

# SHELTER VOICES

## A day in the life of Canada's shelters for abused women and their children.

This first pan Canadian annual survey gives us insight into a typical day in the life of women's shelters and transition houses across the country, bringing us the voices of the women on the front-lines. Shelter workers from 242 shelters responded to our call. Shelters in all provinces and territories (except for Nunavut) participated in the survey. Shelter Voices aims to shine light on the issue of violence against women and to break barriers.

Shelters contribute more than a safe place to stay. They provide vital services, resources and system navigation that enables women who have experienced abuse, and their children to take steps to regain a self-determined and independent life. They are a focal point connecting women to services which are far too often insufficient.

Women's shelters and transition house workers are leaders in bringing about change and advocating for an end to violence against women. Listening to their voices and the voices of the men they accompany is key to deliver solutions to end violence against women.



**ON ONE DAY, 242  
SHELTERS IN  
CANADA HELPED  
4,178 WOMEN AND  
2,490 CHILDREN**

ALTHOUGH NOT ALL SHELTERS RECORD THIS INFORMATION, OF THE WOMEN HELPED, **116** WERE KNOWN TO BE PREGNANT; **184** WERE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN THREATENED BY A GUN.



# On this same day, 286 women and 205 children could not be accommodated

## IF YOU WERE ABLE TO CHANGE ONE THING

Shelters were asked if they were able to change one thing that would make things better for abused women and their children what would it be?

- Affordable and safe housing
- Comprehensive and promptly responsive legal system
- Income and social support
- Interconnected and continuous services

“Greater financial support from social services so women are not choosing between a life with violence or a life in poverty.”

“Immediate court decisions that would allow moms to start rebuilding their lives.”

“Recent immigration changes (Bill C-38), disadvantages immigrant women who are victims of abuse — they are doubly victimized.”

“Need for greater education within schools as violence starts earlier and earlier.”

“Coming from a life of abuse, I have never been treated with such kindness and respect.”

“It’s so hard to watch how the system wears women down, especially when they have so many barriers, that they want to give up. That’s why we care so much because every woman should feel like she has a chance to make it.”

### MAJOR CHALLENGES

Shelters identified the following as their three major challenges:

1. 70% Lack of government funding
2. 62% Gaps in services & supports for marginalized women
3. 62% Lack of supports when women leave shelters



**Shelter Voices** is produced by the Canadian Network of Women’s Shelters and Transition Houses, a coalition of 12 provincial and territorial shelter networks representing over 350 shelters across Canada. The network works as a unified voice to collaborate, educate, and innovate for systemic change that ends violence against women, making Canada a model for safety in the world. The CNWSTH thanks the Canadian Women’s Foundation and its partners as well as the National Union of Public and General Employees for their contributions to Shelter Voices.

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