

SAFE AT HOME: A GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION INTERVENTION FOR WOMEN AND FAMILIES

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Safe at Home Hamilton Steering Committee

DATA COLLECTION IN HAMILTON

- Methods



Semi-structured interviews with 10 service providers

Occurred over Zoom
Transcribed using Zoom software
Approximately 1 hour in length



Focus group with 17 service providers & consultants

- Topics presented

- Need for program
- Attention to Safe at Home pillar development (including sector participation & program content)

KEY MESSAGES

- There are numerous housing related impacts for women living with domestic abuse
- Gender transformative programs centre the needs of women and non-binary gendered individuals
- Safe at Home-Hamilton expands housing options for women leaving intimate partner violence and provides them with their guaranteed right to housing

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE & SAFETY

- For physical and psychological safety, women leaving violence require extra security measures for the home and neighborhood
- Providers shared the importance for programs to acknowledge survivor's feelings of safety



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE & NEED FOR MULTIPLE SERVICES

- Women leaving violence often need immediate access to myriad services
- Providers described the need for programs to be interdisciplinary, trauma and violence informed, culturally competent, and women-centered



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AND HOUSING PRECARITY

- Intimate partner violence is the main contributor to homelessness for women
- “Approximately **699** women and **236** accompanying children are turned away from domestic violence shelters across Canada each day”
- Providers shared that shelters in Hamilton are overwhelmed and cannot meet the current demand & that service users cannot afford market rent



INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE & ECONOMIC PRECARITY

- Intimate partner violence often includes economic abuse
 - Unable to control own money
 - Poor credit rating
- Controlling behaviours can lead to loss of employment or wages
- Providers shared a need for comprehensive economic security programming for survivors





INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE & CHILDREN

- Numerous negative impacts of intimate partner violence on children have been documented
- Yet this group is often underserved
- Providers spoke to the benefits of a housing program that allows survivors to stay in their communities, for their children



SAFE AT HOME- HAMILTON



SAFE AT HOME HAMILTON

*Adapted from Australian Safe at Home models

The perpetrator is the one to leave the shared home and the survivor is given the option to stay in their shared home or a home of their choice.

The Safe at Home response addresses safety issues experienced by the victim through a number of initiatives, tools, and technology.

The Safe at Home response provides supports for the survivor with integrated health, social, police, and legal services.

Safe at Home re
one option amo

<2019: Problem identification

2022-23: Steering committee established and co-creation of program

2020: Funding acquired & team developed, agenda setting

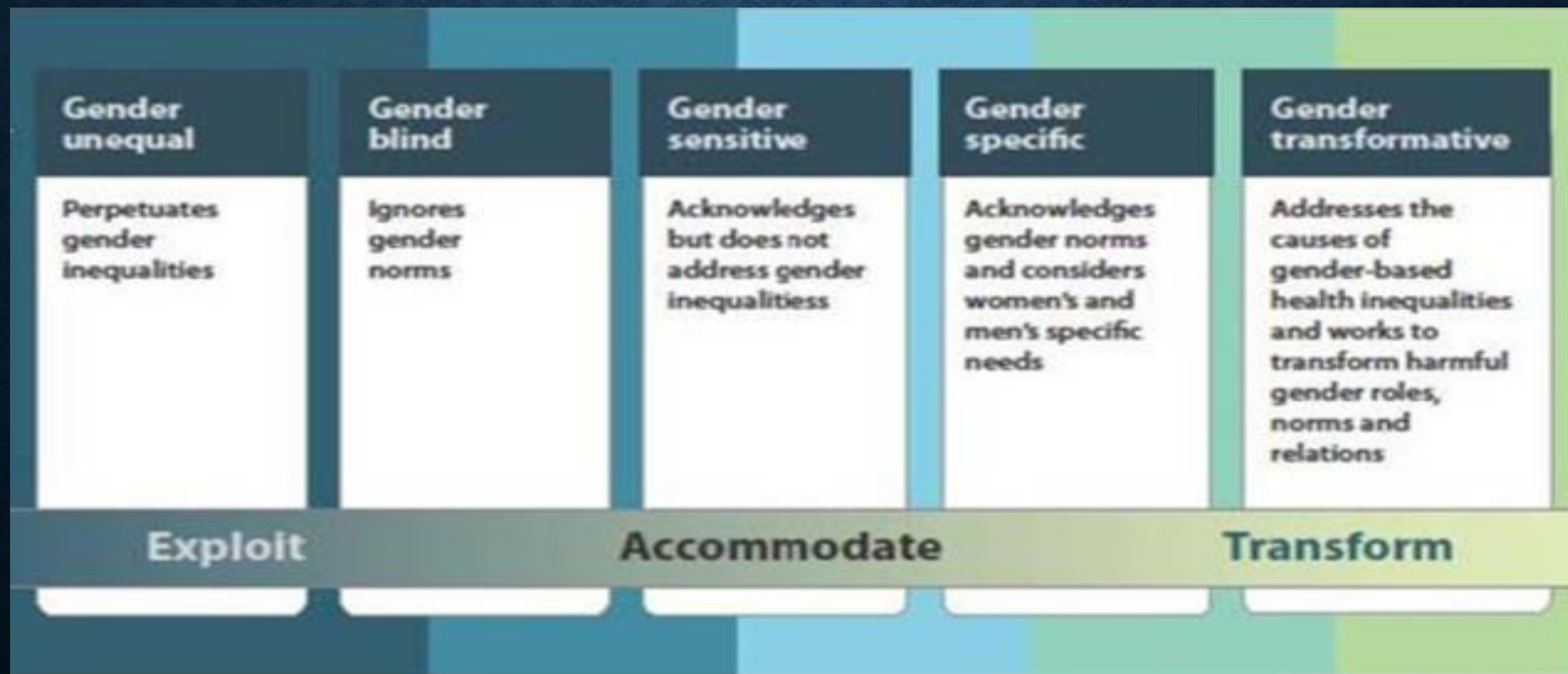
2024 (April): Launch!!!

TIME

Patriarchy's influence on social programs

Gender Blind

Gender Aware



SINGLE ROOM ACCOMODATION INTERVENTION



↑
Does not consider
women's unique
housing needs

- × Services go beyond providing housing (wrap around)
- × Women-only spaces with opportunities to stay with children
- × Trauma and violence informed
- × Consider safety
- × Consider location (near services, schools etc)
- × No provider surveillance

CURRENT STATE OF HOUSING SERVICES & RESEARCH

- Gender-blind approaches to policies and programs are harmful to women, yet housing services continue to fall under gender-blind approach
- Research that can inform housing interventions also take a gender-blind approach.
- Over the last 5 years, only ~3% (11/400) of publications used a gender-specific or transformative approach





SAFE AT HOME-HAMILTON



EG. ECONOMIC SECURITY PILLAR

Gender Blind

Gender Aware

|---Financial counseling/Tax prep---|

|---Education about economic abuse
and its consequences--|

|---Peer groups--|

|---Portable housing benefit--|

|---Matched saving program--|

|---Universal Basic Income--|

|---Paid DV leave--|

|---Banking supports for victims
experiencing economic abuse--|

|---Family Court Supports--|

|---Child care to attend services--|

|---Advocacy for relevant services--|

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MOVING FORWARD: WHAT ARE WE DOING IN HAMILTON

Housing programs, policies & services must move towards being gender-transformative



Promote intentionality: conduct (iterative) gender-based analyses as we redesign services & resources



Gender-transformative housing programs are possible, more effective, and safe for women

SUMMARY

Need to move away from gender blind and gender sensitive services, to establish services that are gender transformative.

We have shared our vision and approach here around SAH-H but there are other experts who have also adopted this focus.

What examples or stories of using or creating gender transformative services do you have to share???