



Gender and diversity at the heart of housing

Session: 2C
Rosy Room
3:45 PM – 5:00 PM

Canada 

GBA 
GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS PLUS


CMHC  SCHL

The session

GBA+ is used to assess the different ways women, men and gender-diverse people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. Whether its race, religion, age or socio-economic status, the GBA+ lens puts a spotlight on the diversity of factors that make us who we are.

This session will focus on better understanding the **unique barriers** to housing faced by women and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community and how we can develop **solutions**.

Speakers

Panelists:

Lise Martin Executive Director, Women's Shelters Canada

Doris Rajan Director of Social Development, Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society

Lindsey Lickers President, Native Canadian Centre of Toronto's Board of Directors

Jacqueline Gahagan Professor, Dalhousie University

Marie-Ève Desroches PhD candidate, Institut national de la recherche scientifique

Moderator: *Michel Tremblay*, Senior Vice-President, Policy and Research, CMHC

What are the main barriers to housing from your perspective?





**WOMEN'S
SHELTERS
CANADA**

Shelters and
Transition Houses
United to End Violence
Against Women

Lise Martin, Executive Director, Women's Shelters Canada

VAW Shelters/Transition Houses (THs)

- **1973** – First shelters opened.
- **2018** – Over 550 shelters for women fleeing violence across the country
- In the territories, far and few between: 4 in Yukon, 5 in NWT and 5 in Nunavut.
- Shelters are often at capacity, having to turn women and children away.
- Lack of safe and affordable housing is why shelters/THs so often full.
- On average, shelters/THs can house 16 people (women and children).
- Shelters offer much more than a roof.
- One does not need to stay in a shelter to access shelter services

Barriers for Women Fleeing Violence

- Lack of safe and affordable housing stock
- Landlord discrimination
- National occupancy standards (NOS) and fear of loosing children
- Safety concerns

Marie-Ève Desroches



Réseau habitation femmes (Montréal):

The organization's mission is to develop and improve women's quality of life by providing them with access to decent, affordable, safe and community-supported housing. The organization works with empowerment practices and feminist and community approaches that improve women's esteem and the ability to exercise citizenship with respect for their dignity.

PhD candidate in Urban Studies

Research focus on new supportive housing for lone-parent families headed by women mothers and how they contribute to make healthier Canadian cities

Barriers for lone-parent families headed by women

- **Mismatch between housing market and women's needs**
 - Lack of rental units of sufficient size (2 bedrooms and +)
 - Housing unaffordability (especially units of sufficient size)
- **Social housing not always aligned with all the needs and realities:**
 - Usually temporary/transitional and attached to a programme
 - Where do you move after?
 - Some are not ready or do not need that level of support
 - Limitation of women-only housing for mothers
 - Lack of funding to support the women and their family



LGBTQI2S seniors and housing

Jacqueline Gahagan, PhD
Professor of Health Promotion



Why are LGBTQ2S older adults missing from the housing dialogue?

- May have come out at a time when their basic human rights were not protected (Baby Boomers).
- May remain 'in the closet' for fear of stigmatization, harassment, violence, etc.
- Many older LGBTQ adults live alone and may not have connections their biological family to discuss their housing issues/needs with.
- May have a distrust of mainstream services, including health and social care services.
- Not actively recruited or oversampled in consultation processes.
- Assumptions about 'one size fits all' housing models.
- Heteronormative expectations about housing needs.

Why does conceptual clarity regarding ‘sex’ and ‘gender matter’?

“**Sex** refers to a set of biological attributes in humans and animals. It is primarily associated with physical and physiological features including chromosomes, gene expression, hormone levels and function, and reproductive/sexual anatomy. Sex is usually categorized as female or male but there is variation in the biological attributes that comprise sex and how those attributes are expressed”. **CIHR (2018)**

Whereas, “**Gender** refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of girls, women, boys, men, and gender diverse people. It influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act and interact, and the distribution of power and resources in society. Gender is usually conceptualized as a binary (girl/woman and boy/man) yet there is considerable diversity in how individuals and groups understand, experience, and express it”.

Conceptual clarity on sex and gender can address knowledge gaps, makes for better science and provides better data from which to develop policies, programs and other interventions.



What are the main barriers to housing that Indigenous women face?

- Poverty & Lack of Funding
- Intergenerational Trauma
- Lack of Support for Indigenous Led-Community Focused Healing Programming
- Systemic Discrimination and Racism
- Not Enough Affordable Housing



IRIS- Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion and Society



Housing

Marginalized Women/Gender Non-conforming Peoples

Why marginalized women and peoples?

Barriers:

- Impact of trauma
- Lack of money
- Ineffective housing policies/programs
- Inadequate supports to stay housed

How can we address barriers (find solutions) to housing?



How to address barriers

- Increase affordable housing stock and ensure that larger accessible units are built
- Provide funding for housing advocates
- Increase the number of Second Stage Shelters
- Portable Housing Benefits/ specific stream for women fleeing violence

Lone-parent families headed by women : solutions

- Funding
- Diversify the housing offer across the housing spectrum, not only in large cities
- Need allies to help women navigate across the housing options
- This spectrum should not be seen as unidirectional where access to private property is the ultimate goal.



Housing solutions for LGBTQ2S older adults?

- Looking at issues of non-discrimination in housing and assisted living
- Drawing from innovative examples from the EU research we have already done on this topic

How do we address these barriers?

- Proper consultation on housing strategies that include most vulnerable populations at the core- *these women know what works and doesn't work!*
- Increased financial supports for affordable housing run by Indigenous community, organizations and leadership that includes community input.
- Increased financial support for advocacy and front-line workers/ case management combined with housing workers.
- Increased affordable housing units, create blended communities to combat racism and discrimination.
- Increase cross departmental knowledge sharing and awareness of working with Indigenous peoples.

Housing

Marginalized Women/Gender Non-conforming Peoples

How to address barriers:

- Local to national community development approach
- Increase investments to front-line, population-specific housing support services to ensure women stay housed
- Marginalized women lead in housing social design
- Increase the number of affordable housing units
- Reform social housing programs

Questions from audience





Thank you!
Merci!