



In the summer of 2017, 22 women between the ages of 19 and 60 were interviewed about their transition from second stage housing to a market housing, or community, environment. These stories were then presented to stakeholders, decision-makers and the women themselves, for interpretation and analysis.



1. WHO SHARED STORIES



5 WOMEN

2ND STAGE HOUSING FOR WOMEN LEAVING VIOLENT RELATIONSHIPS



5 WOMEN

2ND STAGE HOUSING FOR CRIMINALIZED WOMEN (AND NEHILEY)



5 WOMEN

RESIDENTIAL RECOVERY HOUSE FOR WOMEN WITH ADDICTIONS



7 WOMEN

2ND STAGE HOUSING FOR YOUNG MOTHERS AND WOMEN ON IA

73% finished 2nd stage housing program

48% left abusive relationships

24% had children over 18 years

61% had children under 18 years

24% had child protection involvement

50% were employed

48% had credit problems

24% had mental health concerns

42% had lived with addictions

“The women’s experiences do not follow a prescribed set of steps and some of the links between the system components are not clear to them. There does not seem to be a highly predictable flow of women through supportive housing to the community. The system revealed by these stories is disjointed... The system is, indeed, hard to get to know.”

“The system is hard to get to know” Home for Good Research Report, Diane Crocker

2. THE STORY THEMES

ENCOUNTERS WITH LANDLORDS WHICH LEFT WOMEN FEELING JUDGED, STEREOTYPED AND DEMEANED



WOMEN'S STRUGGLES WITH THEIR IDENTITY AND SHAME



WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF MOTHERHOOD IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES



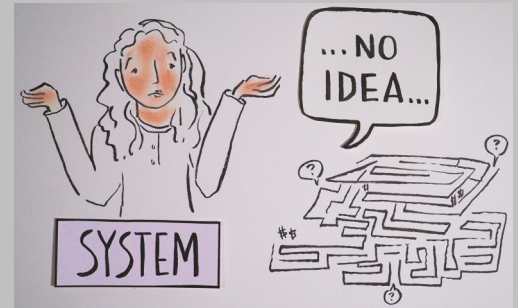
FEELING SAFE IN THEIR HOME AND NEIGHBORHOOD



FINANCIAL BARRIERS OF CRIPPLING DEBT AND RENTAL RATES



NOT KNOWING HOW TO NAVIGATE SYSTEMS AND PROBLEMS ACCESSING INFORMATION



3. IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"I was so tempted to call my ex abuser back 3 or 4 times like all my stuff is in storage, come pick me up – because **that is the easy way out, right?**"

"Every time you are rejected from seeing an apartment... it is like a feeling of being rejected for who I am... They think I am not going to pay my bills. They think my kids will be too noisy. They think I am going to be irresponsible. They think all these bad things about me. They don't trust me... All of that **rejection, rejection, rejection, rejection.**"

"We are kind of left wandering around mindlessly **hoping** that everything is going to fall into place"

"...people discriminate against addiction, **especially women**, ugh. Then they would find out I had kids and I could almost feel I was being shunned"

"I am not ready. **I am not prepared...** when you are in school... You don't learn about credit. You don't learn about how to do your taxes. You don't learn about interest on credit cards, or overdue bills, or anything like that."

"Now I have to look for a place and you are only allowed \$535 for a one bedroom, and the ones I could afford were like **walking into a trap again.**"

"When you go into income assistance or into housing like this, it would be really fantastic if somebody could sit down with us and be like **'so what do you need?'** ... If we don't know what those options are, we are not going to ask for them"

"I went to one place and the [landlord] who was showing me the apartment and she kept asking me 'so there is no man? **You don't have a man?**' I kept saying 'no' and she was saying 'well what would you do if you need to fix this? What would you do if you need to fix that?'"

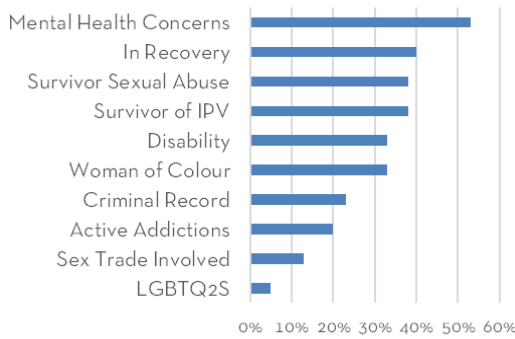
"I didn't know that there were subsidies and stuff I could apply for. Nobody gave me that information so **I didn't know** that there was any sort of help involved at all that I could access."

4. HOME FOR GOOD SURVEY

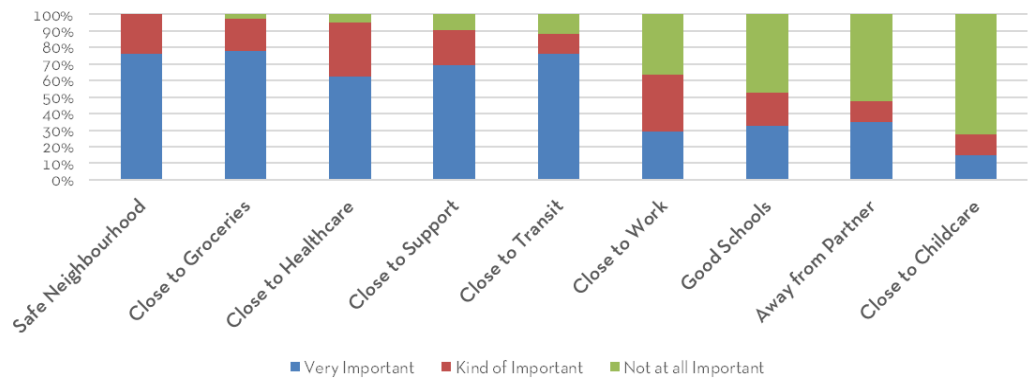


In the spring of 2018, Home for Good conducted an online survey of women in transitional housing programs across nova scotia. 42 women participated in the survey.

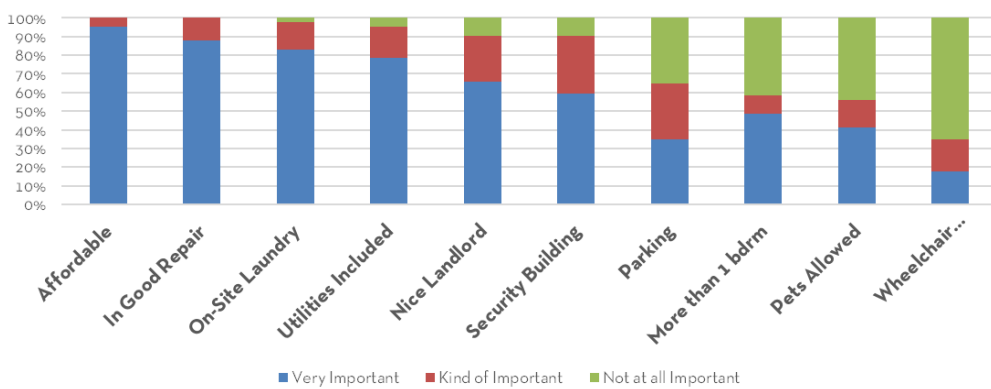
PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS



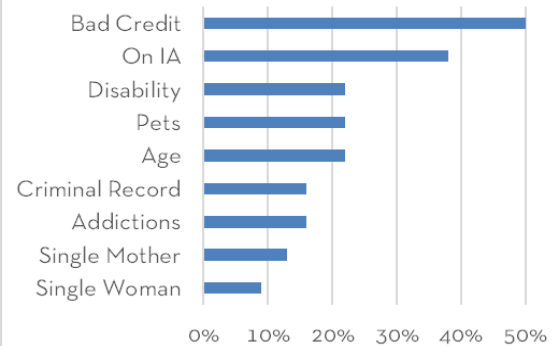
IMPORTANCE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD FEATURES



IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING FEATURES



TYPES OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION



5. AGENCY INTERVIEWS AND FILE REVIEW

Telephone Interviews were conducted with 6 rural NS and one HRM agencies who provide housing services to women, regarding the housing work they do with women, the housing options available in their communities, and the barriers that women face when looking for housing. Interviews were also conducted with Home for Good Staff.

On average, the agencies served 60 women per year

Bed numbers ranged from 9 to 32

Agencies' defined affordability between \$500-\$700 a month

5 of the 7 agencies worked with victims of human trafficking

5 of the 7 agencies interviewed provide housing or shelter for women and their children who are escaping abusive or violent situations

2 of the 7 agencies have policies related to transgender persons and their children.

3 of the 7 agencies have a wait list

Agencies identified the following barriers for their clients:

- ◆ There is lack of low income/affordable housing in safe neighbourhoods across the province
- ◆ Women end up living in neighbourhoods that may not be safe for them or their children
- ◆ Women with children have to find larger places; those with more than 1 child faced the scarcity of 3 bedroom apartments
- ◆ Many women have debt and trouble getting power and utilities in their name
- ◆ Women are often forced to leave their communities just to find a place to live

40 files were reviewed, 10 from each of the co-applicant agencies

- ◆ Just over half were on income assistance and a large majority were not working
- ◆ About half had some criminal justice system involvement at some point in their lives
- ◆ Most had children
- ◆ About half had a note related to addictions or substance use and more than three-quarters had mental health issues noted in their file
- ◆ Average age was 38 and they ranged from 20 to 66.
- ◆ At least half had experienced domestic violence

6. CENTERING WOMEN'S VOICES



“A COMMON THREAD OF REVISION NEEDED THROUGH ALL OF THE POLICES IS THE NOTICEABLE ABSENCE OF A GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS WHICH HIGHLIGHTS THE UNIQUE OPPRESSIVE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WOMEN FACE AND INHERENT GENDER BASED SYSTEMIC INEQUITIES.”

(BURNETT ET AL 2015:13)

GBA+ “IS A PROCESS FOR EXAMINING HOW VARIOUS INTERSECTING IDENTITY FACTORS IMPACT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES. IT INVOLVES EXAMINING DISAGGREGATED DATA AND RESEARCH, AND CONSIDERING SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL CONDITIONS AND NORMS.”

- STATUS OF WOMEN CANADA

GBA+
GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS PLUS



“THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS AND WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO INTEGRATING GBA+ THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM CYCLE OF THE NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY.”

- PLACE TO CALL HOME: CANADA'S NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

7. COLLABORATION WITH PURPOSE

The Home for Good collaboration includes four separate organizations (Alice House, Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland NS, The Marguerite Centre and YWCA Halifax) as equal co-applicants on a single grant. Each agency has separate funding agreements and are sharing resources and personnel towards the objectives of the project. Each co-applicant agency specializes in working with unique populations of women, and brings different strengths and relationships to the project's common vision of reducing systemic barriers to women's housing. Because no framework existed for such collaboration, the executive directors were required to map out and negotiate multiple variables, including resource allocation, staffing, priority setting, conflict resolution, public messaging, and four different sets of paperwork and protocols. And where the co-applicants were unable to predict forks and bumps in the road, they have relied on their trust and commitment to one another and the women they serve to forge ahead and ensure the integrity of the collaboration is maintained.



This project has been funded through Status of Women Canada's Women's Program



**Status of Women
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**Condition féminine
Canada**