

# THIS IS NOT HOME



## FAST FACTS

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# About Gender-Focused, Low Barrier Drop-In Programs:

## What are Gender-Focused, Low-Barrier Drop-In Programs?

Drop-in programs support with access to basic needs (including meals, laundry and a place to rest), provide a space for meaningful engagement and socialization, and to connect participants to available supports and services (including housing, healthcare, income and social services).

Gender-focused programs serve women (cis and trans) and gender-diverse individuals and operate to provide an alternative to co-ed drop-in spaces. Low barrier drop-in programs operate in ways that minimize and reduce barriers to access, and play a critical role in supporting multiply-marginalized individuals who face systemic and organizational barriers when attempting to access other services and supports.

Over six months (March 2020 - August 2020), five research sites documented serving over 104,639 meals and facilitating access to harm reduction supplies over 11,080 times! Four sites provided data on **THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITS WHICH WAS 32,600**. While some sites do not collect data on the number of visitors at the drop-in, two sites recorded **21,251 UNIQUE VISITORS** over six months.

Drop-in spaces play an important role in combating isolation and promoting social inclusion and community, with **HALF OF OUR PARTICIPANTS** reporting that what they liked most about the drop-in space were: seeing friends (**49%**), engaging in social activity (**48%**) and participating in a women-centred space (**51%**).

# ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS AT GENDER-FOCUSED LOW BARRIER DROP-IN PROGRAMS:

Through our survey, we were able to learn more about the identities and experiences of 225 women and gender-diverse people accessing low-barrier drop-in sites:

## AGE

**40%** of all participants were over the age of 50.

### SURVEY PARTICIPANTS BY AGE GROUP (N=214)\*



\*Based on a sample of 214 participants who answered questions related to age.

## RACIAL IDENTITY

**Nearly 41%** of participants identified as Indigenous.

\*Survey participants were permitted to select more than one racial identity.

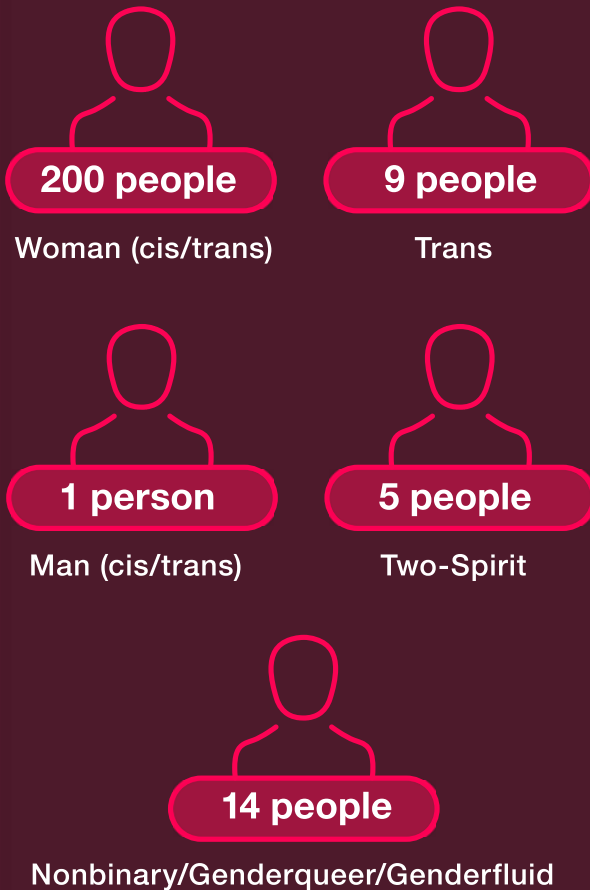
### SURVEY PARTICIPANTS BY RACIAL IDENTITY (N=218)\*

Racial Identity	#	%
Indigenous	89	41%
White	85	39%
Racialized	44	20%
Total sample	218	100%

# GENDER IDENTITY

**1 in 10** (10%) drop-in participants identify as trans or gender-diverse which includes trans women, non-binary or genderqueer, and trans-masculine individuals.

## GENDER IDENTITY OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS (N=225)\*



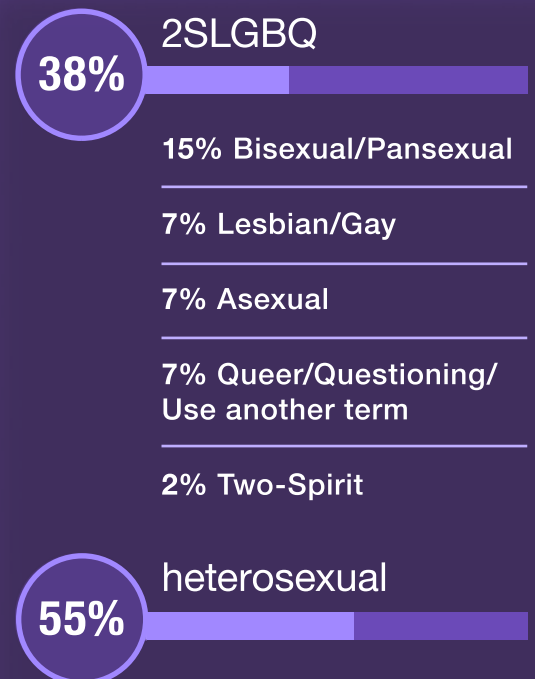
\*Survey participants were permitted to select more than one gender identity.

# SEXUAL IDENTITY

**Over one-third** (38%) of participants are 2SLGBQ (Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer)



## SEXUAL IDENTITY OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS (N=225)\*

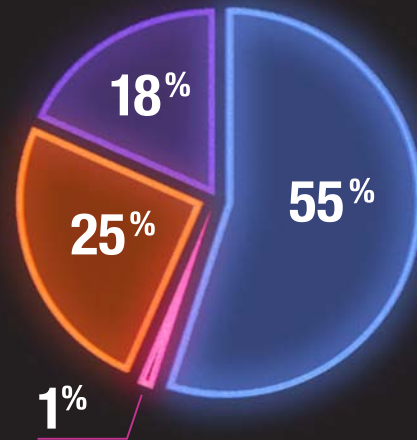


\*Survey participants were permitted to select more than one sexual identity. Not all participants chose to answer this question.

**DISABILITY:** Almost 99% of participants live with at least one disability. Psychiatric and mental health challenges were most common impacting 48% of all respondents, 42% of all survey respondents indicated they were impacted by substance use/addictions, with 38% indicating chronic medical health issues and major illness.

### NUMBER OF DISABILITIES NOTED (N=225)

- Three or more disabilities (124 participants)
- Two disabilities (41 participants)
- One disability (57 participants)
- No disability (3 participants)



### Experiences of Drop-In Program Participants:

- More than three-quarters (76%) of participants are survivors of trauma and abuse.
- Participants who identified as having three or more disabilities, were also far more likely to be survivors of trauma or abuse (85%).
- 41% of participants reported having had encounters with the criminal justice system.
- Just under half of participants (42%) have experience with substance use or addictions.
- Drop-in participants who are trans or gender-diverse (67%) actively use substances at a significantly higher rate than cisgender participants (35%).
- More than one-quarter (28%) of drop-in program participants reported involvement in the child welfare system as children.

### Housing and Homelessness Experiences:

- Drop-in programs play an important role supporting women and gender-diverse people, who are both housed and experiencing homelessness.
- When we asked about experiences of homelessness, 84% of participants reported having experienced homelessness at some point during their life.
- When asked about current housing status, 53% of survey respondents reported being housed, while 47% did not currently have a place to call home.
- Of the participants who were currently experiencing homelessness, over 50% of participants report being homeless for six or more months over the past year.

# EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS

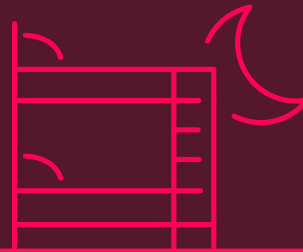
Our survey asked participants (N=225) to identify the spaces and places they stay at during experiences of homelessness - participants could select multiple options.

## SOME OF THE MOST COMMON PLACES WERE:



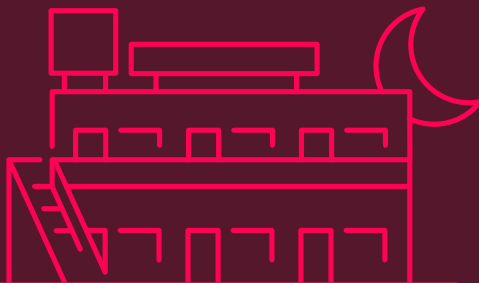
**64% of participants**

stayed at someone else's place



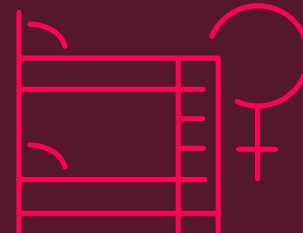
**58% of participants**

stayed at shelters or drop-ins  
in the homeless service system



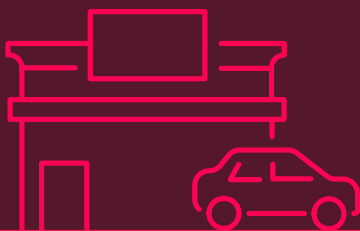
**48% of participants**

stayed at a hotel or motel



**41% of participants**

stayed at shelters in the Violence  
Against Women system



**33% of participants**

stayed in a public place or place  
not meant for living (vehicle, coffee  
shop, abandoned building)



**29% of participants**

stayed outside in a tent,  
encampment or self-built shelter

## When asked about barriers to housing, we found:

➡ 24% of participants reported discrimination (on the basis of race, age, abilities and income) as a barrier to housing.

➡ 21% of participants reported not having the services and supports they need to find and maintain a place.

➡ 56% of participants reported not being able to afford a safe place to live.

➡ 29% of participants reported violence and abuse as a barrier to housing.

## When we asked participants about the reasons why they have left (or been forced out) of housing in the past:

We learned that the end of a relationship or break-up was the most common (43%) reason that causes women and gender-diverse people to lose their housing, followed by eviction (40%), and problems with other people who they were living with (32%).

## Housing Experiences:

We were able to better understand some of the experiences women and gender-diverse people have had in current housing or past housing arrangements.

➡ 20% of participants reported more than three instances of violence, control, discrimination and/or harassment in their home from either landlords/property managers or other people they were living with.

➡ Nearly one third (31%) of all participants who were currently housed, indicated the housing they lived in felt unsafe.

## We learned about the inadequate housing conditions:

**OVER A QUARTER (26%)** of participants who were currently housed were dealing with pests in their housing (including bedbugs, mice, rats and cockroaches), **25%** were living somewhere that repairs were left incomplete and **20%** were living somewhere too small for the number of people living there.



Layout and Design by Sarah Anne Charlebois, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (Hub Solutions). Hub Solutions is a social enterprise embedded within the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH). Income generated from Hub Solutions fee-for service work is reinvested into the COH to support research, innovation, policy recommendations and knowledge mobilization. Learn more: [www.hubsolutions.ca](http://www.hubsolutions.ca)