



# Cedar Blankets: Building Wraparound Supports & Reducing Barriers for First Nation, Métis, Status/Non Status and Inuit Women and Children to Transition Houses and Safe Homes

Literature Review

February 2021

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## With Gratitude

The BC Society of Transition Houses' (BCSTH) office is located on unceded Coast Salish territory, shared by the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), x̣ṃəθkwəỵəm (Musqueam) and sə́lilwətaʔṭ/Selilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations. With humility, we acknowledge this truth. In recognition of the truth that many of us are settlers and uninvited guests to these territories, we make a commitment to being allies and relatives in the recognition and honoring of these relationships grounded in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect.

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude to all BC Society of Transition Houses' members who continue to provide a continuum of services and supports to respond to, prevent and end violence against women, children, and youth.

We hope that our collective work through the *Cedar Blankets* project will contribute to the development of the National Strategy to prevent and address gender-based violence against Indigenous women, children, and communities. As we continue this journey, we hope our collaborative efforts will facilitate a transfer of knowledge and strengthening of networks between all of our BCSTH members, government ministries and agencies, and key sectors serving to address and prevent gender-based violence.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to specifically acknowledge and thank all of the BCSTH member organizations who applied to participate in the pilot for *Cedar Blankets: Building Wraparound Supports & Reducing Barriers for Indigenous Women and Children to Transition Houses and Safe Homes*. In particular we would like to acknowledge Kim van der Woerd, Amanda Card, and Billie Joe Rogers at Reciprocal Consulting for helping us create action from our vision and Michelle Buchholz at Cassyex Consulting for taking our words and making them into beautiful imagery.

Finally we offer heartfelt gratitude to our Elder Valerie Joseph for her prayers and thoughtful guidance throughout this work and our Youth Amei-Lee Laboucan for keeping the future generations in our minds. We thank each and every member of the Partnership Stakeholder Committee for their continued dedication and work.



Atira Women's Resource Services - Janice Abbott

Cariboo Friendship Society of Williams Lake – Tamara Garreau and Connie Thompson

Metis Nation of BC – Tanya Davoren and Victoria Pruden

Wilma's Transition Society – Kathleen Mosa and Kristen Hall

Tamitik Status of Women – Michelle Martins and Sim Grewal

Haida Gwaii Society for Community Peace – Angela Foster

Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert – Anna Zanella

Special thanks to our funders, the Department of Women and Gender Equality, for making the Cedar Blankets project possible.

## Introduction

*Cedar Blankets: Building Wraparound Supports and Reducing Barriers for Indigenous Women and Children to Transition Houses and Safe Homes* is a 5 year project aimed at reducing barriers for Indigenous women and their children accessing Transition Houses and Safe Homes in BC. The Cedar Blankets project will support Transition Houses and Safe Homes to develop and adopt culturally respectful policies and practices for Indigenous women and their children. Once sheltered, the objective is to provide culturally safe, women-centred wraparound supports for Indigenous women and children that foster longer stays and safety and healing for survivors of gender-based violence.

The Cedar Blankets project arose out of significant work over the past several years starting in 2013 when BCSTH's member organizations identified that despite evidence of Indigenous women experiencing disproportionately higher rates of gender-based violence (Statistics Canada, 2013), they were not accessing Transition Houses and other anti-violence services. BCSTH surveyed member organizations and held sharing circles around the Province to ask Indigenous Transition House residents about this situation. Indigenous women shared some of the reasons for not accessing transition houses or safe homes, including:

- fear of overt and/or covert racism;
- fear that entering a transition house will result in involvement of child welfare agencies and apprehension of children; and,
- fear that confidentiality and personal agency will not be respected.

In response, in 2014, BCSTH partnered with [Reciprocal Consulting](#) to gather further information regarding possible reasons for this and to identify potential solutions. In 2016 & 2017, informed by research and information from Indigenous survivors of gender-based violence and BCSTH's member organizations, and funded by BC Housing and the Vancouver Foundation, BCSTH

contracted Reciprocal Consulting to develop and pilot “Access to Transition Housing for Aboriginal Women,” a staff-training curriculum aimed at increasing cultural safety within Transition Houses. Later in 2018, BCSTH developed and piloted an online training course “Increasing Access for Indigenous Women.” The following year in 2019, input from Transition Houses and Safe Homes staff reiterated that improving access for Indigenous women and their children continued to be important to the mission of anti-violence service providers. The Department of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) awarded BCSTH the Cedar Blankets project funding later that year to and support the development of culturally safe wraparound services in four pilot sites (Transition House or Safe House) over the next 5 years.

Four pilot sites, selected from interested BCSTH member programs around BC, will work with Cedar Blankets project staff to adapt the Cedar Blankets service delivery model to fit the unique contexts and needs of their Transition House or Safe House. Over the course of 3 years pilot sites will adapt and implement the Cedar Blankets service delivery model, taking into consideration specific agency needs and capacity, local populations i.e., Métis, Inuit, First Nations and/or Urban Indigenous Peoples, and regional and local issues (historical and current). Additionally, through a combination of supported online and in-person training, pilot site organizations and their staff will explore and gain new learnings in the areas of cultural humility, allyship, decolonization, community engagement and practical skill building to assist in the successful implementation of the service delivery model. This training will aim to support pilot sites to promote safe spaces and places for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women and children through the implementation of decolonized and indigenized practices in Transition Houses and Safe Homes in BC.

The intention of this literature review is to provide an evidenced based foundation and framework for the Cedar Blankets project and pilots sites to build from in starting this journey together. This literature review will provide project partners and stakeholders with an understanding of the relevant current issues, literature and discourse related to the Cedar

Blankets project. As a final contribution, at the end of the 5 year project, Cedar Blankets will develop a Blueprint to share the information, outcomes, and effective practices learned from the project about the project through presentations, webinars, websites, training, and conference presentations. The Blueprint, in combination with other Knowledge Translation activities such as webinars, presentations and resources, will hopefully widen the implementation of the Cedar Blankets promising practices to increase access to culturally safe and responsive shelter and wraparound supports for Indigenous women and children.

## Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls in BC

*The colonial violence, racism and sexism against Indigenous women and girls that has become embedded in everyday life at all levels of Canadian society, including interpersonal relationships, institutions and in many Canadian laws and policies has resulted in gender-based violence*  
(National Inquiry into MMIWG, Executive Summary, 2019, pg 4 ).

Indigenous women and girls face disproportionately higher rates of gender based violence compared to other Canadian women and girls and there are underlying social, economic, cultural, institutional, and historical causes that contribute to the ongoing violence against Indigenous women and girls (Statistics Canada, 2013). Indigenous women make up only 4% of the female population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016) yet they are 3 times more likely to report spousal abuse than non-Indigenous women (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2016), and 12 times more likely to be murdered or go missing than their non-Indigenous counterparts in Canada (National Inquiry into the MMIWG, vol 1b, 2019, pg 7). Of the 582 cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls documented in the Native Women's Association of Canada's (NWAC) database that spans two decades (ending March 2010), 28% of the cases occurred in BC. According to the RCMP, between 1980 and 2012, the number of solved and unsolved murders of Indigenous girls and women across Canada was 1,017, with 20% (n = 205) of those murders occurring in BC. These



rates are higher than would be expected given that only 16% of the total Indigenous population in Canada resides in BC, and BC has only 13% of Canada's population overall. While the exact number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada remains unknown (NWAC, 2015, and National Inquiry into MMIWG, 2019), more recent research suggests that the number could be as high as 4,000 (Tasker, 2015.), and we know that these numbers are on the rise (Statistics Canada, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2019). These disproportionately higher rates of gender-based violence have confirmed that Indigenous women and girls now make up almost 25% of female homicide victims (MMIWG Final Report, 2019). The need for access to culturally safe and responsive Transition Houses and Safe Homes for Indigenous women and girls cannot be overstated.

BC has a large diverse Indigenous population in comparison to other Canadian provinces and territories. There are 203 First Nations across eight regions in BC (Assembly of First Nations, 2018) as well as diverse urban Indigenous communities, which include non-Status Indigenous people living away from their home communities, Inuit and Métis communities. Each of these Indigenous communities experience distinct forms of violence and oppression that are directly linked to colonial policies and attitudes.

## Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

*As this report affirms, and as the Canadian Human Rights Commission has pointed out: A fundamental premise of this approach is that Indigenous women and girls should not be treated solely as victims but as independent human rights holders.*

*A human rights-based approach would be a critical element in efforts to bring about a paradigm shift in Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples, particularly Indigenous women and girls. This is because such an approach would reframe issues of importance related to Indigenous women*

*and girls as a “denial of rights” instead of “unfulfilled needs.”*

*Exposure to violence would then be seen as a systemic violation of the rights to gender equality and non-discrimination requiring broad structural changes (i.e., policing practices, judicial), instead of a symptom of service gaps requiring temporary solutions.*

(National Inquiry into MMIWG, 2019, Vol 1b., p. 169)

In 2016, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and its Commissioners were given the sacred responsibility to hear from Indigenous families and survivors of violence to make concrete and actionable recommendations for the safety of Indigenous individuals, families, and communities (MMWIG, Vol 1a., pg.1). The release of the [National Inquiry’s Final Report into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA](#) people concluded that the systemic causes of all forms of violence amounts to a race-based genocide that has been, and continues to be empowered by colonial structures.

In pre-contact Indigenous societies, women and children held a central place within their communities. Countless Indigenous stories, spiritual teachings, and other forms of knowledge are based on this fact. Matrilineal, collectivist in social and political structure and devoid of hierarchy, each community member regardless of age or gender, had an equally valued role aimed at the well-being and continuation of the community.

Historically, colonizers have exerted social and economic control of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities. Since the time of first contact, colonizing forces have enacted patriarchal strategies such as *The Doctrine of Discovery* originating from a series of Papal Bulls (formal statements from the Pope) in the 1400’s. This Doctrine was used as legal and moral justification for colonial dispossession of sovereign Indigenous Nations, including First Nations in what is now Canada (AFN, 2018). In Victorian times, ‘the white man’s burden’ was a term coined by the poet Rudyard Kipling to describe the responsibility for settlers to civilize colonized peoples and direct them

toward civilization. It was considered a noble enterprise at the time, and it lives on in that it led to the residential schools and the systemic attacks against First Nations language and culture (Cuthand, 2018). The Indian Residential School system enforced a patriarchal Christian dogma that devalued women and exposed them to abuse that made them easy targets for abuse from others. First Nations women were also subjected to forced sterilization and medical experimentation, further poverty and marginalization, and were targeted by the Sixties Scoop and ongoing child welfare policies. These policies and practices were squarely aimed at the assimilation, dispossession, and removal of Indigenous Peoples from their lands and resources for the hidden purpose of capital gain.

The colonial powers quickly realized that the key to ensuring compliance from the Indigenous people and therefore guaranteeing their position of power with its accompanying “right” to ownership of lands and resources would be to attack the places where the strength of Indigenous people is found; the culture and the family. Among these strategies it became apparent that in order to the “break the family” colonial powers must target Indigenous women, as the life givers of their nations and the backbones of their communities. These western notions of patriarchy have threatened and transformed the social, political, cultural, and economic autonomy of Indigenous women and children, dispossessed Indigenous women of any legitimate standing, and renamed them Non-human. “The presiding theory of the time was that Indigenous Peoples, because they were non-Christians, **were not human**” (Joseph, B., 2018, pg. 9) resulting in them to become the most marginalised group in Canada.

Gendered and racist Canadian government institutions and policies have had far-reaching material and psychological impacts on Indigenous women. Through the discriminatory regulation of Indian status, the Indian Act displaced thousands of Indigenous women and their children from their home communities. For decades, the Indian Act denied Indigenous women the right to participate in community membership and governance, severed the ability of Indigenous

mothers to parent their children and pass on their familial lineage and, until very recently, distributed matrimonial property to men in the event of marital breakup.

Patriarchal laws and regulations replaced traditional matrilineal governance and laws, shifting the assignment of cultural identity to Indigenous men, and as a result negated the status of Indigenous women and their autonomy, cultural identity and social authority (Midolo, 2018, p. 2). To illustrate, if an Indian woman married a non-Indian partner, they would have their Indian status revoked and ultimately be stripped of their identity as an Indian woman, losing their rights, and residence, and their access to health, social, and educational services. These systems disenfranchised First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women through assimilation, displacement, and marginalization (Ancil, 2018, p. 7).

In the process of attempting to remove First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures through cultural genocide, sexual and physical violence became normalized against Indigenous peoples (Midolo, 2018, p.1). These broad forms of systemic colonial violence, in part, produced the ongoing epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and is blatant gendered genocide of Indigenous women and girls (National Inquiry into MMIWG, 2019, vol 1b., p. 235). These colonial structures continue to deny First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women and girls their security and human rights.

The cultural disruption by colonization has led to many Indigenous communities to abandon their matriarchal and female-centred practices and implement patriarchal structures (Burnette and Hefflinger, 2017, p. 3). First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women have experienced collective loss of their human rights through these systems, and within their own communities' discriminatory and oppressive practices (Prior and Heinämäki, 2017, p. 2). There is an alarmingly high rate of intimate partner violence for Indigenous women within their communities (Burnette and Hefflinger, 2017, p. 2). Male aggression, as a colonizing factor, has contributed to intimate partner violence that

Indigenous women experience due to the increasing stressors in their communities (Burnette and Hefflinger, 2017, p. 3).

While Métis peoples share many of the same experiences as First Nations and Inuit people, there are some notable exceptions including but not limited to; fears around “race-mixing”, the Canadian government’s poor response to the two Métis resistances of 1869 and 1885; and gendered dimensions to Métis women’s use of Scrip, a form of government issued coupons or entitlement to land. Métis girls also had different experiences of residential schools, in which some were sent to residential schools while others were denied any form of schooling entirely or sent to Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-breeds. They also had distinct experiences within Métis settlements and towns, the Sixties Scoop and other failed government interventions.

One of the distinct features of Métis experiences has been their existence as “forgotten people,” whereby their exclusion from many programs and services offered to their First Nations relatives has directly contributed to violence. This vacuum now means that many Métis are left struggling to access essential services that may help to meet their needs and, ultimately, create safety. Concerted efforts to separate them from First Nations relatives through the apparatus of the state and the history of colonization has further generated a hierarchy of identity, resulting in conflicts within the Métis community and drawing attention away from the ongoing marginalization that Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people face.

These policies and institutions have shaped social and cultural norms and attitudes in complex and harmful ways that compromise the safety of Indigenous women and girls. They have resulted in the socio-economic marginalization of Indigenous people, particularly women and girls, which creates conditions that legitimize and facilitate violence and exacerbate trauma.

## Access to Transition Houses and Safe Homes

Indigenous women and their experiences of intergenerational, institutional and individual expressions of racism continue to deter them from accessing Transition Houses and Safe Homes (BCSTH Survey 2016.) Indigenous women surveyed by BCSTH reported experiencing overt and/or covert racism within all public services including Transition Houses and Safe Homes. In particular a large number of Indigenous women reported that they believe that entering a Transition House or Safe Home will result in child protection involvement and apprehension and that their confidentiality and personal agency will not be respected (Indian and Northern Affairs, 2006; BCSTH, 2016).

Other barriers identified by Indigenous women choosing whether to access a Transition Houses or Safe Homes in BC include, but are not limited to, excessive or oppressive rules and policies, practices and resource limitations that can further undermine the establishment of trust between them and those providing services, making them more likely to leave sooner than non-Indigenous women (Novak, 2006; BCSTH, 2016). For example, children and youth of Indigenous women coming to transition housing can range widely in age and family make-up and can consist of members beyond the Western concept of “immediate family.” There may be children from blended families, or extended family, foster, custom adoptions or other community connections that make up an essential family structure. Transition House policies that define and limit who is considered a dependent and age limitations on male children may also limit Indigenous women and their family’s access.

A variety of other barriers are often experienced upon reaching a Transition Houses and Safe Homes, such as resources often being at or over capacity, and limited admittance quotas can prevent timely access (Public Health Agency of Canada, n.d.). Providing safe refuge for Indigenous women can be additionally complex when residents experience mental wellness and

substance use challenges, poverty, and isolation from their culture and support. Limited resources and demanding workloads can make it difficult to prevent staff burnout and vicarious trauma (Glenn & Goodman, 2015), especially with Transition Houses and Safe Homes experiencing wage disparities, high staff turnover rates and staff retention issues. As a result, Transition Houses often do not have adequate staff time, training, positions with specialized skills, or Indigenous staff members to contribute to a culturally safe environment and improve supports for Indigenous women and their children.

Service gaps associated with healing are also linked to overall cultural safety and inclusivity at Transition Houses and Safe Homes, as well as access to peripheral services (mental wellness counselling, substance use treatment, etc.) and holistic wellness. A lack of services for children and youth, a lack of confidentiality safeguards, the absence of realistic safety planning and inadequate building security can also discourage access (Novak, 2006). These gaps increase when connections to key external networks and culturally safe community partners are limited or unavailable.

## Calls for Justice

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) presented 231 individual Calls for Justice for transformative legal and social change. Arising from domestic and international human and Indigenous rights law, these Calls for Justice are legal imperatives that represent essential ways to end the genocide and to transform systemic and societal values that have worked to maintain this violence. The Calls for Justice came four years after the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada published 94 Calls to Action](#) aimed to redress the legacy of the Indian Residential School system in Canada and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation with its Indigenous Peoples. BCSTH has identified more than 30 Calls for Justice that both directly and indirectly apply to Transition Houses, Safe Homes, and

Second-Stage Housing. (See Appendix 1) For example, MMIWG's Final Report's Call for Justice 4.7 calls upon:

*... all governments to support the establishment and long-term sustainable funding of Indigenous-led low-barrier shelters, safe spaces, transition homes, second stage housing, and services for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people who are homeless, near homeless, dealing with food insecurity, or in poverty, and who are fleeing violence or have been subjected to sexualized violence and exploitation. Governments are called upon to ensure that shelters, transitional housing, second-stage housing, and services are appropriate to cultural needs, and available wherever Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people reside.*

If actualized, the MMIWG Calls for Justice recommendations can be the framework to create safe and secure places for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women and children. Strengthening communities and allowing families and survivors to take the initiative in their healing process, are both powerful actions towards reconciliation and resistance. In order to prevent further violence that Indigenous women and children experience, it is important that front line organizations:

- engage in decolonizing practices,
  - support the individuals they serve to reclaim their power by respecting cultural rights; and,
  - embrace and celebrate Indigenous women and girls
- (National Inquiry into MMIWG , 2019, vol 1b., pg 405).

Cultural rights for example could include the right to practice their cultural traditions such as smudging inside the Transition House or Safe Home, providing traditional foods, or respecting a woman's decision to remain in contact with her abuser.



## Shifting Landscapes

Systemic, institutional, political, environmental and cultural landscapes are all part of the ever-shifting world that Indigenous women and their children face. Over the past decade, there has been a number of changes to legislation and systems that directly affect Indigenous women and their children.

Some of these legislative changes and shifting landscapes include, but are not limited to, the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (UNDRIP), Bill C-92, the environmental and resource development industry, economic development, definition and assignation of cultural identity and membership, healthcare and child welfare. Both UNDRIP, which relates to resources and the authority of governing bodies and Bill C-92, which speaks to the Child Welfare system and Indigenous children, purport to improve the Human Rights of Indigenous people, however they lack a gendered analysis. As such, this new legislation serves to deepen the divide between the oppressor's institutions and oppressed Indigenous women and girls and maintains the status quo. Looking forward, strategies that reclaim Indigenous women's authority and recognize their expertise serve as healing and role modeling for the next generations.

Including Indigenous women in decision-making processes is in keeping with many Indigenous legal traditions. For example, Willie Seymour, a Hul'qumi'num elder, spoke of the importance of women participating in traditional consent-building processes:

*[H]e beat on his drum again and that was his notice for the people to come,  
that there was business to be taken care of.*

*The people rushed down,*

*"We need to talk about whatever the concern was."*

*The women...they came in and joined and they were invited to continue the discussion.*

*It was open and sometimes [the issues] involved women.*

*And they didn't leave until they came to a satisfied resolution.*

*They asked everyone; they asked every individual, "nil ow' sthuthi' ni' 'utun shqualuwun."*

*"Is it okay with you, okay with you personally? Is our decision effective? Is our decision acceptable?"*

*They go around asking each individual and then they say, "tun' ni' 'utunu 'il kwet ch" — from this day on we put this to rest.*

*Then they will appoint a couple of elders to go deal with the people involved.*

*(reported in Morales, S., 2014, pg. 82 – 83)*

Additionally, and possibly most importantly in regards to the Cedar Blankets project, shifting landscapes refers to the paradigm shift that we in the antiviolence sector can embrace. If we can act as role models in repossessing Indigenous Women's political and societal status through honoring Indigenous women and practicing genuine allyship, not only would the effect touch the life of that one woman and her children in our transition house, but like a rock thrown into a pond, this shift could also spread to other parts of our society. Through a demonstrated commitment to systemic decolonization and indigenized services, our actions have the potential to contribute to the lives of Indigenous women and girls of the upcoming generations.

## Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act and the Impacts on First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Women

In November 2019, British Columbia passed legislation to implement the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*, which has as its purpose: "to affirm the application of the Declaration to the laws of British Columbia; to contribute to the implementation of the Declaration; and, to support the affirmation of, and develop relationships with, Indigenous governing bodies" (Declaration, 2019). Similar to the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP), the Declaration acknowledges the standards of the recognition and protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights as self-determining. Self-determination does not

need to be a framework that separates Indigenous communities from the state. Instead, it can be a political partnership with the Canadian government to acknowledge (Belanger, 2010, p.8). However, Canadian politics have altered the concept of self-determination to be separate from the Canadian government and has made the process of being a self-determined government dependent upon federal recognition (2010, p. 8).

#### B.C.'s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People's Act (UNDRIP) Through a Gendered Lens

The Declaration Act's intention is to not only include self-determination in the form of Nation to Nation relationships, but also acknowledge Indigenous Nations' right to self-determination in culture, languages, education, sacred lands, and rights to the lands, water, and resources (Sayers, 2019, p.2). Brenda Gunn, Associate Professor at Robson Hall's Faculty of Law, has advocated for applying a human rights framework to violence against Indigenous women and girls. Gunn states that applying a gendered lens when implementing this new legislation in BC will likely ensure that Indigenous women receive equal benefits from the legislation as well (Gunn, B., 2018,).

Many Nations had women leaders as part of their custom of matriarchal societies that have given women the roles of creators and peacemakers due to their connection to Mother Earth (Champagne, 2015; Hansen & Antsanen, 2017; TRC, 2015). For example, Métis women have played an integral role in the social development of their communities as it is the mother's lineage that develops an individual's Métis identity. Historically, the role of Indigenous women has been essential in community development as many First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities valued both men and women's distinctive roles that are fundamental to their societies (Gunn, 2018, pg 45). Today's Indigenous-based grassroots movements, such as Walking with Our Sisters, are led by Indigenous women and call for critical assessment of social problems to prevent future violence against Indigenous women (Hansen and Dim, 2019). These initiatives center community building and healing.

In contrast, political and colonial control continues to exclude the knowledge and experiences of Indigenous women (Gunn, 2018,).

*“There has been ample opportunity for the application of a gendered lens, unfortunately, the Declaration Act minimally mentions Indigenous women. When Indigenous women are acknowledged, the focus is on the violence Indigenous women and girls experience portraying Indigenous women as marginalized and excluded victims. This deficit based approach fails to recognize the gendered impacts of colonialism” (Gunn, 2018, p.46).*

Furthermore, as Kuokkannen highlights:

*“Most studies present the project of indigenous self-determination as a phenomenon outside of gendered political structures and relations of power or processes of gendering in society in general. Un-gendered research on Indigenous self-determination conceals patriarchal structures and relations of power, which create hierarchal and differential access to resources, representation, political influence and to being “heard” in indigenous societies” (2012, pg. 226).*

## Environmental and Industry Effects

Since time immemorial First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples have held the sacred duty to be guardians and caretakers of the Land and Waters, defining their special relationship with the land and expertise in environmental stewardship. The spirit of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act is to recognize and legitimize this history. Unfortunately, often industries and corporations make significant decisions that impact First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities and lands, and fail to consider, or minimize, Indigenous perspectives and concerns. Further, the Canadian government fails to accept that consent from First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Peoples is required for developmental projects (Morales, 2019, p.4) and instead defines consultation and consent as the same thing.

Global ecology research has determined that extraction projects continue to have negative social, physical, and emotional impacts on First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities where they exist (Morales, 2019, p. 4). As a result, Indigenous leaders continue to be adamant that their right to

self-determination be acknowledged, affirmed, and respected (Morales, 2019, p.5: United Nations, 2012).

In its follow-up report on Indigenous peoples and the right to participate in decision making, with a focus on extractive industries, the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples noted that “there are several unique considerations in relation to Indigenous women and the right to participate in decision making in the area of extractive industries.” Participants at the expert group meeting “Combating violence against indigenous women and girls: article 22 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,” identified violence against Indigenous women by state and non-state actors and corporate actors in the public domain as including: “militarization and the activities of multinational corporations and extractive industries that operate with impunity on Indigenous peoples’ territories. Those actors and their activities have a detrimental impact on Indigenous women and girls, which manifests itself in sexual assault, sex trafficking, prostitution, bonded labour, the exploitation of overseas contract workers, the internal displacement of women and environmental violence.” (Anaya, J., 2009, pg 65)

Accordingly, the Expert Mechanism noted that “these unique impacts and forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls must be resolved through an understanding of the structural nature of violence against Indigenous women, through the full participation of Indigenous women in all aspects of decision-making and through consideration of this problem by Indigenous communities as an integral part of self-determination.” (UNESCO, 2012 at para 21)

Further, Morales (2019) suggests, and the UN report agrees, that First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women should be included in this decision-making process as this population is significantly affected. The Expert Mechanism report also recognized, as discussed previously, that “...extractive industry development can have unique ecological, economic and spiritual impacts

on Indigenous women in their role as traditional caretakers of the environment.” (UN Expert Mechanism report, para 44, pg 65). Morales (2019) suggests that along with the right to self-determination provided by the Declaration, Indigenous women’s expertise and agency should be recognized and consulted in relation to extractive projects (p.6).

Resource extraction and industrial development has been linked globally to the negative health impacts in First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women and children. Illnesses such as cancer, lung diseases, and radiation poisoning present themselves with recourse contamination (Manning et al., 2018, p. 12). Anxiety, depression, addictions, suicides, and other mental health concerns are also present due to resource extraction projects (Manning et al., 2018, p.12). In addition to these health impacts, there is evidence of a correlation between industrial developments and increased violence against First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women and children (Dalseg, Kuokkanen, Mills, Simmons, 2018, p. 18). The introduction of new, often transient, workers into adjacent communities of the projects increases the incidents of sexual harassment and violence, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking (Morales, 2019, p.9). Further, industrial development projects have increased sex work and sexual exploitation of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women in the community (Morales, 2019, p. 9). Consequently, homeless women, women with addictions, or women experiencing poverty are at a higher risk of sexual exploitation and human trafficking.

One benefit Indigenous women may receive from resource extraction projects is employment. Many First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women and their communities have new opportunities for employment, despite the unfavourable effects of industry and development projects (Manning et al., 2018, p. 5). In these work environments, there are reports of sexualized, gendered, and racialized violence and harassment, which continue to be prominent issues. In addition, the long hours away from family can increase vulnerability to violence and results in concerns for women

attempting to secure housing (Manning et al., 2018, p. 9). It is also important to note that once the resource project ends communities' experience mass unemployment and often there are no safety nets or mechanisms in place to address the impacts of this.

Accordingly, if Canada is committed to implementing UNDRIP in a manner that addresses the rights of Indigenous women in relation to extractive industry development, it must ensure that Indigenous women's right to self-determination is respected by including them in all aspects of the decision-making processes by actively seeking out their free, prior and informed consent to any development project taking place within or affecting their traditional territories (Morales, pg 83).

## Climate Change Impacts on First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Women and Children

Indigenous worldviews often acknowledge that when one aspect of the whole is affected, then the entire balance of all life is impacted. Place and land hold significant influence on the holistic well-being in the domains of emotion, body, mind, and spirit of Indigenous Peoples (Fernandez et al., 2020, p. 1) According to the [Women's Environment and Development Organization](#) (WEDO), Indigenous communities are more likely to experience direct harm as a result of climate change, despite being responsible for the majority of biodiversity conservation and leading environmental activist movements (Campo, 2020). Climate change continues to have detrimental effects on the physical health of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Peoples (Dudley, Hoberg, Jenkins, and Parkinson, 2015, p.1). Physical sickness directly influences the emotional and mental wellness of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples, especially when land and traditional food and medicines are diminishing.

Chronic diseases have presented themselves particularly throughout Arctic populations where climate change is most dramatic. In Arctic communities, there is a stark contrast between non-

Indigenous and Indigenous population's infant mortality rate and life expectancy (Dudley et al., 2015, p. 3). The destruction of the environments and the shifts in the climate have restricted healthy living areas for many First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Peoples. Remote villages in the Arctic that connect with major cities by transpiration risk the introduction of viruses, infections, and other health complications (Dudley et al., 2015, p. 3).

Armed conflict, natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies like the coronavirus pandemic can significantly weaken a society's ability to protect women and girls from gender-based violence. According to research on the impacts of pandemics and other climate emergencies, women and children experience increases in gender-based violence (UNICEF, 2020). . When the coronavirus pandemic hit Canada in early 2020, many Indigenous communities closed their borders to prevent infection. This can be particularly difficult for rural and remote communities who generally have a limited amount of available resources and services. In the case of a fire or flood event, community emergency resources are delegated to responding to the emergency - residential programs are filled, transportation and communication systems are further stressed.

In addition, changing weather patterns in British Columbia have an impact on Indigenous women. With increased fire activity, an increase in precipitation has not been enough to make up for the increase in temperatures. These weather pattern changes increase the risk for women and children fleeing abusive relationships especially if there is a lack of resources in communities. This is true, particularly in Northern, rural and remote communities, for women and children wishing to escape this violence (Prior and Heinämäki, 2017, p. 3). This lack of resources within their communities threaten Indigenous women's resilience. Unequal allocation and complex access points between the Western systems of support and Indigenous communities have different implications of how First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women experience climate change (Prior and Heinämäki, 2017, p.4).



As previously acknowledged, patriarchal structures have devalued many responsibilities of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women within Western systems and within their communities (Prior and Heinämäki, 2017, p.4). The work and traditional knowledge that Indigenous women have in efforts to reduce climate change in their communities becomes invisible within these structures and ultimately devalued (Löw, 2020, p. 1). Restrictions placed on land use also restrict the traditional methods and diets of Indigenous communities (Fernandez et al., 2020, p.3). First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women have to adapt to these changes, as they are predominantly responsible for foods and customs (Pentlow, 2020, p. 1). Further, women articulate how important and seriously they take their roles in their communities (Whyte, 2014, p. 3).

## Truth and Reconciliation Commissions Calls to Action

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was officially launched in 2008 as part of the [Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement](#) (IRSSA). When former students of Indian residential schools decided to settle out of court with the federal government and four national churches, the launch of a TRC was part of the terms of settlement. Intended to be a process that would guide Canadians through the difficult discovery of the facts behind the residential school system, the TRC was also meant to lay the foundation for lasting [reconciliation](#) across Canada. This multi-faceted agreement, widely understood to be one of the largest settlement packages in the history of the country, was intended to compensate survivors for the harms they suffered in residential schools, and to work towards a more just and equitable future for Indigenous peoples. The former students wanted to ensure their stories were not lost by settling out of court. One part of the commission's mandate was to gather the written and oral history of residential schools and to work toward reconciliation between former students and the rest of Canada.

For over a century, the central goals of Canada's Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of

assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs Duncan Campbell Scott outlined the goals of that policy in 1920, when he told a parliamentary committee “our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic” (TRC, 2015 pg. 3).

The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as “cultural genocide.” *Cultural genocide* is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned, spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. In addition, and most significantly, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next. In its dealing with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things. (TRC, 2015 pg. 1) It was at this point in time that Indigenous women lost their political and social position moving from honored members of their communities to non-humans.

#### Reconciliation at the Crossroads

*“To some people, reconciliation is the re-establishment of a conciliatory state. However, this is a state that many Aboriginal people assert never has existed between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. To others, reconciliation, in the context of Indian residential schools, is similar to dealing with a situation of family violence. It’s about coming to terms with events of the past in a manner that overcomes conflict and establishes a respectful and healthy relationship among people, going forward. It is in the latter context that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has approached the question of reconciliation” (TRC, 2015 pg 7).*

At the British Columbia National TRC event, the former lieutenant-governor of British Columbia, the Honorable Steven Point, shared:

*And so many of you have said today, so many of the witnesses that came forward said, “I cannot forgive. I’m not ready to forgive.” And I wondered why. Reconciliation is about hearing the truth, that’s for sure. It’s also about acknowledging that truth. Acknowledging that what you’ve said is true. Accepting responsibility for your pain and putting those children back in the place they would have been, had they not been taken from their homes... What are the blockages to reconciliation? The continuing poverty in our communities and the failure of our government to recognize that “Yes, we own the land.” Stop the destruction of our territories and for God’s sake, stop the deaths of so many of our women on highways across this country... I’m going to continue to talk about reconciliation, but just as important, I’m going to foster healing in our own people, so that our children can avoid this pain, can avoid this destruction and finally, take our rightful place in this “Our Canada” (TRC, 2015, pg. 14).*

Since the release of the 2015 TRC’s Final Report, progress to adopt the Calls to Action has been slow. In 2017, the Yellowhead Institute released their report *Calls To Action Accountability: A Status Update on Reconciliation* (Jewell & Mosby, 2019) and provided an update in December 2019. The analysis of Canada’s progress towards completing the TRC’s 94 Calls to Action suggests that—as was the case in past years—progress has been limited and the number of completed Calls to Action has moved from a total of 8 in 2018 to 9 in 2019. (By way of comparison, Beyond 94 found no change in 2018 and 2019, with the number of completed calls to action coming in at 10 in total).

It is notable that the only call to action implemented to date related to the rights of Indigenous Women was the creation of the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Women and Girls; however, the Calls for Justice resulting from this report have not been implemented.

## Child Welfare Reform

One of the biggest barriers to accessing Transition House and Safe Home services identified by Indigenous women was the fear of child welfare involvement and/or apprehension triggered by

going into Transition Houses or Safe Homes. In Canada today there are more children living in government care than even during the times of Residential Schools with Indigenous children making up about 60% of the total number. This does not count children who have open child welfare files. Indigenous women have expressed they would rather stay in un-safe situations rather than risk Ministry involvement. (BCSTH, 2016; NWAC, 2020)

In response to a national outcry from Indigenous people as to the state of the Child Welfare system and the TRC Calls to Action, the federal government implemented The Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families (formerly Bill C-92), which came into force on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. The Act purportedly was co-developed with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit leadership, and provincial and territorial partners to reform child and family services. This statute is the first Federal Act which recognizes First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Peoples' jurisdiction over Children and Family Service (CFS) as an Indigenous right to self-governance to develop policies and laws based on their histories, cultures, and circumstances (Metallic, Friedland, and Morales, 2019; Lightning-Earl and Friedland, 2020). This Act intends to reduce the number of children in care by acknowledging the importance of the child to remain connected with their language, culture, and community by supporting children currently in care to return to their families and communities (Metallic et al., 2019).

This Act will shift many aspects of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit child and family services, not the least of which is in situations where Indigenous women and children are escaping violence. Concerns have been raised about the risks involved for Child and Family Services that could perpetuate further harm to another generation of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit children. Upholding standards of care for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit children remains the paramount concern, ensuring key elements of child protection systems are protecting child safety and well-being from abuse and neglect.

Some of the criticism of this Act is there was little planning involved in the transfer of authority or implementation of this Act, which has the potential to supersede Provincial legislation. This lack of planning may have unintended consequences in terms of the Ministry of Children and Family Development authority and responsibilities. Particularly during the transition phase, Indigenous women may need support, education and advocacy to ensure they receive the services and support throughout this Act's implementation process.

## Promising Approaches for Supporting Indigenous Women and Girls Experiencing Violence

Over the last decade, a number of different promising practices have emerged in terms of how Transition Houses and Safe Homes approach the delivery of their services, particularly in relation to Indigenous women and their children. The following section highlights some of these key approaches and practices that support the safety and well-being of Indigenous women and their children, recognizing that the central foundational approach to all of the following practices is one that places women at the center.

### Decolonizing Practices

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls advocates for a decolonizing approach that acknowledges the rightful power and place of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA (Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual) people. In the context of Indigenous decolonizing approaches, the efforts to resist the forces of colonialism and decolonize are rooted in Indigenous values, philosophies, and knowledge systems that reestablish Indigenous self-determination and self-governance (MMIWG, p.170). Decolonizing approaches challenge the colonial influences by making space for Indigenous Peoples to govern themselves in relation to their communities' right to determine

their own economic, social, and cultural development. In doing so, this strengths-based approach can focus on the resilience and expertise of First Nations, Metis and Inuit women and children, along with their communities, to uphold their values, philosophies, and knowledge systems and occupy their rightful position as holders of equal human rights. Strength and resilience at the heart of each person, family and community remains a guiding approach (MMWIG, p.171).

Indigenous women, girls, 2SLGBTQQIA people, Elders and children must be included in decolonization approaches that seek to implement self-determination and measures that uphold rights and create safety through cultural safety and trauma-informed approaches and services (MMWIG, p.170). For Transition Houses and Safe Homes, this work entails increasing the effectiveness of support services for them by using interdisciplinary, systemic approaches to coordinating services, understanding the importance of cultural safety and integrating Indigenous values and traditions, and building long-term relationships with Indigenous communities in culturally safe ways.

## Allyship and Community Engagement

The Calls for Justice encourage everyone – not just governments and organizations – to get involved in standing up, acknowledging and condemning violence against Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG, p.14). Genuine allyship means stepping into a self-reflexive place to understand the position of power and privilege that have been, and continue to be, gained through unjust colonial systems that marginalize the Indigenous women and children we seek to ally with. As allies, Transition Houses and Safe Homes have a responsibility to use our position and privilege to support and amplify the voices of the Indigenous women and their families whose lives have been affected by violence, both individually and collectively. In doing so in the development and implementation of policies and practices we work to eliminate the structural roots of violence.

There is a need for public education and greater awareness of violence against Indigenous women and girls (MMWIG, p.15) and allies can be open to understanding and learning more about missing and murdered Indigenous women and the complex issues that increase their vulnerability. For instance, Jaime Black who launched the REDress Project, a response to the high number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, encourages public discourse as a way to address this violence (Black, 2014). A gendered lens and framework that ensures the impacts on women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA individuals must be taken into account, including the understanding that the experiences of individuals within distinct communities may differ, but are nonetheless equal.

There are also key responsibilities to uphold through self-reflection, listening, and learning in order to understand how presence can affect the people and communities, we support (Amnesty, 2018). For example, it is critical that allies do not presumptively speak about or in place of First Nations, Metis and Inuit women and children but learn how to use their positions of power to create space for Indigenous women to step into, to stand with them so their voices can be heard and to assign legitimacy and authority to First Nations, Metis and Inuit women.

## Cultural Safety and Humility

The history of colonization has altered First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Peoples' relationships to their culture and identity through targeted policies designed to sever their cultural and kinship relations. These attacks on culture, which include residential schools, the Sixties Scoop and other assimilatory policies, are at the roots for other forms of violence Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people experience.

Responding to Indigenous women and girls experiences of violence requires a service approach that prioritizes cultural safety and humility. Cultural safety is an approach that considers social and historical contexts. Complemented by cultural humility, a humble acknowledgement as a learner in understanding another's experiences, both approaches are strongly linked to emotional and physical safety in Transition Houses and Safe Homes and foster inclusive, supportive and safe environments.

There are many different experiences in being a First Nation, Métis, and Inuit woman, which leads to diverse ways of accessing services. Not all First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women will want the same services, or First Nation, Métis, and Inuit-specific services at all (Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centre's, 2009). A participatory approach to development and design can ensure that services are appropriate and supportive of identity development, cultural pride, and self-esteem. Holistic care models that blend contemporary and traditional forms of healing are also proven to be effective (McCallum & Isaac, 2011).

Many witnesses in the National Inquiry spoke about the importance of culture as a way of ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of their families, communities, and environments. They identified practicing ceremony and using traditional medicines as important ways of fostering relationships that center respect and reciprocity. Participants saw access to culture as a fundamental right, a basic need, and a top priority to reduce risks of violence. They spoke about the significance of land, languages, and cultural teachings as sources of strength, healing, and guidance that should inform work in all sectors. Meanwhile, family and community members were identified as critical sources of support and safety.

Of the many best practices and solutions that participants discussed related to culture, the unity of families was identified as being central to the safety and well-being of individual Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. Participants highlighted childhood as a critical period



that can either strengthen and protect women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people from harm, or cause lasting trauma. Other critical areas include the crisis of child welfare, the importance of cultural revitalization, access to culture in urban settings, and 2SLGBTQQIA, Métis, and Inuit inclusion.

A clear need for more dialogue and training on cultural safety, intergenerational trauma, and trauma- and violence-informed practice emerged in BCSTH research with Transition House staff in 2016 and in subsequent evaluations identified a need for cultural humility training. In a 2019 survey of BCSTH member programs (with 55 respondents), when asked what training and education frontline staff needed to reduce barriers for Indigenous women, 93% reported that training on intergenerational trauma and trauma- and violence-informed practice would be helpful and 91% supported more education on Indigenous cultural safety. This aligns with literature concluding that accessible training and education for Indigenous women who have experienced violence, as well as the legal, social, and health service providers who assist them, is a necessary strategy to achieve safer communities for Indigenous women in BC. Specifically, service providers' must be given training that includes an expansive understanding of the colonial context of violence against Indigenous women; the specific nature of violence and healing in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous families and communities; the cultural (and geographical) differences that lead to needs for differing services and diverse needs amongst Indigenous peoples and their communities; and, the implementation of research and developmental education, training, resources, and programs that must be managed and/or led by Indigenous women for Indigenous women.

As a part of cultural humility training, all staff should learn the names, histories, and politics of local First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities (McCallum & Isaac, 2011). It is important to be clear which First Nation, Inuit or Métis community you are enhancing your program for, and

incorporate the traditions, stories and teachings of that community and be clear about where the traditions come from to avoid pan-Indigenism (Crooks, Thomas, & Chiodo, 2009).

Considering the long history of paternalistic institutional attitudes towards First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples, open, respectful, and nonjudgmental communication is important, as is flexibility in allowing people to choose their own path. Because cultural humility is such an important part of serving First Nation, Métis, and Inuit populations, evaluations must also be culturally responsive and appropriate. Finally, Transition Houses and Safe Homes can also develop their own strategies for increasing First Nation, Métis, and Inuit employees and capacity. (McCallum & Isaac, 2011).

## Governance and Policy

The literature identifies a number of considerations that are important for Transition Houses and Safe Homes to be attentive to when aiming to increase safety for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women. First, Transition Houses require increased, or prioritized, long term funding for resources to assist First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women with lived experience, such as educational programs around healthy relationships, short- and long-term housing, counselling, provision of basic resources (e.g., food and clothing) for children, interim financial assistance, and affordable transportation to services (National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, 2008). Second, recruiting indigenous staff, including management with proven leadership skills, is crucial to the success of any Transition House. A strong Transition House director draws attention to the issue of family violence and its effects, which can motivate positive community action (National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence, 2006). Third, policy changes that are aimed at decreasing violence against First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women and girls must focus on the effect of colonial policies (Health Reference Center Academic, 2013) and be developed in collaboration with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit women (Belanger, Weasel Head, & Awosoga, 2012). Additionally, these policy changes should be rooted in traditional values (Health Reference Center Academic). Fourth,

accountability mechanisms must be developed for all parties involved in service delivery. Furthermore, Transition Houses should engage in research and meaningful data collection to create an ongoing process for identifying best practices in supporting Indigenous women and their families in their community (Belanger, Weasel Head, & Awosoga, 2012).

Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) is a “set of standards that establish important ground rules for how First Nations data can be collected, protected, used or shared” (First Nations Information Governance Centre, n.d.). These principles are designed to ensure that Indigenous communities own, protect, and control how data about them is used (First Nations Information Governance Centre, n.d.):

- **Ownership** - the principle that the community collectively owns its data;
- **Control** - the principle that communities have the right to control all aspects of data management that impact them;
- **Access** - the principle that communities must have the right to access data about them regardless of where that data is held; and,
- **Possession** - the concrete, physical control of the data, and is a means by which ownership can be both asserted and protected.

OCAP has been endorsed by Indigenous communities and organizations across Canada, integrated into projects (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014a; McMahon, LaHache, & Whiteduck, 2015; First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014b), and incorporated into guidelines and protocols for ethical research with Indigenous communities (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2014; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2018). OCAP continues to be a guiding set of protocols for ensuring appropriate access and sharing of data by and about Indigenous communities.

## Conclusion

At the onset of this literature review we identified the objective of this document was to provide project partners and stakeholders with an understanding of the relevant current issues, literature and discourse related to the Cedar Blankets project. It was the intention of this literature review to provide an evidenced based foundation and framework for the Cedar Blankets project and pilots sites to build from in starting this journey together. However, during the course of our research of the literature, we discovered that while there was a plethora of research into Indigenous issues generally, there was actually a limited amount of research specific to Indigenous women and girls outside of a victimization framework, and even less that focuses on Indigenous women as rights holders whose lives have been impacted by relationship and institutional violence. This is illustrative of the world of Indigenous women today. Many of our research sources agreed on the invisibility of Indigenous women, in terms of individual and collective rights, the lack of recognition as holders of expertise, and that this invisibility serves to maintain continued systemic oppression. This, of course, culminates in violence, legitimizes inadequate responses to gender-based violence, threatens the safety of Indigenous women and girls, and serves to maintain a cycle that seeps into the upcoming generations. In order for real change to occur on a systemic level Indigenous women and girls must be able to step out of this invisibility. We believe the anti-violence sector has the potential to be a starting point for this change.

Moving forward, Cedar Blankets will work to adapt a culturally safe and inclusive service delivery model to fit the unique contexts and needs of Indigenous women with experiences of violence and each of the Transition House or Safe House pilot sites. Taking into considerations the current relevant social, political, cultural and legal environments that impact an Indigenous woman's access to services and support including considerations such as agency needs and capacity, local Indigenous Peoples, and regional and local historical and current issues. Decolonization and

allyship, institutional, political, geographical and cultural landscapes are all part of the ever-shifting world of Indigenous women and their children today.

Initiatives that support the restoration of balance and well-being of Indigenous Peoples must attend to both historical and current experiences that have undermined Indigenous Peoples and women, in particular. Cedar Blankets intends to support Indigenous women's leadership by providing opportunities for Indigenous staff, individuals, and communities to participate in online and in-person training for staff and their organizations. Through its service delivery model the Cedar Blankets project recognizes and prioritizes the importance of having First Nation, Métis, and Inuit children stay connected to their language, culture, and community.

The Final Report of the MMIWG calls for a paradigm shift – no longer accepting the view of Indigenous women and girls as victims that are somehow responsible or deserving of the violence perpetrated against them but instead as a population whose human rights are being violated. The report asserts that until this shift occurs violence against Indigenous women and girls will continue to be viewed as a limited service delivery issue as opposed to a call for systemic change. The Cedar Blankets project provides the anti-violence sector with tools to modify their service delivery models and support this critical paradigm shift. Transition Houses and Safe Home programs are vehicles uniquely positioned to hold safe spaces for Indigenous women and their families to become visible again as individuals and as members of their Nations and break the cycles of systemic and societal discrimination for the generations coming up.

## Appendix 1

### Additional Resources

Graben, Sari and Cameron, Angela and Morales, Sarah, (February 21, 2019). Gender Impact Analysis of Impact Benefit Agreements: Representation Clauses UNDRIP Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3339404> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3339404>

Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). <http://caid.ca/TRCFinExeSum2015.pdf>

Jewell Eva and Mosby Ian: Calls To Action Accountability: A Status Update On Reconciliation Posted December 17, 2019 The Indian Department  
<https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2019/12/17/calls-to-action-accountability-a-status-update-on-reconciliation/>

Joseph, B., Insight on 10 Myths about Indigenous People, published Nov 27, 2018  
<https://www.ictinc.ca/hubfs/Blog%20post%20pdfs/Insight%20on%2010%20myths%20about%20Indigenous%20Peoples.pdf?hsCtaTracking=626da117-81af-4135-8d92-453b08009cdb%7Ca3eb8b2e-2965-4284-9fc0-253f0bae4bed>

McCallum, K., & Isaac, D. (2011). Feeling Home: Culturally Responsive Approaches to Aboriginal Homelessness. Burnaby, BC: Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia and the Centre for Native Policy and Research.  
<https://www.sparc.bc.ca/resources/>

Morales, Sarah (2018): Canary in a Coal Mine published in UNDRIP Implementation: More Reflections of the Braiding of International, Domestic and Indigenous Laws: Centre for International Governance Innovation; pgs 73 - 84  
<https://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/documents/UNDRIP%20II%20Special%20Report%20lowres.pdf>

Morales, Sarah (2014) Cited in Interview of Willie Charles Seymour (23 June 2010) Snuw'uyulh: Fostering an Understanding of the Hul'qumi'num Legal Tradition (PhD Dissertation, University of Victoria, 2014) [unpublished] at pg 306.

[https://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item?id=TC-BVIV-6106&op=pdf&app=Library&oclc\\_number=910551181](https://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item?id=TC-BVIV-6106&op=pdf&app=Library&oclc_number=910551181)

“Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds” (Ottawa, 1879) p. 9

<https://tc2.ca/uploads/PDFs/SDdavinreport.pdf>

Swiftwolfe, D. (2019). First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Ally Toolkit. Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network.

<https://reseaumtlnetwork.com/>

UNICEF. (2020), Gender Based Violence in Emergencies

<https://www.unicef.org/protection/gender-based-violence-in-emergencies>

## Online Resources

Cutland, D., (Jan 2018) The white man's burden of privilege still affects us

<https://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/columnists/cuthand-the-white-mans-burden-of-privilege-still-affects-us>

Whose Land am I on?

Maps as an education tool to create dialogue around reconciliation.

<https://www.whose.land/en/>

NWAC: Yana (You are Not Alone) Handbook 2018

A Toolkit for Indigenous women, girls and gender diverse people escaping domestic violence.

<https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2018-Yana-Handbook-English-Final.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1UBtZbJ2kmmNT7xSsBT5VNGZ6iHVSVCIH6XIPNAVyXhS2z0c-WxJNOJYM>

### Indigenous Ally Toolkit

Information and resources to support organizations and individuals interested in being Indigenous allies.

[http://reseaumtlnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Ally\\_March.pdf](http://reseaumtlnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Ally_March.pdf)

### 10 Ways to be a Genuine Ally to First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Communities

Approaches to being an ally for Indigenous communities.

[https://www.amnesty.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/10-ways-to-be-a-genuine-ally-to-First-Nation, Métis, and Inuit -communities.pdf](https://www.amnesty.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/10-ways-to-be-a-genuine-ally-to-First-Nation-Métis-and-Inuit-communities.pdf)

### Ally Bill of Rights - Lynn Gehl

Responsibilities to uphold in being an ally.

[http://www.lynngehl.com/uploads/5/0/0/4/5004954/ally\\_bill\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_poster.pdf](http://www.lynngehl.com/uploads/5/0/0/4/5004954/ally_bill_of_responsibilities_poster.pdf)

Native Women's Association of Canada, (2015) Fact Sheet Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and Girls [https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Fact\\_Sheet\\_Missing\\_and\\_Murdered\\_Aboriginal\\_Women\\_and\\_Girls.pdf](https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Fact_Sheet_Missing_and_Murdered_Aboriginal_Women_and_Girls.pdf)

Tasker, J.P., (2016) Confusion reigns over number of missing, murdered indigenous women, Retrieved from cbc.ca, CBC News · Posted: Feb 16, 2016 2:47 PM ET

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mmiw-4000-hajdu-1.3450237>



## Appendix 2

### MMIWG’s Calls for Justice

CALL	Related Area	
<p>1.1 We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, and Indigenous governments (hereinafter “all governments”), in partnership with Indigenous Peoples, to develop and implement a <b>National Action Plan to address violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people</b>, as recommended in our Interim Report and in support of existing recommendations by other bodies of inquiry and other reports. As part of the National Action Plan, we call upon all governments to ensure that <b>equitable access</b> to basic rights such as employment, <b>housing</b>, education, <b>safety</b>, and <b>health care</b> is recognized as a fundamental means of protecting Indigenous and human rights, resourced and supported as rights-based programs founded on substantive equality. <b>All programs must be no-barrier, and must apply regardless of Status or location.</b></p>	Direct	Housing Cedar Blankets
	Overarching	All projects
<p>1.5 We call upon all governments to immediately take all necessary measures to <b>prevent, investigate, punish, and compensate</b> for violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people.</p>	Overarching	All projects
	Direct	PEACE
<p>1.9 We call upon all governments to develop laws, policies, and <b>public education campaigns to challenge the acceptance and normalization of violence.</b></p>	Overarching	All projects PA & Media opportunities
<p>2.2 We call upon all governments to recognize Indigenous languages as official languages, with the same status, recognition, and protection provided to French and English. This includes the directives that:</p>	Overarching	Education Manuals etc. Translation
<p>i Federal, provincial, and territorial governments must legislate Indigenous languages in the respective territory as official languages. ii All governments must make funds available to Indigenous Peoples to support the work required to revitalize and restore Indigenous cultures and languages.</p>		
<p>2.6 We call upon all governments to educate their citizens about, and to confront and eliminate, racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia. To accomplish this, the federal government, in partnership with Indigenous Peoples and provincial and territorial governments, must develop and implement an <b>Anti-Racism and Anti-Sexism National Action Plan</b> to end racist and sexualized stereotypes of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA people. The plan must target the general public as well as public services.</p>	Overarching	All projects PA & Media opportunities

CALL	Related Area	
<p>3.2 ..... <u>The lack of health and wellness services within Indigenous communities continues to force Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people to relocate in order to access care.</u> Governments must ensure that health and wellness services are available and accessible within Indigenous communities and wherever Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people reside.</p>	Direct	Safety Safe homes Temporary alternatives so families don't have to relocate to rec'v health services (MH)
<p>3.3 We call upon all governments to fully support First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities to call on Elders, Grandmothers, and other Knowledge Keepers to establish community-based trauma-informed programs for survivors of trauma and violence.</p>	Overarching	BCSTH Board
<p>3.4 We call upon all governments to ensure that all Indigenous communities receive immediate and necessary resources, including funding and support, for the establishment of <b>sustainable, permanent, no-barrier, preventative, accessible, holistic, wraparound services, including mobile trauma and addictions recovery teams.</b> <u>We further direct that trauma and addictions treatment programs be paired with other essential services such as mental health services and sexual exploitation and trafficking services as they relate to each individual case of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.</u></p>	Direct	Cedar Blankets (outreach component?)
<p>3.5 We call upon all governments to establish culturally competent and responsive crisis response teams in all communities and regions, to meet the immediate needs of an Indigenous person, family, and/or community after a traumatic event (murder, accident, violent event, etc.), alongside ongoing support.</p>	Direct	Safe Homes Transition Houses
<p>4.6 We call upon all governments <u>to immediately commence the construction of new housing and the provision of repairs for existing housing to meet the housing needs of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.</u> This construction and provision of repairs <b>must ensure</b> that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people have <b>access to housing that is safe, appropriate to geographic and cultural needs, and available wherever they reside, whether in urban, rural, remote, or Indigenous communities.</b></p>	Direct	Housing Safe Homes Transition Houses





**behind.** Further, all governments must ensure the availability and accessibility of specialized care, such as grief, loss, trauma, and other required services, for children left behind who are in care due to the murder or disappearance of their caregiver

CALL	Related Area	
12.9 We call for the establishment of a <u>Child and Youth Advocate in each jurisdiction with a specialized unit with the mandate of Indigenous children and youth.</u> These units must be established within a period of one year of this report. ...	Indirect	Advocacy
13.1 We call upon all resource-extraction and development industries to <u>consider the safety and security of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people,</u> as well as their equitable benefit from development, <u>at all stages</u> of project planning, assessment, implementation, management, and monitoring.	Direct Indirect	Safety Advocacy
<u>15.1 Denounce and speak out against violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.</u>	Overarching	Advocacy
15.2 <u>Decolonize by learning the true history of Canada and Indigenous history in your local area.</u> Learn about and celebrate Indigenous Peoples' history, cultures, pride, and diversity, acknowledging the land you live on and its importance to local Indigenous communities, both historically and today.	Overarching	All projects
15.3 <u>Develop knowledge and read the Final Report.</u> Listen to the truths shared, and acknowledge the burden of these human and Indigenous rights violations, and how they impact Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people today	Overarching	All projects
15.4 Using what you have learned and some of the resources suggested, <u>become a strong ally.</u> Being a strong ally involves more than just tolerance; it means actively working to break down barriers and to support others in every relationship and encounter in which you participate.	Overarching	BCSTH BOD All projects
15.5 <u>Confront and speak out</u> against racism, sexism, ignorance, homophobia, and transphobia, and teach or encourage others to do the same, wherever it occurs: in your home, in your workplace, or in social settings.	Overarching	BCSTH BOD All projects
15.6 <u>Protect, support, and promote the safety of women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people by acknowledging and respecting the value of every person and every community,</u> as well as the right of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people to generate their own, self-determined solutions.	Overarching	BCSTH BOD All projects
15.7 <u>Create time and space for relationships</u> based on respect as human beings, supporting and embracing differences with kindness,	Overarching	BCSTH BOD All projects

love, and respect. <u>Learn about Indigenous principles of relationship specific to those Nations or communities in your local area and work, and put them into practice in all of your relationships with Indigenous Peoples.</u>		
15.8 <u>Help hold all governments accountable to act on the Calls for Justice, and to implement them according to the important principles we set out.</u>	Overarching	BCSTH BOD All projects
<b>CALL</b>	<b>Related Area</b>	
Create Resources for Learning and Allyship “toolkits”	Overarching Direct	All projects Cedar Blankets
Look to all Calls with Distinction Based Lens as they relate to: Metis People Inuit People Non-Status People	Overarching	All projects

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