma)
- Employment skills (resume, employment counsellor)

HOUSING & FINANCIAL SUPPORTS

- Navigating systems to access income assistance
- Support navigating housing applications, rental agreements, applications for rental subsidies

SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Safe space to build relationships and trust again
- Need to realize not alone
- Need time for structured socializing and unstructured—need to have difficult conversations with others who have lived experience
- Need safe spaces for reunification with family and friends

CULTURAL SUPPORTS

- Help with healing from trauma in a culturally appropriate way
- Potential for culturally supported housing and land-based healing
- Using food and cultural traditions with food to support healing

STIGMA-FREE HEALTHCARE

- timely access to medical assessment, medication, doctors, dental care

TECHNOLOGY

- Access to phones for safety and for employment
- Need capacity building to use phones
- Need pre-paid minutes

TRANSPORTATION

- Transportation to access supports and services, employment

CAPACITY BUILDING, NOT HANDOUTS

- Community kitchens, gardens, things that build capacity

Awareness of and Navigation of Supports with Women+ at risk of Violence

BARRIERS

- There is confusion for women+ about number of organizations and roles they play
- It can be difficult for women+ to be aware of or navigate the path to transition houses
- It can be difficult to access other housing and navigate the application processes (BC Housing, other non-profit housing)
- Literacy can be a barrier
- Lack of awareness of services—no map or directory of where to go

OPPORTUNITIES

- Staff need to stay up to date on rules (eviction rules), legal rights and supports available
- Developing a communications plan

6. Gaps in Policy, Plans & Strategies

Provincial Policy, Plans

Policy is fundamental to this issue as well as federal & provincial budgets

- Policy needs to be informed by the lived experience of women fleeing violence.
- Various levels of policy need to change (top to operational policy on ground)
- **Women+ At risk of Violence & Homelessness as a Priority Population**

- o There's still challenges in identifying women at risk of violence as a **priority population** provincially. Other priority populations are **competing for limited spaces** in independent housing (families, seniors, disabilities)
- o Need to prioritize this population of women+ at risk of violence: equitable treatment under the law is not the same as equal treatment under the law, it means that those who are experiencing the greatest level of oppression under the system and structure need to have the greatest a higher level of support in order to overcome these barriers.

BC Housing
- They are setting up more targeted programs
- Women+ are not currently named as a specific focus, but there's an opportunity to consider the needs of women+ as part of the strategy.

Gaps in Provincial Policy/Mandates
There is a focus on homelessness, but less of a focus on transitioning across the spectrum of housing
- *Gap in Mandates*
  - o The issue of housing for women fleeing violence fits everywhere and nowhere
  - o Lack of clear mandate has made this issue less of a priority
  - o Provincial health is looking at gendered based violence during COVID
- *Collaboration across Ministries*
  - o Each ministry is approved for a discrete program; if women+ at risk of violence do not fit into this program, they fall through the cracks.
  - o What is needed is collaboration across mandates and ministries: Ministry of Attorney General, Gender Equity Office, Social Development & Poverty Reduction, Health, MCFD, Addictions and Mental Health & Addictions
  - o There is a need to start early, collaborating in the planning stages
- *Non-profit Capacity*
  - o The NP sector has been meeting the needs of women+ at risk of violence and homelessness by piecing together supports and funding
  - o Important for government to recognize non-profit constraints
  - o They are being asked to step in quickly, mobilize and are stretched beyond their capacity

Provincial Policy areas getting attention
- Longer stays in transition houses (beyond 30 days)
- 2nd stage housing
- Rates of VAW during COVID
- Design, transition houses and shared space during COVID

Regional/Local Policy, Plans and Strategies
CRD Regional Housing Affordability Strategy
- While the strategy does prioritize Indigenous populations, it <u>does not</u> specifically focus on Indigenous women+ or women+ fleeing violence
- Indigenous populations: commitment to end the disproportionate representation of indigenous people in homeless system, but also to be more inclusive of understanding their

needs, and having them inform the work that's happening in the community to address the challenges they face in finding stable housing.

- Housing needs of women+ fleeing violence could be much better represented and included in how the housing needs assessment is done.
- Needs assessment are now mandated by the province and need to be updated every 5 years
- Currently, province has not taken any significant steps in laying out legislation and requiring municipal governments to report on needs of specific populations, such as women fleeing violence.
- Currently, needs assessment in Victoria is mainly a quantitative exercise, could be more opportunity for engagement (although this is timely and costly.)

MONITORING SYSTEM FOR HOMELESS POPULATIONS

- Currently there is **not a coordinated and coherent homelessness management information** system for the region; agencies are working individually on this
- Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS)—federal system: BC Housing has rights to this system.
- BC Housing is required to use HIFIS or some kind of information system in order to track and manage and report out on what's happening in the homelessness response system. Currently, BC Housing uses HIFIS in shelters.
- But it needs to be implemented beyond the BC Housing mandate
- Without a system like this we can't really monitor what's happening or understand extend of the challenge.

Federal Policy, Plans and Strategies

- NHS has named women and children fleeing violence as a priority population
- Need for federal leadership on an **Indigenous led housing strategy**
- the government talks about a kind of **GBA+ lens** but don't fully see that implemented in the policies that are coming out
- upholding the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous people** implementing the **call to action from the missing and murdered Indigenous women** and Two Spirit girls in Two Spirit folks
- **OPPORTUNITY:** as we approach the fed election, push each party to make sure they are addressing this issue in a meaningful way. Make this issue front and centre for whoever forms gov't

Tenancy Policy and Regulations

- New tenancy policy around ending tenancy due to violence—disputes are now siding more with victims.

7. Barriers to Collaboration & Coordination Across the System

- How can many sectors and agencies collaborate as a collective to integrate women into the 'next' level of housing that will meet their needs? (e.g., elders housing, dry housing)?
- Need to avoid competition between non-profit sector for the same pots of funding

- Need more collaboration across sectors overall (e.g., health authority, education systems, hospitals, transition houses, non-profit housing providers, co-op housing, etc.)
- There is needed collaboration specifically with **RCMP, Police, Victim services unit, MCFD**
- Lack of coordination / collaboration in the **non-profit housing sector** in relation to this population
- Lack of relationship between BC Housing, Non-profit housing providers and Co-op housing
- There is a role for multiple sectors play in contributing to the challenge and also solutions, but it's complex not always clear (e.g., MCFD has a role to play b/c of their role in women with children.)
- How can we look at integration of services (e.g., victim services) for this population?
- Need for **linking across scales** – fed, prov, local – getting across lack of mandate

Promising Examples to Learn From
Speqəŋéutxw (SPAKEN) House
- Short term modular housing for Indigenous women+
- Collaborative approach with community
- Offers cultural, mental health, social supports as well
- Land-based healing
- Has 21 women+ residents and 60+ on wait list

Homelessness Action Response team (HEART) program:
- Go to where they are: building trust with women+ in encampments
- Collaboration with housing providers, bylaw officers, police

Ideas for Solutions & Possible Prototypes
Co-operative Housing
- Potential of partnerships with co-operative housing and micro-co-ops within existing apartments
- Co-ops as a way to provide long term housing solutions for women+ at risk of violence

Communications and Information
- Information hub—make sure it is up to date
- Youth hub
  - Youth also: social media and word of mouth
- Communications: making women's homelessness more visible and less stigma!
- Staying up to date on eviction and legal rules since COVID

Technology
- Tech and phones to people!! Explore formal initiatives out there and potential partnerships
- Need pre-paid minutes on phones

Navigator Positions
- support women to navigate to housing and supports they need.

Networks
- Lower Mainland Transition Houses: integrated supports, low barrier, inclusive and partnerships across different sectors

First Nations Land based Healing Programs (e.g., Heltsik Nation)

- how can we support urban 'away from home' Indigenous populations?
- Britain Distributed model: lots of satellite flats and houses scattered around the community, bring supports to people and bring them together; people were in everybody's communities, there wasn't this concentration of people in one neighbourhood.

Build a community of landlords
- Matching landlords with people facing barriers
- Need education of landlords but also resources for them (landlord guarantee fund)

Need for Indigenous-led housing solutions
- Need for long-term strategies, not only pilot programs that require 'proving' efficacy (this can be onerous)
- Indigenous organizations need autonomy to access funds to develop Indigenous led housing strategies

Advocacy
- COVID has created growing focus federally on VAW—how can we leverage this?
- Federal election coming—how can VAW and housing be an election issue?
- Mandate letters for provincial ministries—cabinet committees are just getting underway

Developmental Coaching Sessions

Some of the key DE roles within this Lab include:
- Framing the challenge, desired outcomes and interventions being tested
- Generating and making sense of real-time feedback for ongoing learning, development, and adaptations along the way
- Documenting the overall evolution of the lab (including key developments & forks in the road)
- Surfacing tough issues (tensions, issues related to power, being stuck, or different interpretations), and supporting adaptive action.
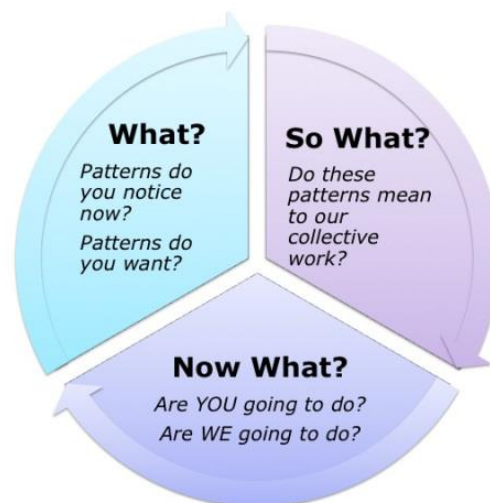

Figure 13: DE Framework - an "Adaptive Action" approach

Developmental Evaluation has been integrated into how the backbone team has been making sense of discovery phase findings. We have been iterating the planning of lab activities regularly to adapt to feedback from the peer research team, the leadership team and what is emerging from the focus groups and interviews.

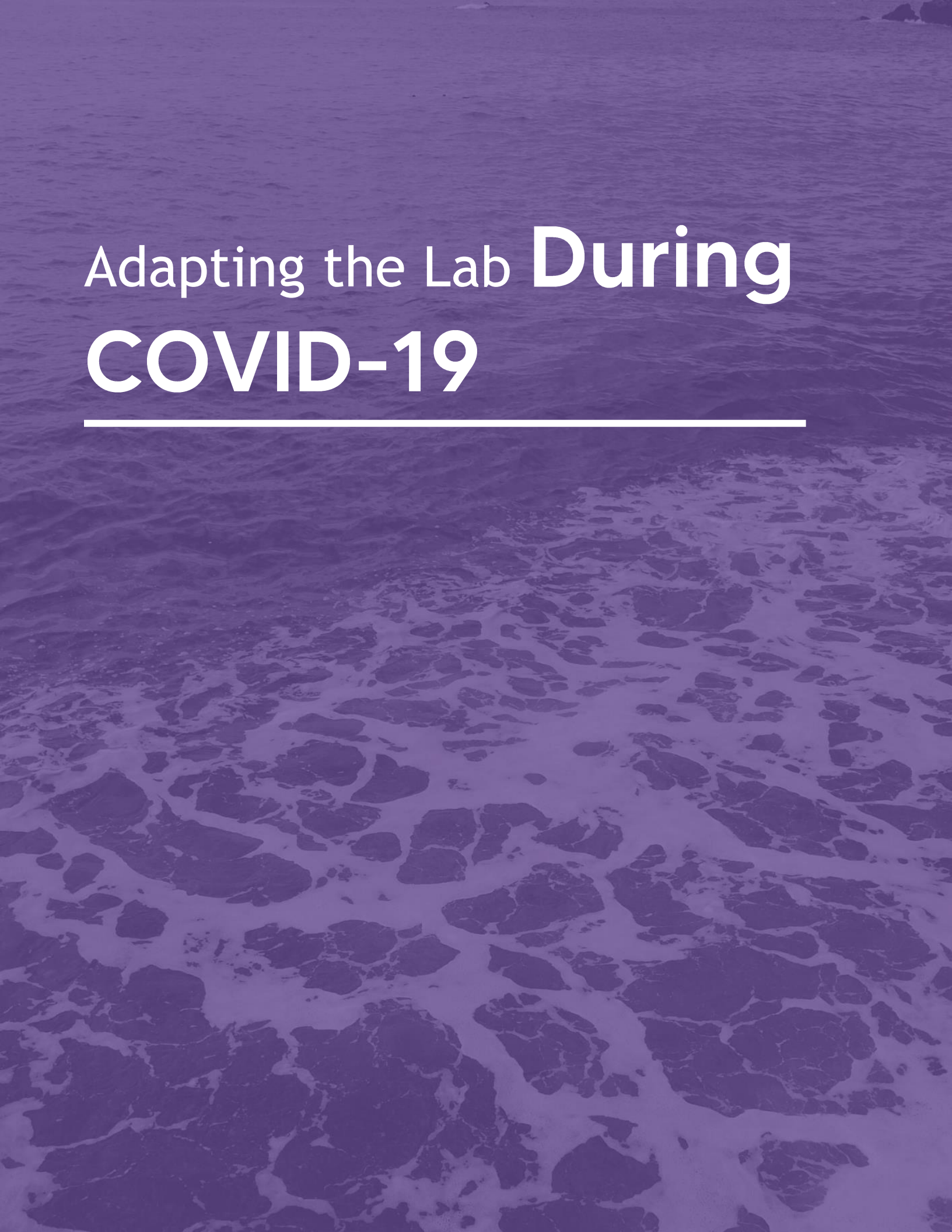The specific evaluation activities conducted thus far include:
- Three evaluation surveys sent to the Lab Leadership Team (2 in the definition phase and 1 in the discovery phase)

- Bi-weekly backbone team meetings: engaging in discussions to frame the challenge, outcomes and strategies, and sense-making of the themes emerging in the discovery phase.
- An in-depth evaluation session is planned with the backbone team May 11th, 2021.

1. Overall, how would you rate each of the exercises in today's session:

	Excellent	Good	Neutral	Poor	Responses
Sensing the System: Identifying questions to explore in the next phase of the lab Count Row %	6 85.7%	0 0.0%	1 14.3%	0 0.0%	7
Actor Mapping: identifying those that influence and are influenced by this challenge Count Row %	6 85.7%	1 14.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7
Persona Exercise Count Row %	6 85.7%	1 14.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	7
Totals Total Responses					7

Figure 14: Leadership Meeting #1 Evaluation

Adapting the Lab **During**

COVID-19

Adapting the Lab During COVID-19

March 11, 2020 was the onset of the COVID19 Pandemic, unprecedented in our lifetimes, COVID-19 Pandemic. The World Health Organization (WHO)[5] declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic. This disrupted everyday life across the globe and has impacted everyone. This impact was amplified across the homelessness sector, as service and shelter locations shuttered, and reduced numbers of individuals being served to comply with COVID-19 safety precautions. The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (GVCEH) and the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness (ACEH), like many organizations, were forced to pivot activities and programming to support the sector, and the individuals they serve, in a time of uncertainty and rapidly moving system-wide changes. This included: developing and delivering a plan to get basic survival needs (food, water, and sanitation) immediately to those sheltering outdoors, creating communications for people who were unsheltered, supporting coordination of a cross-sector collaboration to facilitate a sanctioned encampment, and subsequent mass move to indoor sheltering locations, establishing and operating a culturally supportive sheltering location, providing outreach support, delivering nutrition hampers and more.

The Housing Solutions Innovation Lab project began in earnest on August 5, 2020 when the first meeting of the Backbone Team was convened. Much of the work envisioned for this Lab was not anticipated to be in a culture of digital meetings and self-isolation. The original plan was for in-person and accessible engagement, where communication is key, and the nuance of body language and tone is not filtered through a screen.

The project is completely centred around the voice of lived and living experience of women+ experiencing homelessness and/or fleeing violence. To ethically and effectively engage these individuals within the changing parameters of the BC Provincial Health Orders in a timely fashion was, and continues to be, a challenge. This was partly due to barriers for these individuals, such as access to communications tools like phones and the internet for calls, planning and digital meetings. Coordinating equitable participation for the women+ voice has necessitated many extra considerations and planning steps. The trust and relationship-building required to facilitate this process takes time, and is challenging in general, never-mind in this climate where many of the issues we are looking to explore in this Solutions Lab are currently exacerbated for these individuals. Further, many partnering agencies have experienced similar challenges in adjusting, and readjusting as the second wave hit in November of 2020.

Through thoughtful planning and creativity, a pathway forward for continued engagement is being continuously developed by the Lab Backbone Team.

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[5] WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID19 -March 2020

Future Work

Future Phases of the Lab will include transitioning into the discovery phase. Key activities in development are:

- Convening the Leadership Team for '**leverage points' workshop** to support further analysis and provide feedback on the draft systems map,
- Peer researcher Outreach and engagement to **people with lived experience**, and
- Designing and hosting a community-wide workshop to identify and explore key leverage points to focus on in the Prototype Phase.

# Appendices

Appendix A
Engagement and Research Strategy

Housing Solutions Lab: Supporting Women+ to Transition from Homelessness to Safe Stable Housing

Discovery Phase Strategy: Engage, Listen and Learn

The Invitation

How might we co-develop equitable, safe and culturally supportive responses to the housing needs of women+ who have been/are at risk of experiencing violence and homelessness in Greater Victoria?

5. ROAD MAP
1. DEFINITION
4. TEST & PROTOTYPE
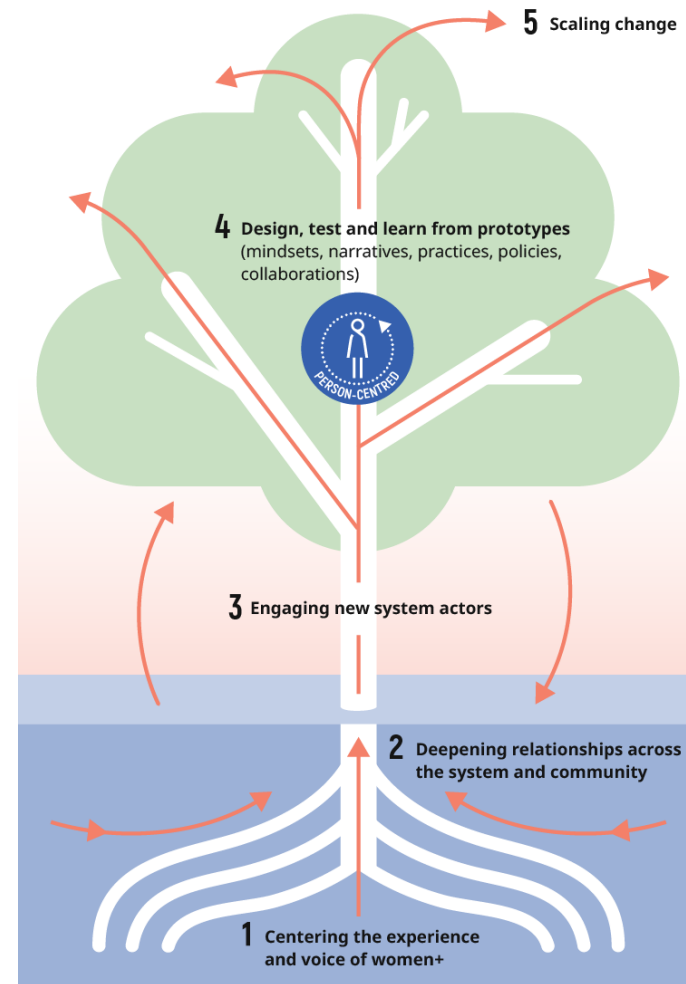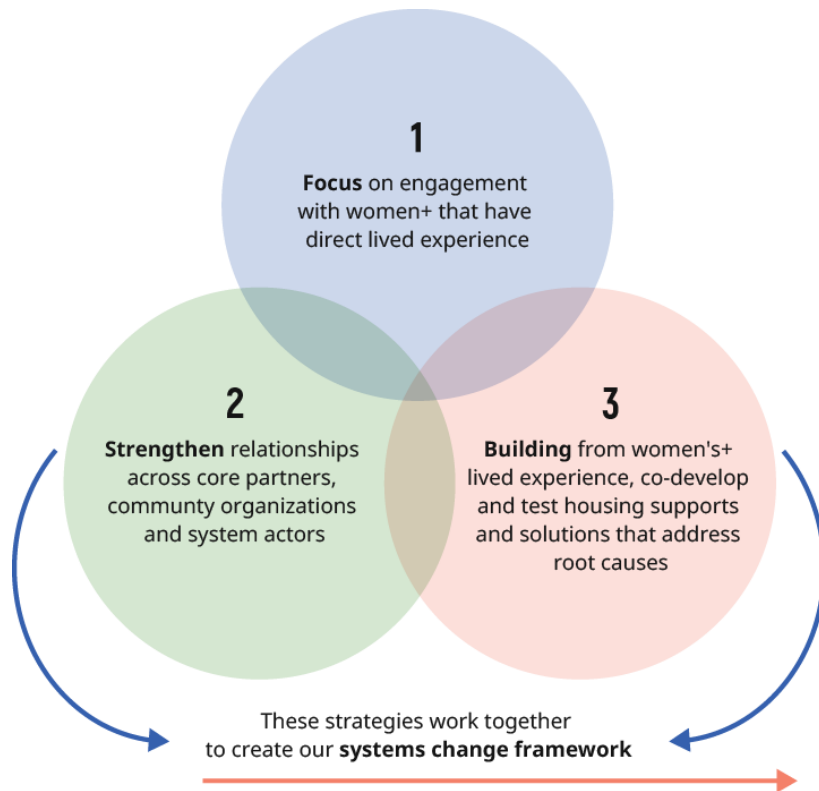HOUSING SOLUTIONS
2. DISCOVERY
3. DEVELOPMENT
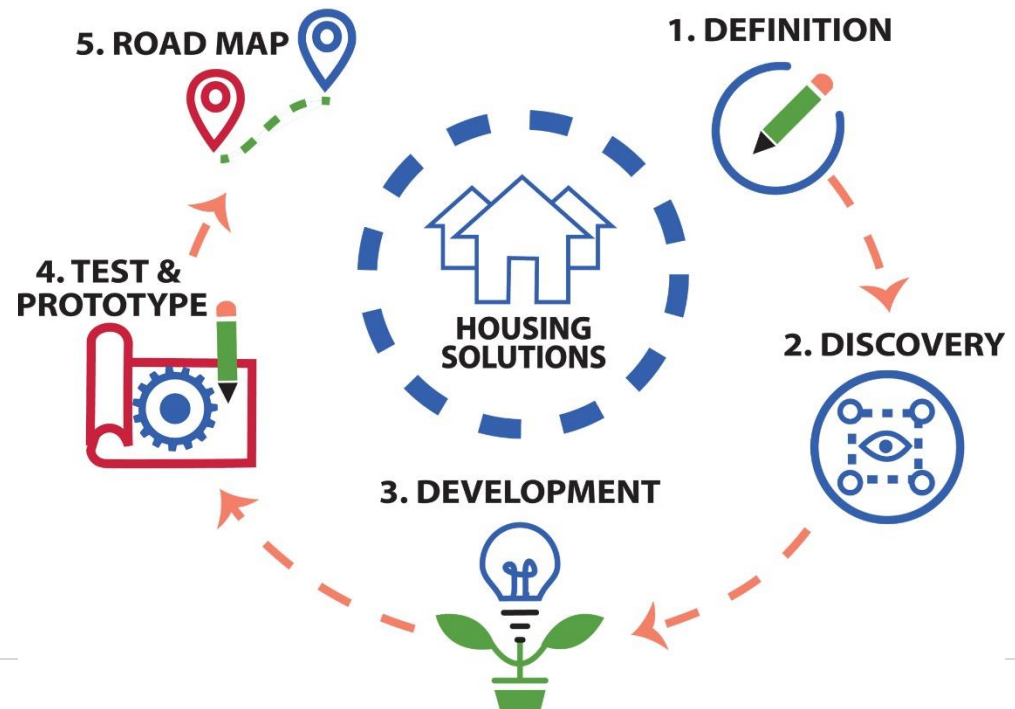
Overview

Violence plays a pivotal role in experiences of homelessness for women, and especially for Indigenous women due to the ongoing impacts of colonialism. The homelessness-serving sector and domestic violence sector currently operate quite separately, presenting challenges to providing responsive, person-centred and culturally appropriate supports and housing options.

The priority audience for this project is women and people of marginalized gender identities (herein: "women+") at risk of violence and homelessness – including women+ with children fleeing violence.

This lab will work across diverse sectors to:

1 **Focus** on engagement with women+ that have direct lived experience

2 **Strengthen** relationships across core partners, community organizations and system actors

3 **Building** from women's+ lived experience, co-develop and test housing supports and solutions that address root causes

These strategies work together to create our **systems change framework**

5 **Scaling change**

4 **Design, test and learn from prototypes** (mindsets, narratives, practices, policies, collaborations)

PERSON-CENTRED

3 **Engaging new system actors**

2 **Deepening relationships across the system and community**

1 **Centering the experience and voice of women+**

Guiding Principles of this Lab (DRAFT)

- **CENTERING LIVED EXPERIENCE:** This project will honour and centre the voices of women+ who have lived experiences of homelessness, violence and exclusion.
- **EQUITY & INTERSECTIONALITY:** Women+ at risk of violence are not a homogenous group and have unique lived experience. Some women+ are less able to access supports than others. This project considers the multiple, overlapping intersections of gender, race, class, ethnicity, ability and sexual identity that affect how some women+ are disproportionately affected by violence and homelessness. We recognize that homeless Indigenous, Black, women of colour and non-binary people are disproportionately at risk of violence and will prioritize solutions that reduce these inequities. This includes aligning this project with Article 22 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which commits to ensuring that Indigenous women and children enjoy the full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination.
- **SYSTEMIC AND STRUCTRUAL:** This lab will strive to identify and work on root causes, aiming to address factors that systematically marginalize women+ from accessing equitable housing supports and services.
- **TRAUMA-INFORMED:** We recognize that participants in this project may have experienced or are experiencing trauma that affects their mental, physical, spiritual and emotional wellbeing. We also recognize trauma can be triggered. This project will create culturally, emotionally and physically safe spaces for project participants, including providing appropriate supports to allow women+ to participate fully.
- **STRENGTHS-BASED:** In this lab we will focus on the individual and community strengths that support self-determination and resilience; these strengths will be valued, respected and nurtured.
- **HONOURING INDIGENOUS WAYS OF KNOWING & PROTOCOLS:** This lab will honour and acknowledge the protocols of the unceded Lekwungen (Songhees and Esquimalt) territory, where the project is taking place. Through our governance, engagement and collaboration we will work to create culturally safe spaces that honour, respect and include Indigenous Knowledge and approaches.
- **COLLABORATION ACROSS SECTORS:** We believe the wisdom generated from the coming together of a diverse collective helps us to get more thoughtful solutions. Together we build opportunities to learn from others, co-design with community and test our ideas with people on the front lines to ensure the solutions we suggest will actually work.

The Discovery Phase (December 2020 – May 2021)

The activities in the discovery phase will build on our current understanding of the challenge in this region to:

- **Generate insights** about the issue of women+ at risk of violence and homelessness through research, dialogue and engagement. There is a particular focus on engaging **women+ who have lived experience** with violence and homelessness as well as other sectors and actors that are influenced by the issue and/or may influence the challenge or potential solutions.
- Understand and learn about the **current state of the issues** based on a range of **participatory research** methods.
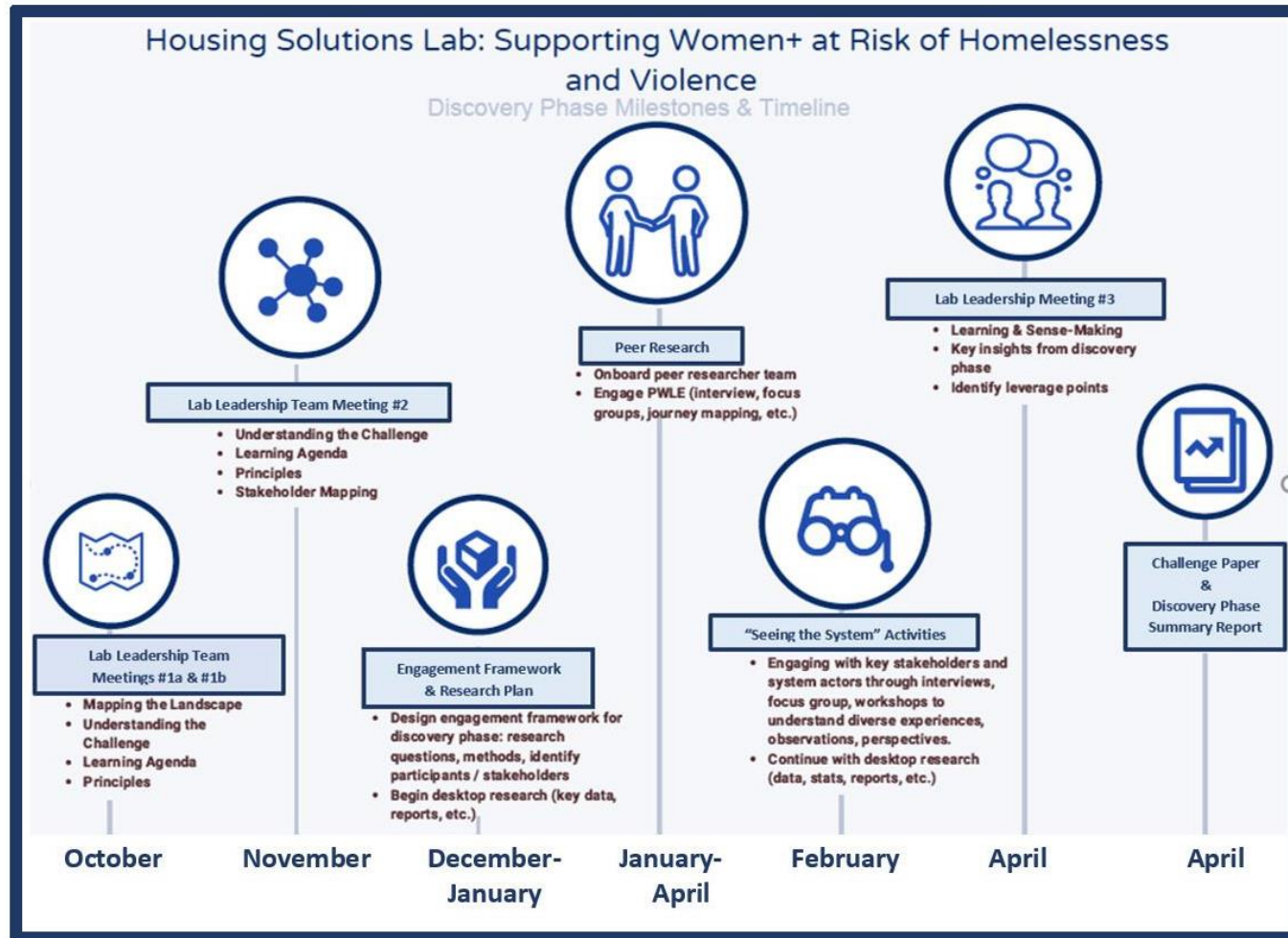
The approaches are designed to support bringing these diverse groups together to share and learn from each other, building shared understanding and knowledge in order to co-create new solutions together.

Summary of Sectors and Stakeholders Engaged and to Engage

Sectors	Actors Engaged and to Engage
People with Lived Experience	• Diverse women+ experiencing violence and homelessness, including: Indigenous women+, women+ of colour, persons with sex work background, non-binary people, women+ from the queer community, newcomers, temporary residents, pregnant women+, women+ with children fleeing violence
Housing Sector	• Shelters, supportive housing, transitional housing, 2nd stage housing, recovery 2nd stage housing • Mental health and substance use supportive housing • Subsidized housing • Market housing • Indigenous Housing (i.e., SpeqƏɲéutxw (SPAKEN) House) • Association of Landlords, landlords, housing operators
Non-Profit / Service Providers	• Agencies that have direct access to women+ with Lived Experience: Transition houses, support services • Victoria Sexual Assault Centre • VAW support groups • Housing and legal support groups for tenancy • Tenancy organizations • Getting Home Project (BC Society of Transition Houses)
Government	• Municipal/ CRD staff • Coordinated Assessment & Access Committee Coordinator (CRD) • Local councillors • First Nations Chief and Council • MLAs • BC Housing • BC: Ministry of Health, MCFD, Mental Health and Addictions, Social Development & Poverty Reduction, Gender Equity Office
Health	• First responders • Urgent care clinics • Primary care providers • Social workers, counselors, mental health professionals
Other	• Neighbourhood Associations (Association of Neighbourhood Assoc.) • Community Associations • Indigenous Knowledge Keepers • University researchers and scholars • Police • Religious groups

	• Media
	• Schools
	• Festival organizers
	• Sports Teams (men)

Discovery Phase: Engagement Framework

Housing Solutions Lab: Supporting Women+ at Risk of Homelessness and Violence
Discovery Phase Milestones & Timeline

Lab Leadership Team Meeting #2
- Understanding the Challenge
- Learning Agenda
- Principles
- Stakeholder Mapping

Peer Research
- Onboard peer researcher team
- Engage PWLE (interview, focus groups, journey mapping, etc.)

Lab Leadership Meeting #3
- Learning & Sense-Making
- Key insights from discovery phase
- Identify leverage points

Lab Leadership Team Meetings #1a & #1b
- Mapping the Landscape
- Understanding the Challenge
- Learning Agenda
- Principles

Engagement Framework & Research Plan
- Design engagement framework for discovery phase: research questions, methods, identify participants / stakeholders
- Begin desktop research (key data, reports, etc.)

"Seeing the System" Activities
- Engaging with key stakeholders and system actors through interviews, focus group, workshops to understand diverse experiences, observations, perspectives.
- Continue with desktop research (data, stats, reports, etc.)

Challenge Paper & Discovery Phase Summary Report

| October | November | December-January | January-April | February | April | April |

Engagement and Research Questions

Themes Being Explored	Questions
Landscape of Housing Supports and Services for women+ at risk of violence	• What organizations, (wrap-around) supports and services exist for women+ at risk of violence and homelessness in this region? What are the gaps? • What has already been tried here? Elsewhere in Canada and around the world? What were the failures and successes? What can we learn from other initiatives? • What is the unique context(s) in Victoria needs to be considered in relation to this issue?

Housing
 	
(i.e., Availability of Appropriate Housing, Housing Supports & Services, Housing Policy)
	Housing Plans, Strategies and Policy:
	• What are the specific mandates, policies, and strategies regionally, in BC and federally to develop housing solutions and supports for women+ at risk of violence?
	• How might we have a more united, integrated approach to housing needs assessment, strategy and policy across the region that can benefit women+ at risk of violence?
	Housing Models:
	• Other than transitional housing and emergency shelters, what other innovative supportive housing models could be explored to support long-term housing security for women+ at risk of violence?
	  ○ short term/emergency shelters (housing)
	  ○ short-term/temporary of 1 year or less
	  ○ longer term/temporary house (like the Timmin's model)
	  ○ long term/permanent housing

Funding and Financial Barriers	• What are the **financial barriers** that women+ at risk of violence and homelessness face to access support? • How much **housing funding** is allocated specifically for women+ at risk of violence in the region? Provincially? • How can we think long-term to create a **transformative funding strategy** to support women+ at risk of violence and homelessness (beyond band-aid grant funding)?
Discrimination & Stigma	• How are women+ at risk of violence stigmatized when they enter specific housing models? • What are the **different experiences** of discrimination & stigma across different identities of women+ at risk of violence (i.e., sex workers, Indigenous, women+ of colour, newcomers)? What factors are important for ensuring safety for ensuring accessibility?
Awareness & Understanding of the Issue(s) & Available Supports	**Awareness in Community** • What is the level of awareness of women+ at risk of violence and the challenge they have around housing supports in the community? What are the barriers to public engagement/awareness around these issues? • What are the pathways of communication that are available and could be leveraged to promote awareness of women+ at risk of violence and the challenge they have around housing supports in the community? **Awareness of Supports for Women+** • What barriers exist for women+ to access and navigate information about housing supports and services? (i.e. awareness, technology, language) • What are the best methods of providing information to women+ at risk of violence and homelessness?

Lived Experience & Needs	• What is the **pathway** of women+ fleeing violence? How can we understand where they have come and weave stories and data together to better understand this issue? • What is the **range of needs** and necessary wrap-around supports (e.g., physical, emotional, psychological, financial) that should be considered in housing solutions for women+ at risk of violence and homelessness? • What additional supports and services are needed for women+ at risk of violence and homelessness? (i.e., where are the gaps between what is provided, Awareness & Understanding of the Issue(s) & Available Supports, and what women+ at risk of violence need)?
Collaboration	• How can housing, violence against women services, and justice/anti-poverty sectors stop working in silos and work more collaboratively? (i.e., What strategies can we use to create and maintain collaboration between the sectors that serve women+ at risk of violence and homelessness?) • Who/which sectors are the "unusual suspects" who can help to generate and support innovative solutions to these challenges?
Intersectionality and Equity	**Equity** • How can this lab meet the needs of women+ that are at highest risk? • What do we mean when we say 'women+'? How can we bring an intersectional lens to understand identity and experience of women+ at risk of violence and homelessness? **Indigenous Women+** • How might we build on existing recommendations and calls for justice in the MMIW? (i.e. data is there, but there is a lack of response). **Sex Work** • What are the specific risks / barriers for sex workers in relation to violence and homelessness?
Intersecting Crises	• How is **COVID, the opioid crisis and the housing crisis** affecting and/or exacerbating women+ experiencing violence in this region? Accessing housing and supports? • How might the crisis of **COVID create opportunities** for the violence against women sector and housing sector come together to seek innovative solutions?

1. Secondary Research: reviewing key data, literature and reports (January – May)

Lead: Michelle Vanchu-Orosco, GVCEH

The lab is drawing on existing relevant research and data on the experience, needs, and status of housing supports and services for women+ at risk of violence and homelessness. This includes connecting with existing projects addressing this issue in BC and elsewhere. *[NOTE: Vancouver Island University student, Carley Marshall, and UVic faculty, Denise S. Cloutier, PhD and Ruth M Kampen, MA, and UVic student, Audrey Tung, are collaborating with GCVEH to support this work]*

Questions/Themes being explored:

1.1 Data summarizing the context and need for housing supports and solutions for women+ at risk of violence	Examples:
	• Regional data/snapshot on housing and homelessness for women+ at risk of violence
	• Snapshot of existing housing supports and services and gaps
	• Data on funding for housing supports and services for women+ at risk of violence and homelessness, including recent COVID-19 funding
	• Data from reports of local projects (Minding the Gender Equality Gap, etc.)
	• Reports from Provincial Projects addressing housing for women fleeing violence:
	    o Getting Home Project (BC Society of Transition Houses)
	    o Her Way Home (Island Health)
	    o BC Housing
	    o Provincial Gender Equity Office
	• Reports from National Projects:
	    o Women's Housing and Homelessness Network
	    o Women Shelters Canada

1.2 Summary of Regional Housing Plans, Strategies, Needs Assessments and Policies related to women+ at risk of violence	• Are women+ at risk of violence a priority population in regional housing policy and plans? • How do women+ at risk of violence show up in the current housing policy and planning landscape in the region?
1.3 Identify inspirational promising examples of housing models / stories to support women+ at risk of violence (in Canada and beyond)	Examples: • Domestic Violence Housing First Model (Washington State) • Sistering Women's Place Housing Lab: Creating Home: Supporting Women+ through Housing Transitions (Toronto, ON) • Musk Quat Transition House (Timmins, ON)
Outcomes • A summary of key relevant data and findings from existing reports, studies (local, provincial and federal) • Identification of themes related to barriers and opportunities to be explored further through lab activities • Documentation of key data and themes for the challenge paper	

2. Peer Research—focus groups, interviews, journey mapping (January – April 2021)

Lead: Janine Theobald, GVCEH and GVCEH Peer Research Team

A **Peer Research Team** was recruited by the GVCEH and ACEH, reaching out to partner organizations from the Leadership Team. Peer Research protocols, strategy, and tools will be co-developed with the Team and supporting staff from GVCEH. Participants include women+ that are Indigenous, trans, those that struggle with mental health and/or addictions, and those that are chronically homeless.

Questions/Themes being explored:

2.1 Stories about the lived experience of diverse women+ at risk of violence and homelessness	• Their journey and story • Themes related to barriers to access to safe, appropriate and supportive housing • Themes related to successes—what has worked well and why? • Themes related to needs for women+ at risk of violence and homelessness (physical, emotional, psychological, financial, and housing supports) • Themes related to vision, hopes, opportunities for making progress on this challenge
2.2 Themes related to discrimination and stigma	• Different experiences of discrimination & stigma across different identities of women+ at risk of violence (i.e., sex workers, Indigenous, trans, newcomers)? • Important considerations around risks/barriers/opportunities for different populations of women+ at risk of violence?
2.3 Themes related to intersecting crises	• How is COVID and other crises (e.g., opioid crisis) affecting and/or exacerbating women+ experiencing violence in this region? Accessing housing and supports?
2.4 Themes related to accessing & navigating supports	• To what extent are women+ at risk of violence able to access and navigate information about supports and housing options?

Outcomes
• Documentation and summary of key themes
• Persona Maps

3. Stakeholder Interviews—with diverse actors/stakeholders in the system (February – March 2021)

Lead: Janine Theobald (GVCEH) and SHIFT Collaborative

Key informant interviews took place with a select group of 6 people that represent diverse sectors that influence the challenge and also provide unique insights, experiences, and observations from their vantage point in the system.

Questions/Themes being explored:

3.1 Local landscape and context	• Better understanding the strengths, challenges and gaps in current services and supports offered • Past successes? Lessons learned?
3.2 Awareness of the issue(s)	• Level of awareness of the issues • Barriers and opportunities for increasing awareness
3.3 Collaboration	• Influences, barriers and opportunities to work more collaboratively across sectors
3.4 Intersectionality and Equity	• Exploration of how different women+ are disproportionately impacted by violence and homelessness • Insights into how can this lab meet the needs of women+ that are at highest risk
Outcomes • Insights into barriers and catalyzing factors that can support and transform the conditions for women+ at risk of violence and homelessness • Documentation and summary of key themes	

Summary Interviews + Focus Groups for Discovery Phase

| Method	Sector / Group	Organizations / Individuals / Departments
Interviews (Feb – March 15, 2021)	Leadership team Members	• Hilary Marks • Florentien Verhage, ICA • Echo Kulpas, Island Health • Candice MacDonald, COOL AID
	Tenancy Supports	• Antonia Mah, Together Against Poverty Society (TAPS)
Focus Groups (Feb – March 15, 2021)	Transition Houses	• Victoria Women's Transition House • Cridge Transition House for Women • Greater Victoria Women's Shelter Society • Sandy Merriman • BC Society of Transition Houses • Salt Spring Island - IWAV • Sooke Women's Transition House • Rosalie's Village Transitional Housing Program
	Provincial Government	• BC Housing • Housing Policy Branch • Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction (MSDPR)
	Regional/Local Government Housing	• BC Housing • City of Victoria • CRD Coordinated Assessment & Access Committee Coordinator • Capital Regional Housing Corporation (CRHC)
	Indigenous women+	• Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness (Speqəŋéutxw (SPAKEN) House) • First Nations Health Authority (Kari Wuttunee) • Victoria Native Friendship Centre (Christina or Jen Wilde) • Minister's Advisory Council for Indigenous Women (Barb Ward-Burkitt)
	Youth (in progress)	• GVCEH Youth task Force

Appendix B
Developmental Coaching Sessions

What is Developmental Evaluation (DE)?

Developmental Evaluation (DE) is an evaluation approach particularly well-suited to social innovation initiatives such as this Solutions Lab. DE focuses on ongoing learning and reflection, tracking Lab developments and key pivot points along the way, in order to surface learning for the project team. Evaluation and learning are conducted in real time so that the team can respond and adapt to what they are seeing and learning, rather than waiting until the end of the project to see what worked well and what didn't.[6]

DE serves a different purpose than traditional forms of evaluation and is best suited to initiatives that are still under development or testing new models, approaches or interventions where we don't yet know what is going to work. In contrast to formative or summative evaluation, developmental evaluation is often likened to the role of "research and development" in the private sector, supporting the creation, development or radical adaptation of an initiative or model in real-time. Groups using DE conduct a series of analyses to better understand how the initiative is being implemented, how well it is working, and how it should be adapted as it unfolds.

Some of the key DE roles within this Lab include:	
- Framing the challenge, desired outcomes and interventions being tested - Generating and making sense of real-time feedback for ongoing learning, development, and adaptations along the way - Documenting the overall evolution of the lab (including key developments & forks in the road) - Surfacing tough issues (tensions, issues related to power, being stuck, or different interpretations), and supporting adaptive action.	

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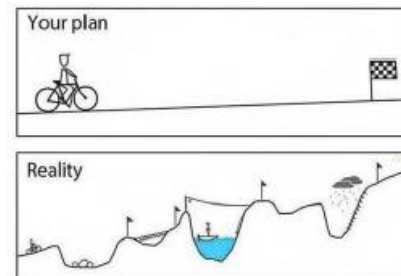
[6] Adapted from: http://ledlab.ca/portfolio/evaluatingledlab_strategies_for_developmental_and_systems_change_evaluation/

Lab Learning Agenda

Throughout the Solutions Lab, we will be carrying out DE to track and inform our learning about the following key topics and questions:

The Lab Challenge & Context	• What are the underlying factors or patterns that are influencing this challenge? • What's missing from our understanding of the challenge so far? What is it we're not seeing? What do we need more clarity about? • What opportunities for making change exist?
Collaboration Partnerships & Network	• Do what extent do we have the 'right' knowledge, skills, experience and capacities involved in the lab leadership team? • What are we learning about working in partnership across organizations and across diverse parts of the system in this Lab? What is working well and what is challenging? • What are we learning about what is possible through collaborative efforts that is not possible if working in isolation? • How we might sustain meaningful and impactful collaboration and engagement across diverse Solutions Lab partners/leaders?
Lab Platform, Process & Methods	• What are we seeing/learning and noticing about the Lab strategy and methodology overall? What should we adapt in our approach (if anything)? • How are the planned lab activities being impacted by COVID? What pivots or adaptations are necessary in the next steps/phase of the lab? • To what extent do we have the "right mix" and make up of participants in the Lab? How do we foster a sense of ownership and commitment amongst the Leadership Team and participants? • To what extent are we manifesting foundational process lab principles (e.g., systemic, participatory, experimental, iterative) and our own specific principles in the lab?
Lab Experiments, Prototypes and Interventions	• What are the strengths and limitations of individual prototypes, and the mix of interventions, to emerge out of the Lab? • How can they be strengthened? • What does it mean for the next cycle of experimentation? • What experiments should be tested, continued, scaled or wrapped up? What patterns of learning are we seeing across experiments?
Lab Outcomes	What shifts are happening for Lab Participants, the Lab Leadership Team and other key players in the system? How and why is this shifting: • Mindsets and Mental Models/Understanding of the Challenge/Self-understanding

DE Frameworks, Practices, Structures & Methods

Frameworks

DE activities support the Lab team to adopt an "Adaptive Action" approach where we integrate an ongoing iterative process of reflection and action based on these key questions in relation to the Lab Learning Agenda:

Human Systems Dynamic Institute (2014)
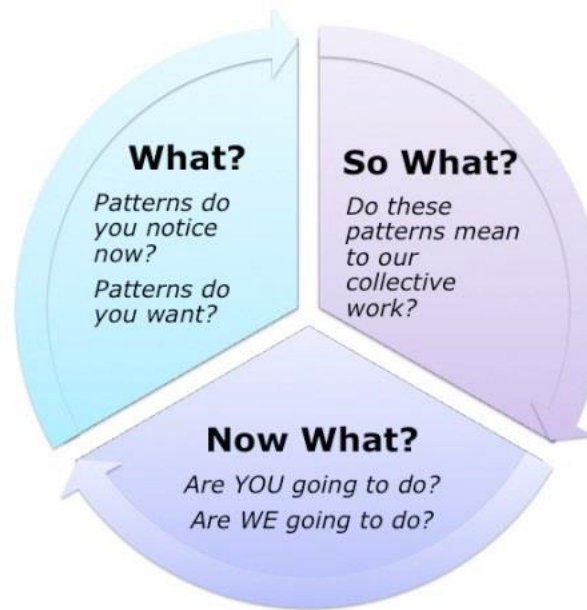
This adaptive action cycle will be integrated into the ongoing activities of the Lab. In addition, the following methods and DE structures will be used to systematically harvest, make sense of, and act on key learnings as they emerge.

The Lab Evaluation will also use Steve Williams' "**Societal Effects Framework**"[7] shows the relationship between shorter-term, easier-to-achieve outcomes and broader, lasting impacts. In this framework (see Figure below), "1st order" outcomes include improved relationships and because it networks in the system, improved knowledge and capacity, and new tools and resources. "2nd order" outcomes occur when there are changes in system actors' practices and policies. "3rd order" outcomes in our framework are "New

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[7] Williams, Steve. 2017. Evaluating Societal Effects of Transdisciplinary Co-production Processes: Final Report.
https://www.mistraurbanfutures.org/sites/mistraurbanfutures.org/files/Evaluating-societal-effects-Steve-Williams.pdf

narratives and culture shifts" and "Population-level transformation", reflecting profound or wide-reaching societal and cultural shifts.[8]

DIAGRAM. Systems Change Outcomes Framework
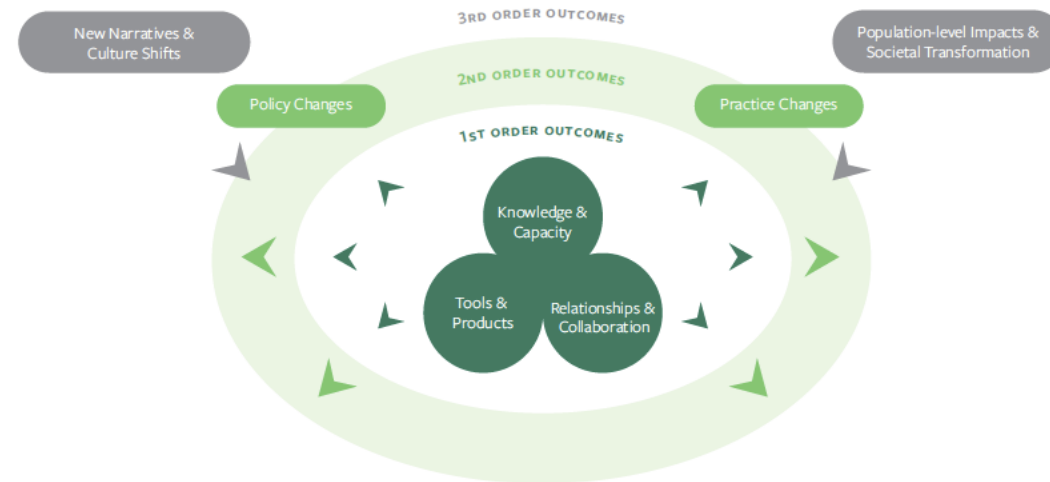
© 2018 by MetaLab, Tatiana Fraser and Juniper Glass. Adapted from Williams, S. (2017) *Evaluating Sustainability Transition Experiments in Times of Rapid Change International Sustainability Transitions 2017.* Gothenburg, Sweden.

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[8] Fraser, T. and Glass, J. (2020). Bridging the fields of feminist and systems practice: Building ecosystems for gender equity. Retrieved on January 15, 2020 from: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a0b2bbb80bd5e8ae706c73c/t/5f62b391191e4255845d66f6/1600304027998/Gender_Ecosystems+_Fina l.pdf

Practices and Methods

Over the course of the lab the following evaluation methods will be used:

| DE Practice/Method	Details	When	Who
Sense-Making Debriefs	Informal debriefs to document key insights & observations	Following key Lab activities such as Discovery research, interviews, community	Backbone team and others as relevant
Regular DE Adaptive Action Meetings	Regular reflection meetings to track learnings and integrate this into next steps & strategy	Bi-Monthly or at minimum once/phase	SHIFT Collaborative Backbone team Others as relevant
Lab Workshop Evaluation Forms & Facilitation Team Debriefs	Participant evaluation feedback forms and facilitator insights /observations on Lab process and content	During and After Lab workshops (virtual and in person)	Lab Participants, Lab Facilitation Team Backbone Team
Lab Milestone DE Sessions	In depth harvest, reflection and sensemaking at key milestones to inform design and implementation of the next phase of the Lab	At end of each Lab Phase: Discovery, Development, Prototype/ Test, Roadmap	Lab Leadership + Backbone Team & SHIFT
Lab Outcomes Evaluation	Evaluation of Lab Contribution & Outcomes (surveys, key informant interviews, focus groups, evaluation report)	At end of lab and as appropriate throughout (i.e. at end of prototype phase)	Lab Participants, Prototype Teams, Leadership Team & SHIFT

Appendix C
Personas and Systems Maps

1 **NAME:** LAYLA
Age: 34
Identity: Indigenous Woman+ with 2 children (8 and 12)
Housing Condition: Transition House (6 mo. or less)
Goal: Find Safe, affordable Long-Term Housing for her and herself and her children

Description

- Layla left an abusive partner and has taken her children to a transition house
- She has been staying at the transition house for 3 weeks, but is nervous about impending 30 day cut off
- She left quickly without her ID and does not have the damage deposit.
- She is not currently employed and is worried about making $ to pay for rent in the long term.
- She has applied for 2nd stage housing but there are no spaces currently available.
- She has applied to rental market housing, but the landlord requested references and a damage deposit, which she does not have
- She has applied for family subsidized housing, but the waitists are long
 She fears for losing her children if she does not find stable housing
 She is considering returning to her abusive partner if she cannot find housing soon.
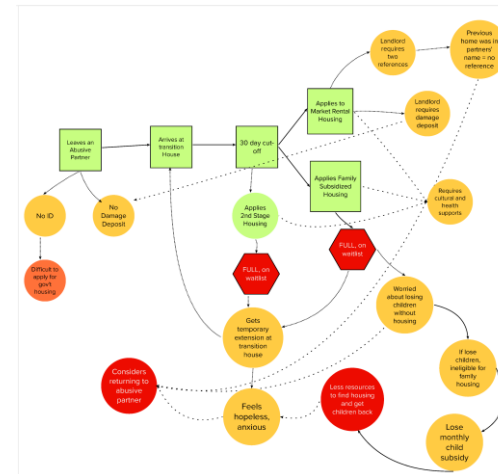
2 **NAME:** HELEN
Age: 47
Identity: 2nd Generation Canadian
Health Condition: Physical disability, PTSD and depression, Substance use
Housing Condition: Staying in temporary emergency housing
Goal: Find supportive housing ASAP, moving towards long term independent housing

Description

- Helen left an abusive home a year ago (emotionally and physically abusive)
- She struggles with depression and PTSD which makes it challenging to maintain employment.
- She uses substances to cope with her mental health challenges.
- She went to a transition house, but was not accepted while using substances
- At first she stayed with friends and now is staying at temporary shelters
- Her mental health challenges have made it difficult to trust landlords and have room mates. Shelters make her feel unsafe and lead to more substance use to cope.
- Her lack of stability has made it difficult to access the supports she needs
- She often feels lonely and isolated.
- She is considering sleeping on the street if she cannot find other housing options.

3

NAME: NAYA
Age: 49
Identity: Syrian, arrived on Canada in 2018, has 3 children
Housing Condition: Just left abusive partner and took children to stay with friends
Goal: Find supports to become indepedent and access independent housing for herself and children

Description

• Naya was sponsored by her husband to immigrant to Canada with their three children in 2018
• Abuse has become worse since COVID-19
• She recently gathered courage to take the children and leave to stay with Syrian friends.
• She is worried her husband will find them.
• She is learning English, but is not confident enough to apply for work
• She relies on her husband for financial security
• She has a small network of other Syrian women in Victoria, but is worried about the stigma associated with violence
• She is familiar with cultural services agencies, but is unaware of support for mental health, violence against women, transition houses or other housing supports;
• She does not drive, and would like to remain close to the downtown core where they currently live so she can see friends, access services, and children can remain in school where they have supports.
• She has a large family and needs a 3 bedroom, to comply with National Occupancy Standards
• She is scared and does not know where to begin.
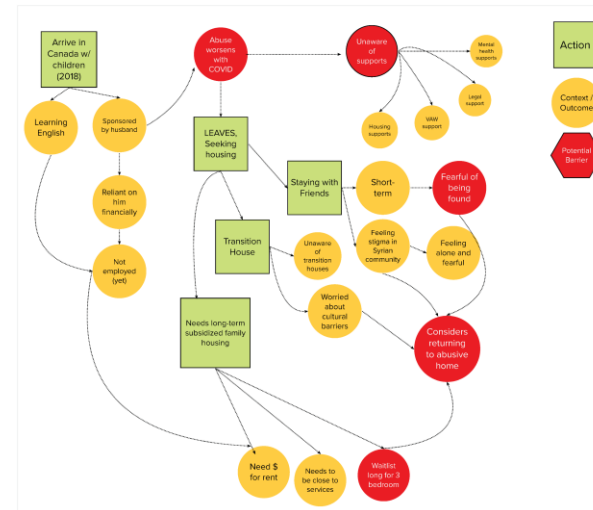
Appendix D
Glossary

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

DUAL MODEL OF INDIGENOUS HOUSING
The Dual Model of Indigenous Housing is a Culturally-Supportive Housing model that includes traditional foods, plants and medicines, Elder support, cultural activities, traditional healing practices, building community, family reunification, and Indigenous harm reduction programming for alcohol and substance use. Programming strengthens Indigenous self-identity, builds a sense of place, family, community and purpose.

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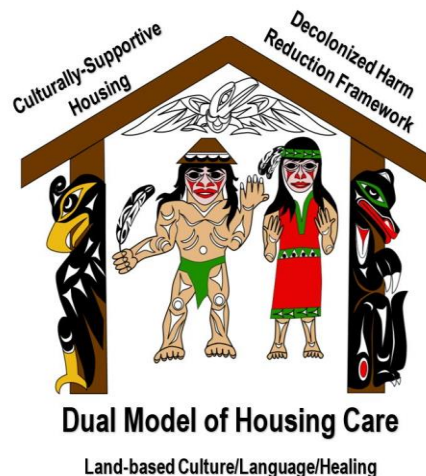
Decolonized Harm Reduction Framework (DHRF)
The Decolonized Harm Reduction Framework (DHRF) provides pathways to healing and recovery and includes land-based healing camps based on Indigenous ways of knowing and being, which incorporates culture, language, and healing. The DHRF approaches programming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

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

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)

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 FNMI (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://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 one 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 a lot of 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
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/public-safety/domestic-violence/what-is-violence-against-women

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/