It Shouldn't Take an Inquest: A Review of the Literature Examining Links Between Domestic Violence and Homelessness

Violence Information & Education Centre
Tracey Braun and Julie Black

This project was made possible by a grant from HRDC (Human Resources and Development Canada).

The Violence Information & Education Centre would also like to thank the United Way of Calgary and Area and the Calgary Foundation for their support of this project.

© 2003 Violence Information & Education Centre

No part of this publication may be reproduced without the acknowledgement of the publisher on all reproductions, including mechanical or electronic means, photocopying, recording or by an information storage system.

Additional copies of this report can be obtained from the Violence Information & Education Centre.

Violence Information & Education Centre
302, 501—18 Avenue S.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2S 0C7

Phone: (403) 209-3129
Fax: (403) 209-3261
Email: info@viec.org
Website: www.viec.org

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter One: Evolving Definitions	3
Chapter Two: Causality	8
Chapter Three: Implications	12
Conclusion	15
References	16

I am a formerly homeless woman, speaking to you about safety on the streets, as a representative of homeless and formerly homeless women who are a lot of things besides victims.

…I have come to realize that we do not have any problems that don't affect our sisters in houses. Homeless women are more vulnerable more often, true. We often don't have a choice about whether to go for a walk at night or stay home. The usual police patterns have the effect of funneling every-thing that is seen as a problem into the same areas, which often means homeless women trying to stay invisible between drug dealers and angry drunks. When you're living homeless you get tired, drained, your self-esteem fails – and all of that makes you more of a target.

But just as anyone can have a disaster out of nowhere that leaves you homeless, anyone – even with a home – can have an emergency that leaves you out late at night in a bad neighborhood, with a car that won't start or a lost purse.

…Let us be your experts on street safety, Once again, homeless women are not part of the problem. We are part of the solution.

Anitra Freeman, 1997

Introduction

September 23-27, 2002, was Homeless Awareness Week in Calgary, Alberta. This week consisted of events around street, or visible, homelessness, including a sleep-in vigil in a downtown park, an awareness forum and a winter boot drive. Events of this nature illustrate the growth of homelessness in Canadian urban centres and its subsequent pull on community consciousness. The City of Calgary's bi-annual homeless count, which provides a snapshot of the number of people on the streets and in shelters in one evening, found that homeless rates in the city had increased 34% from 2000 to 2002 (City of Calgary, 2002). Beginning in the 1990s, North American research began to demonstrate a link between the growth in homelessness and changes to social policy, particularly policy on social housing and social programs (Daly 1996, Hurtig 1999, Layton 2000).

This literature review adds to the ways homelessness is conceptualized in Canada by tracing the connections being made between the changing demographics of people living on the street or otherwise homeless and the experience of and societal response to domestic violence. Literature reviews have yet to incorporate the growing body of work examining these connections. *Homelessness: A Guide to the Literature* (1999) neither profiles women as a specific category of analysis nor identifies domestic violence as an important factor in women's homelessness. *No Room of Her Own: A Literature Review on Women and Homelessness* (1996) has one chapter on violence against women, however, its emphasis is on women's experiences of violence while homeless, with little mention of the domestic violence that might have propelled the flight from home.

Since domestic violence is a profoundly gendered phenomenon, as explained below, this literature review focuses primarily on the experiences of women, while striving for a diversity approach. Of the 1737 people counted in Calgary in 2002, for example, 85 (4.9%) were staying in one of the three emergency battered women's shelters. Combined with the number of women counted at homeless shelters and in the streets, women made up 16.5% of Calgary's visible homeless. Aboriginal women were over-represented in shelters and particularly on the streets. And there were more visible minority women and men than in previous counts comprised, including 46 visible minority women of the 244 women in shelters and 2 of the 29 women on the streets (City of Calgary, 2002).

Annual statistics of battered women's shelters can round out the snapshot view of the biannual homeless count. Although a battered women's shelter is seen as a “last resort” by many women (Johnson 1999), battered women's shelters in Calgary are often filled to capacity. In 2001, while 5,194 women and 5,546 children were admitted to battered women's shelters in Alberta, approximately 17,460 others had to find accommodation elsewhere due to lack of space (Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, 2002).

As yet, there are no wide-scale studies to determine what happens to women when they are turned away from battered women's shelters. Individual shelter workers refer women to homeless shelters but it is not known how many women act on this referral. Certainly the personal stories of women at homeless shelters identify abuse as a common factor in their homelessness (The Street Speaks 1995). Undoubtedly, many other women stay with friends, family or acquaintances, or take a hotel room, or stay out on the streets in order to escape domestic violence. Other women stay in the home despite the violence, being more fearful of homeless shelters or street life. While studies are still sparse, a 1990 Michigan Renters for Housing Rights survey found that 60% of women who return to abusive partners do so because of lack of housing.

Given the magnitude of danger involved in these experiences – domestic violence and homelessness – much of the literature offers implications for program delivery and urgent social policy reform. This review is of particular interest to community activists, program developers, agency staff and social policy makers. It is our hope at the Violence Information and Education Centre that this review can support and perhaps challenge efforts to create meaningful and lasting improvements in the lives of women and their families experiencing domestic violence and homelessness.

Chapter One: Evolving Definitions

Domestic Violence

"Domestic violence" is a contested term. Coined in the 1980s, it can be used to denote all forms of abuse that occur within a family, household or dependent relationship, such as abuse of seniors and children or abuse of men by female partners. The Calgary Domestic Violence Committee, for example, defines domestic violence as:

> …the attempt, act or intent of someone within a relationship, where the relationship is characterized by intimacy, dependency or trust, to intimidate either by threat or by the use of physical force on another person or property. The purpose of the abuse is to control and/or exploit through neglect, intimidation, inducement of fear or by inflicting pain. Abusive behaviour can take many forms including: verbal, physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, spiritual, economic and the violation of rights. All forms of abusive behaviour are ways in which one human being is trying to have control and/or exploit or have power over another.

In response to that generalization, terms like spousal violence, marital violence, intimate violence and intimate partner violence appeared as ways of speaking directly to particular configurations of abuse. (See, for example, McGillivray and Comaskey 1999.) Given the distinctive history of organizing around rape and sexual abuse/assault, these terms have been kept apart as well as integrated into the generalized terms of abuse and violence.

"Domestic violence" can also be used to mean wife abuse, woman abuse or male violence against women in a way that does not immediately signal this particular focus. Some theorists argue that the coining of the term was less about an attempt to be inclusive about diverse human experience and more about masking the gendered nature of the phenomenon. The generalized and gender-neutral term has served to discredit feminist work and dilute efforts at social change into efforts of service delivery that maintain the status quo of women's subordinate status in society (Profitt 2000). Activists and theorists working from an integrated feminist analysis have argued that even a gender-lens is insufficient because it ignores other structures of oppression, like racism and classism, and therefore works to the advantage of the dominant group (Abraham 2002). Brenda ManyFingers (1994) notes that much domestic violence research and thus terminology stems from research by and on what she calls "majority society".

In keeping with common usage in Calgary, this literature review uses the term "domestic violence" to denote all forms of abuse and violence in family, household or dependent relationships. However, our focus is on women experiencing abuse. Our reasons are two-fold. Firstly, domestic violence continues to be a highly gendered phenomenon. Male partners committed eighty percent of spousal homicides in Canada in 2001 (MacKay 2002) and there was a 25% increase in what activists call femicide or the murder of women (Landsberg 2003). In 2002, eighty-five percent of the 34,000 victims of domestic violence who reported incidents to the police in Canada were women (Trainor 2002). Even the controversial 1999 General Social Survey on Spousal Violence which purportedly found near equal rates

of spousal violence experienced by men and women in the previous five years, notes that the severity of woman abuse outweighs the kinds of violence experienced by male spouses (Jiwani 2000).

Secondly, and most importantly for the purposes of this review, the focus on women's experiences of domestic violence and service responses sheds new light on effective strategies to address homelessness.

While not a focus of this review due to their specific experiences and needs, many of the points raised will have relevance for young women and girl children experiencing homelessness. Children become homeless because they are born to women already homeless or because their family becomes homeless. Most homeless youth have experienced serious family dysfunction, physical abuse and neglect, residential instability or removal from the home by child welfare officials (Cooper, Hoffart and Bartlett 2002).

Homelessness

The definitional debate within the homelessness field directly relates to efforts to quantify the number of people who are homeless and thereby justify government, corporate and private resources for change or, conversely, to justify inaction. The range of definitions has been categorized as defining the problem so that it is either too small or too big to justify action or that it is someone else's problem, either the responsibility of the individual or some other government level or department (Layton 2000). By equating homelessness with shelter space, the problem has been shrunk and redefined into how well cities or agencies are able to address the need for shelter on a night-by-night basis (Miller and Du Mont 2000).

United Nations' terminology is often cited by those looking for common definitional ground. The UN definition is a broadly encompassing one, defining people experiencing homelessness as:

> those who have no home and who live either outdoors or in emergency shelters or hotels, and people whose homes do not meet UN basic standards of adequate protection from the elements, access to safe water and sanitation, affordable prices, secure tenure and personal safety, and accessibility to employment, education and health care (as cited in The Street Speaks 1995).

Much as within the domestic violence field, researchers and activists then further define specifics within that broad definition. The motif of a *continuum* recurs within the literature. Use of a *continuum* acknowledges similarities in people's experiences wherever they are on the continuum and recognizes that people move along that continuum through the course of their lives (Brown and Ziefert 1990; Daly 1996; The Golden Report 1999 cited in Layton 2000; Layton 2000; Sistering 2000).

A commonly cited scheme describes points along a homelessness continuum by virtue of where people seek refuge or escape. People in the visible homeless category are on the streets or staying in homeless shelters or, in some definitions, battered women's shelters. People in the invisible or hidden category turn to informal methods, such as finding temporary accommodation with friends, family or acquaintances. Some researchers stop with these two points, while others add a third: the concept of be-

ing *at risk* of becoming homeless due to various pressures like higher cost of rent than a person can afford (The Golden Report 1999 cited in Layton 2000).

The second popular scale defines three points according to causality or duration, namely chronic, episodic, and situational homelessness and may or may not include a fourth category, *at risk*. Women experiencing domestic violence are generally placed in the *at risk* category and then the periodic category each time they leave their home to escape the violence (Daly 1996).

A third scale uses a binary scheme of absolute homelessness vs. relative homelessness. Absolute homelessness (AH) refers to those individuals living in the street with no physical shelter of their own, including those who spend their nights in emergency shelters. Relative homelessness (RH) refers to people living in spaces that do not meet basic health and safety requirements. Researchers may or may not include an *at risk* category (Calgary Homeless Foundation 2002). Canada House and Mortgage Corporation uses the phrase “core housing need” to describe what others might call relative homelessness.

In this literature review, we use the concept of continuum, and look at what the growing body of research on women’s experience of domestic violence and homelessness says about the most relevant ways of defining the points along it.

Defining Homelessness from the Point of View of Women Experiencing Domestic Violence

While the literature examining links between these two phenomena is still sparse, three trends are notable: the use of the continuum motif, the debate over the *at risk* category and the reluctance of at least some battered women to identify as homeless.

Various continuum schemes have been elaborated specifically for women. Chronically homeless women are those who have lived without a permanent residence for at least a year; they do not often access the social service network, and so remain unconnected to help available to them. Episodically homeless women are those who rotate between street life, shelters, friend’s and/or family’s homes, and their own independent living situations. Women who are episodically homeless often have some unresolved crises in the past that have led to homelessness and continue to prevent them from being able to find a stable home environment. The third category, situational homeless, defines women who find themselves homeless because of a crisis. Often, these women have never been homeless before, although they may have stayed briefly with family and/or friends or at a motel before arriving at a shelter (Brown and Ziefert 1990).

One group, Sistering, uses a two-point scale, effectively posing a challenge to those theorists who use a third category - *at risk* - to describe women who are living in a household where they experience domestic violence. Like other researchers, Sistering uses the term visible homeless for women in homeless or battered women’s shelters. Unlike others, Sistering expands the hidden homeless category to include women staying with a man to obtain shelter, living in households in which family violence occurs, paying a great proportion of their income to rent and/or living in unsafe buildings and in overcrowded households (Sistering 2002). Their definition picks up on the United Nations’ recognition of the

importance of “secure tenure and personal safety”.

This may be the central contribution to the definitional debate offered by the research into both domestic violence and homelessness: At what point is a person’s disempowerment in their own home enough to qualify them as effectively homeless? For Miller and Du Mont (2000), women who are not safe “at home” should be considered “home-less”. They recognize that this is a controversial viewpoint but defend it on the grounds of women’s experiences:

While many theorists and housing advocates criticize or downplay the concept of hidden homelessness, arguing that to view even serious housing need as a form of homelessness is to disregard the “distress of actual homelessness”, such a disclaimer fails to recognize the extent to which abused women are forced to adopt “hostage survival strategies” as they trade bodily integrity, and sometimes their lives, to assure food and shelter for themselves and their children (199).

This argument expands the definitional ground from a narrow focus on roofs and real estate to an exploration of relationships, a particularly vulnerable area for women experiencing domestic violence, as we shall see in the Causality chapter below.

Alternatively, the central contribution of this field of study may be the revelation that many women who arguably fit into one of the contested categories of homelessness do not see themselves as homeless at all. Tomas and Dittmar (1995) note that none of the twelve women they interviewed considered themselves homeless because they were living “somewhere”, in this case, a battered women’s shelter. A participant in a study by Liebow (1993) explained: “I’m not homeless. I’m family-less”.

Zappardino and DeBare (1992) also report that the women they interviewed said they did not see themselves as “homeless” as such because they had only been “temporarily displaced” from their homes. Rather than seeing this divergence as a critique of homelessness theory, Zappardino and DeBare offer the following explanation:

> Most battered women live in a world of denial for many months or even years, believing that the abuse will go away, or that the abuser will change. Denial can become the easiest way for them to deal with the concept of being homeless, a coping mechanism that often prevents them from dealing with issues of homelessness (757).

Facing similar challenging responses from interviewees, Johnson (1999) proposes an explanation that does critique theory that privileges homelessness over other aspects of people’s lives:

> The most important finding of this study was the women’s perception that homelessness was not the defining event in their lives but, rather, it was one event in a series of events that led them to enter an emergency shelter (73).

The appeal of this explanation is that it makes the perceptions of the individuals experiencing domestic violence and homelessness central to the definitional debate rather than peripheral. Definitions, categories, boxes may be necessary from a resource or funding point of view, as researchers have maintained, but less useful in the quest to understand people’s perceptions of their own experiences and how services and programs might be developed and shaped to serve their needs.

As literature begins to draw from the experiences of Aboriginal people and people from ethnocultural and racial minority communities, the definition of homelessness may gain further nuance. In the context of strong extended families, for example, staying temporarily with family or friends might not necessarily be considered homelessness. Lady, who describes herself as an Aboriginal woman around 45 who "has been abused all her life and has the scars to prove it" says:

> I have a big family and my home is theirs this is part of our sharing and caring that everyone seems to say it sounds good but when an aboriginal family moves in the neighbourhood and they must be dope dealers etc. (The Street Speaks 1995).

Staying with family or friends due to circumstances defined as acceptable by the culture or community may be perceived as an experience of home rather than homelessness.

Chapter Two: Causality

Homelessness

Daly (1996) characterizes the dramatic rise in homelessness as "a manifestation of a loss of shared common ground or the abandonment of the notion of the public realm in a civil society" (14). For those communities in Canada with a longer history of visible homelessness, such as Aboriginal people in urban communities, or hidden homelessness, such as women experiencing domestic violence, Daly may be presenting a rather rosy picture of Canada's most recent past. However, there is wide consensus that the current scale of homelessness in Canada represents a national crisis (Layton 2000).

The literature elucidates numerous factors involved in homelessness in Canada (poverty, domestic violence, child abuse, mental illness, addictions, immigration status, racism, post-traumatic stress disorder, and so on). However, these elements, however critical they might be, are generally defined as factors involved in homelessness and not causes. Liebow (1993) writes:

> People are not homeless because they are physically disabled, mentally ill, abusers of alcohol or other drugs, or unemployed. However destructive and relevant these conditions may be, they do not explain homelessness; most physically disabled people, most mentally ill people, most alcoholics and drug addicts, and most unemployed persons do have places to live. Moreover, when mentally ill or physically disabled or alcoholic homeless persons do get a place to live, they are no longer homeless but they remain, as they were before, physically or mentally disabled, drug addicts, or whatever. Clearly, then, there is no necessary connection between these conditions and homelessness. Homeless people are homeless because they do not have a place to live (11).

Kozel (1988) notes that, while poverty, addictions and other factors can precipitate homelessness, lack of housing is the deciding factor.

There is also wide agreement in the research on what has caused the rapid shift in the numbers and demographics of people experiencing homelessness, however homelessness is defined: namely government cutbacks and restructuring. Government withdrawal from social housing and the de-indexing of social assistance and minimum wage rates are specific government changes often cited as having major impacts on homelessness (Liebow 1993; Daly 1996; Raphael and Tolman 1997; Lyon 1998; Hurtig 1999; Layton 2000; Miller and Du Mont 2000). As Man (2002) puts it:

> The hollowing out of the welfare state means that the state no longer provides a social safety net for its citizens (26).

These changes in government priorities are best understood in the context of urbanization (Daly 1996) and corporate globalization (Layton 2000; Man 2002).

Within that over-arching consensus in the research, there are many points of divergence that help to create a more nuanced picture of homelessness, its relationship to domestic violence, and the ways ahead for service delivery and policy development.

Interweaving of Social Inequities

In his comparison of homelessness in Canada, the United States and Britain, Daly (1996) offers this overview: "Race, class, gender, disability and place define one's quality of life in these new urban centres" (6). Numerous scholars have documented social, political and economic stratification in Canada, Alberta and Calgary (Dacks, Green and Trimble 1995; Calgary Status of Women Action Committee 1996; Federation of Canadian Municipalities, June 1999; Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities 2002; Man 2002; Saraswati 2002). As a consequence, the dismantling of the social safety net has profoundly different implications for different people according to complex social identities.

Lenon (2000) notes how society's view of housing as a commodity (something that can be bought, sold and possessed) as opposed to a right has had an especially detrimental effect on women and children because they are more likely to be disadvantaged in terms of resources. Immigrant and visible minority women are even more at a disadvantage; Saraswati (2000) cites three studies that conclude immigrant or visible minority women are, on average, more educated than other women yet are often less employed and, when employed, are paid less. ManyFingers (1994) reports that less than twenty-five percent of Aboriginal women living on reserves are employed, even though off-reserve more Aboriginal women than men are employed. Senior women have been greatly affected by cuts to pensions and other programs (Dacks, Green and Trimble 1995). The amount of AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped) falls substantially below the most used and credible measures of poverty in Canada (Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities 2002). This kind of stratification has significant impact on women's ability to afford the housing that is available.

Reserve policies and practices can also lead to women's homelessness. Nipshank (2001) identifies a direct link between patriarchal policies on some reserves that limit Aboriginal women's ability to gain housing and the systemic discriminations that Aboriginal women face off-reserve when they have to leave. Examples of discriminatory policy include houses being allotted to the male head of the family (Nipshank 2001), women's homes being seized when they are off-reserve at a battered women's shelter (Goodwin 2002) and the community rejecting a family or individual (ManyFingers 1994). Goodwin notes that some of these practices may have been established to protect reserve land from outside encroachment, but the application has the potential to deeply affect women and children from the community itself. Scholars like Patricia Monture-Angus (1999) link both domestic violence and structures that disconnect leaders from the grassroots community to the experience of colonization.

> Different urban areas have different contexts. Calgary is noted for the number of visibly homeless people who are employed but unable to pay damage deposits and ongoing rent due to the combination of a low minimum wage and high rents (Hurtig 1999). An admittedly conservative estimate found that Alberta social housing waiting lists grew between 1993 and 1998 by at least 64 percent (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, June 1999, quoted in Layton 2000).

There are many more examples of how social, political and economic stratification influences people's vulnerability to and experience of homelessness. National and international sex trade trafficking resulting in women's indentured labour in illegal brothels such as the 40 identified in Vancouver (DAARE 2001) is surely an example of homelessness. The establishment of immigrant enclaves in urban settings (Novac 1999) is likely a complex expression both of community/home-building and exclusion from the wider society that impacts people's choices and access to housing. The social isolation of women with disabilities directly impacts their vulnerability to domestic violence, their access to shelters and their experience of home and autonomy (Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities 2002). These and many other factors in homelessness have yet to be fully explored and integrated into the body of literature on homelessness and domestic violence.

Domestic Violence as a Factor in Women's Homelessness

Research makes a clear case for domestic violence as a leading factor in women's homelessness. For those who do not hold that a battered woman is already de facto homeless in her own home, the most common depiction is that leaving the home to escape violence leads to homelessness. For many women, homelessness occurs at the end of a relationship with a man and is accompanied by the loss of financial security, possessions and sometimes their children (Brown and Ziefert 1990). Rural and urban women cite family conflict and dissolution as the reason for their homelessness at a nearly identical rate; the only difference lies in the geographical factors that limit their ability to flee (Cummins, First and Toomey 1998). Lenon (2000) draws attention to the extent of male violence in the domestic sphere, including intimate partners and other men in power positions such as landlords and neighbours.

Tomas and Dittmar (1995) and Johnson (1999) modify this link by noting that some battered women see homelessness as a necessary strategy or "solution" to domestic violence. The respondents in Johnson's study (1999) considered homelessness part of the solution to major crises in their lives and part of what they went through to re-establish their households (73).

Whether the research conceptualizes homelessness as a further victimization of battered women or a more empowered strategy for change, it is worth remembering Kozel's caution (1988) that the lack of housing is the deciding factor in a person's homelessness. Domestic violence may impel women to leave the home, but social policy dictates whether there will be homes available for them in the interim or long-term. As Ontario's Joint Committee on Domestic Violence (1999) noted: "without long-term, stable, and affordable housing, women leaving abusive situations cannot be safe" (120).

Homelessness as a Factor in Domestic Violence

Perhaps because the experiences of Aboriginal women and women in relative homelessness have been less documented, it has been less common to note another way homelessness and domestic violence interact. Noting that 35% of the Aboriginal people living off reserves were in core need of housing, the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women (1993) points out that "Housing conditions have been identified as a primary factor in the high rate of violence, disease and accidental death in Aboriginal communities in Canada" (171). Inadequate housing conditions, including a high rate of overcrowding, often lead to family tension, including physical and other forms of violence.

Women, Homelessness and the Impact of Relationships

Various studies have found that women, especially women who have experienced both violent relationships and life on the streets, see safety in relation to their relationships with men. Men provide protection on the streets and in social housing (Tomas and Dittmar 1995) and perhaps a way out of homelessness (Brown and Ziefert 1990).

Researchers also identify the dangers and costs of this strategy. Sometimes the cost of male protection is a very high level of reported abuse. Tomas and Dittmar (1995) elaborate on women's experience of these relationships:

> The high expectations at the beginning of most of their relationships with men appear to slowly wear down, over time, to a basic level of tolerance. … Men were always 'found' to be safe at first, their violence frequently excused at least for some time, and were finally 'left', either because the violence started to take on life threatening forms or the possibility of a safer situation presented itself, most often in the form of another man. Sleeping anywhere, without a man for protection against other men, was considered the most dangerous option in terms of both loneliness and safety (509).

Brown and Ziefert (1990) describe this phenomenon as women retreating into the perceived safer boundaries of traditional sex roles. It is a strategy used by women in many contexts and social strata. As Gross (1998) writes "…with respect to the political economics of homelessness, women and their children are expected to provide for themselves by securing the good intentions of their husbands and fathers (or sons and other male relatives), who in turn are supposed to provide for them" (389).

The danger involved in living on the streets or in homeless shelters helps to explain why women would make such a risky bargain:

> "One woman told me how she dealt with trouble of the road," reported an observer. "You just lay down and spread your legs. It's better than getting your head split open" (Gross, 1998, 155-156).

This graphic statement illustrates the dangers of homelessness and also the trauma many women experience from multiple attacks and betrayal. "[S]exual and physical abuse may often be the subtext in stories of women's … homelessness" (Browne 1993).

Chapter Three: Implications

Battered women's shelters and homeless shelters have developed differently because of their differing mandates and histories.

> Men's shelters have a history as transient accommodation, functioning as a 'charity to losers and failures who deserve only minimal support' (Single Displaced Persons Project 1983:23). Women's refuges, on the other hand, developed more recently and are predicated on different assumptions (Daly 1996,160).

As the experiences of the increasing numbers of women made homeless due to domestic violence, social services and social housing policy makes clear, more collaboration and common cause is required.

Specialized Services

Zappardino and DeBare highlight the complexity of the issues services need to address:

> In addition to their primary need to be safe from further violence, the immediate crisis component of leaving a violent home, the double stigma of being battered and homeless, the child custody issues that inevitably arise, and the sexism within the homeless shelter systems all contribute to the unique challenges faced by homeless victims of domestic violence (756).

Identifying overlapping experiences and populations of women staying in battered women's shelters and in homeless shelters, research supports the need for specialized domestic violence services that specifically address housing needs (Goodman 1991; Browne 1993; Tomas and Dittmar 1995). Goodman (1991) also advocates extending specialized services to women who have homes but are living in poverty, based on her study that found identical rates of abuse between homeless women and poor housed women.

Correia (1997) identifies security deposits, transitional housing and public/social housing as housing issues to be addressed. Specialized domestic violence services include safety planning, risk assessment, access to protection orders and measures, client confidentiality and culturally-relevant practice. Participating agencies need to centralize victim safety, ensure a supportive community infrastructure for battered women, undo the harm violence does to women and children and enhance networking among service providers, among other things (Shepard and Pence 1999).

Browne (1993) says women who have experienced both homelessness and domestic violence have to overcome the trauma of the violence they have suffered and negotiate the systemic barriers inherent in all social service systems, such as multiple bureaucracies, unsafe housing, untrained staff and lack of practical aid. She calls for social service reform, including education of staff around issues of domestic violence and homelessness, the creation of safe environments for women and ongoing support for homeless women who have suffered abuse in the past.

The number of shelters needed in a community continues to be a source of debate. Bowker and Maurer (1987) caution against creating a proliferation of services to reproduce asylum and call instead for services that buttress individual and community networks and reinforce their capacity for self-help. On the other hand, looking at the sparseness of services available to Aboriginal women, Goodman (2002), calls for the creation of women's shelters on reserves and for recognition that Aboriginal women's rights are being violated.

The literature does not specify where these specialized services should take place. However, the few assessments of the appropriateness of homeless shelters for women are far from flattering. The homeless shelters in Zappardino and DeBare's study (1992) were not prepared for women's needs, with the lack of provisions for children and the rarity of counselling services. Considering the number of women who call battered women's shelters and are turned away, the disproportionately low rates of women using homeless shelters indicate an overall reluctance of women to used mixed-gender shelters (Daley 1996; The Golden Report 1999 cited in Layton 2000) rather than a lack of need.

Given the paucity of research in this area, it is beyond the scope of this literature review to identify where specialized domestic violence and homelessness services should be held. Given the numbers of women and children turned away from battered women's shelters in Alberta and the growing number of women staying at homeless shelters, and their likely history of abuse, suffice it to say that collaboration is needed between the two kinds of shelters to better serve women's needs.

The need for improved collaboration is urgent. Journalist Michele Landsberg argues that the 25% increase in the Canadian femicide rate in 2001 can be mostly attributed to Ontario and linked to government social housing, social assistance and battered women's shelter policies. "A woman who wants to get away from a potential murderer has nowhere to go," she writes.

Research Gaps and Social Policy

As this literature review has demonstrated, elucidating connections between domestic violence and homelessness is a relatively new field of study. Given the review's reach towards a diversity approach to women's experiences, numerous research gaps and limitations have been noted.

Given the widespread consensus on the cause of homelessness (lack of housing, changes to government social housing and social welfare policies) and the variety of homelessness definitions available, there seems little merit in conducting more research in these areas. While it has been a useful exercise to draw attention to the national crisis (Layton 2000), that work has been done.

The research gaps rest more in the areas of service delivery implications and best practices, the divergent and complex realities of women experiencing domestic violence and homelessness who have been overlooked in existing studies, and ways to develop much-need social housing. There are many creative ideas for change being put forward, including measures to protect and create affordable and accessible housing stock in urban areas and on reserves (Layton 2000). Quality and focused research could help make these recommendations a reality and ensure that strategies reflect the diverse and common needs of women experiencing homelessness and domestic violence.

The 2002 Calgary Homeless Foundation Report calls for 'state of the science' literature reviews in each of the sectors serving specific elements of the homeless population (16). We hope this literature advances this effort in the domestic violence community in Calgary.

Conclusion

In some ways, the history of homeless activism in Canada is the story of inquests in Ontario. People mobilized to compel inquests into the deaths of Drina Joubert (1986), ten people in a fire at the low-income Rupert hotel (1989) and Eugene Upper, Mirsalah-Aldin Kompani and Irwin Anderson (who froze to death in one week in Toronto in 1996). And people rallied to push for the implementation of the resulting inquest recommendations.

To this list, Gillian Hadley must be added. Gillian Hadley was murdered by her husband Ralph in June 2000 in Ontario. The inquest into her death found that housing was a central factor in her inability to get away from her abusive husband. From the Hadley Inquest (2002):

> The prevention of the reoccurrence of domestic violence generally involves keeping the accused away from the complainant. While it is unfair that the complainant should have to move in order to achieve this separation, this is often the only practical way. It is important that there be suitable safe temporary accommodation immediately available as well as long term assistance in the form of subsidized housing. The present long wait for housing is unacceptable.

February 2003 marks the one-year anniversary of the release of the Gillian Hadley inquest report and an opportunity to assess which recommendations have been implemented by the governments most implicated and those who should have paid attention.

The theme of this literature review is that it shouldn't take an inquest. The available literature demonstrates clearly and persuasively that policy and program changes are necessary, possible and urgently needed, particularly in the areas of domestic violence emergency shelter, affordable housing and social programs and assistance. With research and inquest activism combined, there is reason to hope that more action will follow.

References

Abraham, M. (2002). Speaking the unspeakable: Marital violence among South Asian immigrants in the United States. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities. (2002). Violence against women with disabilities. Edmonton: Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities.

Al-Nasr, M. (2002). The dilemma of homeless Muslim women and children in the U.S.A. Retrieved May 22, 2002 from the World Wide Web: www.crescentlife.com/articles/homelessness.htm.

Boes, M. & Worner, (1997) K. Social work with homeless women in emergency rooms: A strengths-feminist perspective. Affilia, 12 (4), 408-426.

Bowker, L.H., & Maurer, L. (1987). The medical treatment of battered wives. Women and health 12(1), 25-45.

Brown, K. & Ziefort, M. (1990). A feminist approach to working with homeless women. Affilia, 5 (1), 6-20.

Browne, A. (1993). Family violence and homelessness: The relevance of trauma histories in the lives of homeless women. American journal of orthopsychiatry, 63 (3), 370-384.

Browne, A., Saloman, A. & Bassuk, S. (1999). The impact of recent partner violence on poor women's capacity to maintain work. Violence against women, 5 (4), 393-426.

Butler, S. (1997). Homelessness among AFDC families in a rural state: It is bound to get worse. Affilia, 12 (4), 427-451.

Calgary Status of Women Action Committee. (1996). Bleeding from Alberta budget cuts. Calgary: Calgary Status of Women Action Committee.

Cooper, M., Hoffart, I., & Bartlett, D. (2002). Calgary children and youth environmental scan. Calgary: Calgary Joint Funding Review Initiative.

Cummins, L., First, R. & Toomey, B. (1998). Comparisons of rural and urban homeless women. Affilia,13 (4), 435-453.

Dacks, G., Green, J., & Trimble, L. (1995). Road kill: Women in Alberta's drive toward deficit elimination. In T. Harrison & \ G. Laxer (Eds.), The Trojan Horse: Alberta and the future of Canada (270-285). Montreal: Black Rose Books.

Daly, G. (1996). Homeless: Policies, strategies and lives on the street. New York: Routledge.

Davies, J. (2002). Building opportunities for battered women's safety and self-sufficiency. Retrieved February 18, 2003 from the World Wide Web: www.vaw.umn.edu/documents/webpracl/webpracl.htm.

Davies, L. & Srinivasan, M. (1995). Listening to the voices of battered women: What helps them escape violence. Affilia, 10, 49-69.

Davis-Netzley, S., Hurtburt, M. & Hough, R. (1996). Childhood abuse as a precursor to homelessness for homeless women with severe mental illness. Violence and Victims, 11 (2), 129-142.

Direct Action Against Refugee Exploitation. (2001). Movement across borders: Chinese women migrants in Canada. Vancouver: Direct Action Against Refugee Women.

Echlin, C. & Osthoff, B. (2000). Child protection workers and battered women's advocates working together to end violence against women and children. Journal of aggression, maltreatment and trauma, 3 (1), 207-219.

Fahlstrom Van Natta, M. (2001). I am no one's property: Ownership and abuse in intimate relationships. Off Our Backs, 31 (10), 30-30.

Felty, K. & Nichols, L. (1999). The only thing you really got… is this minute: Homeless women re-visioning the future. In S. Brodribb (Ed.) Reclaiming the Future: Women's Strategies for the 21st Century (49-72). Charlottetown: Gynergy books.

Freeman, A. (1997). Take back the night 1997. Retrieved February 18, 2003 from the World Wide Web: http://www.speakeasy.org/~anitra/writing/speeches/tbtn97.html

Gardiner, H., & Cairns, K.V. (2002). 2002 Calgary homeless study. Retrieved February 18, 2003 from the World Wide Web: http://www.calgaryhomeless.com/images/products/documents/1214/75C7A6BF-C88E-4A77-82FC-2F89A9698C8D.pdf

Gillespie, K. & Brennan, R. (2002, May 22). Homeless video: Eves pledges shelter action. The Toronto Star, Retrieved May 22, 2002 from the World Wide Web: www.thestar.com.

Golden, S. (1991). Lady versus low creature: Old roots of current attitudes toward homeless women. FRONTIERS: A journal of women studies, 11 (2-3), 1-7.

Golden, S. (1992). The women outside: Myths and meanings of homelessness. Berkeley: University of California.

Goodman, L. (1991). The prevalence of abuse among homeless and housed mothers: A comparison study. American journal of orthopsychiatry, 61 (4), 489-501.

Gordon, J. (1996). Community services for abused women: A review of perceived usefulness and efficacy. Journal of family violence 11 (4), 315-328.

Gross, E. (1997). What is feminist about homelessness? Affilia, 12 (4), 389-390.

Gross, E. (1998). Deconstructing the liberal consensus on what is feminist. Affilia, 13 (2), 143-146.

Gross, E. (1998). Reconstructing the liberal consensus on what is feminist. Affilia, 13 (4), 389-392.

Gully, K., Keller, S. & Ainsworth, A. (2001). Exposure of homeless children to family violence: An adverse effect beyond alternative explanations. Journal of emotional abuse, 2 (4), 5-19.

Hagen, J. (1999). Time limits under temporary assistance to needy families: A look at the welfare cliff. Affilia, 14 (3), 294-314.

Hanson, C. (2002, July 19). Low-income families fall into gap. Calgary Herald, A1, A12.

Harman, L. (1989). When a hostel becomes a home: Experiences of women. Toronto: Garamond Press.

Heller, C. (1997). Until we are strong together: Women writers in the Tenderloin. New York: Teachers' College Press.

Herman, D., Sussen, E., Struening, E. & Link, B. (1997). Adverse experiences: Are they risk factors for adult homelessness? American journal of public health, 87 (2), 249-255.

Hope, M. (2002, July 20). NIMBYism is still alive and well: Multi-family housing is not always welcome. Calgary Herald, HS6.

Hurtig, M. (1999). Pay the rent or feed the kids: The tragedy and disgrace of poverty in Canada. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

Jimencz, M. (1999). A feminist analysis of welfare reform: The Personal Responsibility Act of 1996. Affilia, 14 (3), 278-293.

Jiwani, Y. (2000). The 1999 General Social Survey on spousal violence: An analysis. Vancouver: The Freda Institute.

Jones-DeWeever, A. (2002). Marriage promotion and low-income communities: An examination of real needs and real solutions. Retrieved May 22, 2002 from the World Wide Web: www.iwpr.org/pdf/d450.pdf.

Johnson, A. (1999). Working and nonworking women: Onset of homelessness within the context of their lives. Affilia, 14 (1), 42-47.

Kozel, J. (1988). Rachel and her children: Homeless families in America. New York: Crown Publishers.

Krishnan, S. & Hilbert, J. (1998). In search of sanctuary: Addressing issues of domestic violence and homelessness at shelters. Women's health issues, 8 (5), 310-316.

Landsberg, M. (2003). Assaults on women continue while Tories do nothing. Retrieved February 22, 2003 from the World Wide Web: www.thestar.com.

Layton, J. (2000). Homelessness: The making and unmaking of a crisis. Toronto: Penguin.

Lee, S., Sills, M. & Gi-Taik Oh. (2002). Disabilities among children and mothers in low-income families. Retrieved May 22, 2002 from the World Wide Web: www.iwpr.org/pdf/d449.pdf.

Lerner, V. (1997). War on women: A viewpoint on domestic violence. off our backs, 27 (4) 14-14.

Lenen, S. (2000). Living on the edge: Women, poverty and homelessness in Canada. Canadian woman studies, 20 (3), 123-126.

Liebow, E. (1993). Tell them who I am: The lives of homeless women. New York: The Free Press.

Lindsey, E.(1996). Mothers' perceptions of factors influencing the restablization of homeless families. Families in society, 77, 203-215.

Lloyd, S. & Taluc, N.(2000) The effects of male violence on female employment. Violence against women, 5 (4), 370-392.

Lyon, E. (1998). Poverty, welfare and battered women: What does the research tell us? Retrieved February 18, 2003 from the World Wide Web: http://www.vaw.umn.edu/documents/vawnet/welfare/welfare.html.

Macleod, M. (2002). Alberta near top of list for affordable housing. Business edge, 2 (25), 12-13.

Malos, E. & Hague, G. (1997). Women, housing, homelessness and domestic violence. Women studies international forum, 20, 397-409.

Man, G. (2002). Globalization and the erosion of the welfare state: Effects on Chinese immigrant women. Canadian woman studies 21/22 (4/1), 26-32.

Marianne, K. (1998). Income packaging as a survival strategy for welfare mothers. Affialia, 13 (2), 211-232.

McGillivray, A., & Comaskey, B. (1999). Black eyes all of the time: Intimate violence, Aboriginal women and the justice system. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Monture-Angus, P. (1999). Journeying forward: Dreaming First Nations' independence. Halifax: Fernwood.

Miller, K. & Du Mont, J. (2000). Countless abused women: Countless and inadequately housed. Canadian woman studies, 20 (3), 115-122.

Novac, S., Brown, J & Bourbonnais, C. (1996). No room of her own: A literature review on women and homelessness. Ottawa: Canadian Mortgage and Housing.

Novac, S. (1999). Immigrant enclaves and residential segregation: Voices of racialized refugee and immigrant women. Retrieved February 18, 2003 from the World Wide Web: www.library.utoronto.ca/hnc/publish/women.pdf.

Pearce, D. (1990). Welfare is not for women: Why the war on poverty cannot conquer the feminization of poverty. In L. Gordon (Ed.). Women, the state and welfare, (265-279). Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Pence, E.L. (1999). Some thoughts on philosophy. In M.F. Shepard & E.L. Pence (Eds.). Coordinating community responses to domestic violence: Lessons from Duluth and beyond. Minnesota: Sage Publications.

Profitt, N.J. (2000). Women survivors, psychological trauma and the politics of resistance. New York: Haworth Press.

Raphael, J. & Tolman, R.(1997). Trapped by poverty, trapped by abuse: New evidence documenting the relationship between domestic violence and welfare.Retrieved May 22, 2002, from the World Wide Web: www.ssw.umich.edu/trapped.

Rebick, J. (1999). Budget reflects values in a vacuum. HERIZONS, 13 (1), 44.

Rocha, C., Johnson, A., McChesney, K. & Butterfield, W. (1996). Predictors of permanent housing for sheltered homeless families. Families in society, 77, 50-57.

Saraswati, J. (2000). Poverty and visible minority women in Canada. Canadian woman studies 20 (3), 49-53.

Seith, C. (2001). Security matters: Domestic violence and public social services. Violence against women, 7 (7), 799-820.

Shepherd, J. (2001). Where do you go when it's 40 below? Domestic violence among rural Alaska Native women. Affiflia, 16 (4), 488-510.

Stephens, N., McDonald, R. & Jouriles, E. (2000). Helping Children who reside at shelters for battered women: Lessons learned. Journal of aggression, maltreatment and trauma 3 (1) 147-160.

Sutherland, C., Sullivan, C. & Bybee, D. (2001). Effects of intimate partner violence versus poverty on women's health. Violence against women, 7 (10), 1122-1143.

The street speaks: A survey of, by and for low income and homeless Calgarians on homelessness in Calgary. Retreived February 18, 2003 from the World Wide Web: www.gov.calgary.ab.ca/81/housing/sspeaks.

Tomas, A. & Dittmar, H. (1995). The experiences of homeless women: An exploration of housing histories and the meaning of home. Housing studies, 10 (4), 493-515.

Tutty, L., Weaver, G. & Rothery, M. (1999). Residents' views of the efficacy of shelter services for assaulted women. Violence against women, 5 (8), 898-925.

Tyler, K., Hoyt, D. & Whitbeck, L. (2000). The effects of early sexual abuse on later victimization among female homeless and runaway adolescents. Journal of interpersonal violence, 15 (3), 235-250.

Ursel, J. (1997). Considering the impact of the battered women's movement on the state: The example of Manitoba. In C. Andrew & S. Rodgers (Eds.), Women and the Canadian state. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 155-170.

Walker, G. (1990). Family violence and the women's movement: The conceptual politics of struggle. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Watson, S. & Austenberry, H. (1986). Housing and homelessness: A feminist perspective. New York: Routledge.

Wenzel, S., Leake, B. & Gelberg, L. (2001). Risk factors for major violence among homeless women. Journal of interpersonal violence, 16 (8), 739-752.

Ziemba, S. (2001). Therapy with families in poverty: Application of feminist family therapy principles. Journal of feminist family therapy, 12 (4), 205-237.

Zappardino, P.H., & DeBare, D. (1992). In search of safety: Double jeopardy for battered women. The New England journal of public policy. 8 (1), 753-760.