

# Social Isolation and Loneliness Among Individuals with Lived Homelessness Experience: A Review of the Literature

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# Land Acknowledgement

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We wish to acknowledge the sacred land on which MAP and Unity Health Toronto operate. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years.

This land is the territory of the Huron-Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home of many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory. We are also mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations

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# TEAM AND FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions

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# OUTLINE

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- 1. Background**
- 2. Objective**
- 3. Methods**
- 4. Preliminary Results**
- 5. Implications & Next Steps**
- 6. Discussion Questions**



# BACKGROUND

- Social isolation and loneliness is a growing concern in Canada.
  - 13% of Canadians reported always feeling or often feeling lonely.
- COVID-19 social restrictions further exacerbated the problem of loneliness and social isolation.
- Transitioning to housing does not always eliminate experiences of social isolation and loneliness.
- Loneliness and social isolation have detrimental impacts on wellbeing and can result in death.

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# WHAT IS SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS?

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Loneliness is a subjective experience of feeling alone.

Social isolation is a response to the absence of close and meaningful relationships with others.

Social isolation and loneliness can be confused with social exclusion, lack of social capital, or lack of social networks

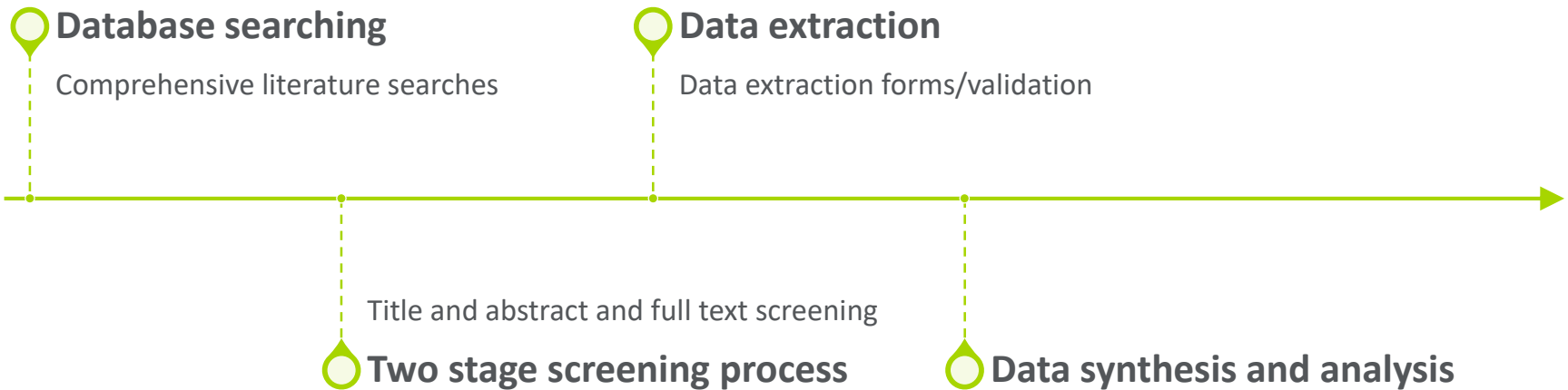
# OBJECTIVE

- To explore published knowledge on loneliness and social isolation among individuals experiencing or with lived experienced of homelessness.
  - Existing qualitative and quantitative evidence on this issue.

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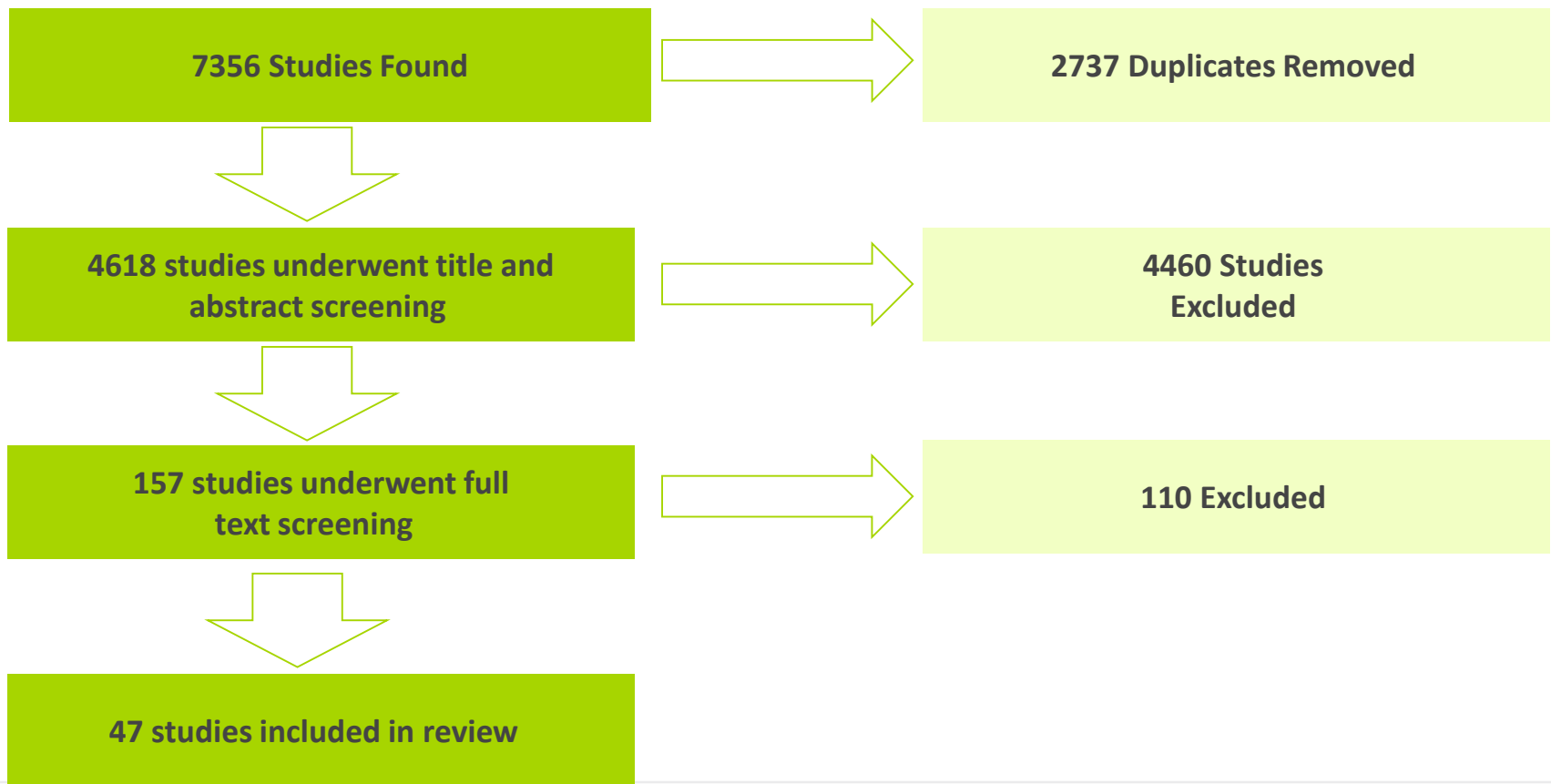
# METHODS

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# PRISMA Diagram



# Preliminary Results



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# PRELIMINARY RESULTS

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- Majority of studies were observational in nature
- COVID-19 influenced experiences of social isolation and loneliness
- Lack of stable source of support is a contributor to social isolation – **Quality of the relationships rather than the number of people**
- Among people in supportive or transitional housing settings, loneliness was described as both sought after and as a limitation
- Built environment and access to technology were factors influencing experiences of social isolation and loneliness
- Length of time experiencing homelessness and social identity were associated with varying levels of social isolation and loneliness (age, illness, mental health)
- Transitioning into housing programs can contribute to social isolation and loneliness

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# GAPS IN CURRENT LITERATURE

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Loneliness and social isolation remain not well defined and conceptualized

Limited studies that examine loneliness and social isolation among individuals experiencing or with lived experiences of homelessness

Variability in measures and definition make it difficult to clearly estimate the prevalence of loneliness and social isolation

Lack of studies that analyze how loneliness and social isolation impact differently diverse groups of populations

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# IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

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- Inform policies, interventions and practices to reduce social isolation and loneliness among individuals with lived homelessness experience living in supportive or social housing, and their effectiveness
- Intervention-based studies on social isolation and loneliness

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# Discussion Questions

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- How do social isolation and loneliness appear in the work that you are doing?
- What are your considerations for how these experiences can be taken up in future work surrounding housing and homelessness programs and policies?
- What are some interventions that you know of that address social isolation and loneliness among people with lived/living experience of homelessness?

# Thank you!