

## **Systemic Factor: Housing Insecurity and Socio-Economic Marginalization**

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**Themes:** Housing/Access to Housing; Social Determinants of Health; Poverty; Colonialism; Incarceration; Criminal Justice System; Release/Aftercare Planning

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## Housing Insecurity started with Land Dispossession

“The impact of colonization on Indigenous Peoples’ relationship with the environment began with dispossession of and displacement from traditional lands. Essentially, within the span of a few generations, entire nations of Indigenous Peoples were rendered homeless – regulated or forbidden to hunt, trap or fish even for the purpose of subsistence. Countless Indigenous people and several authors contend that the intergenerational trauma experienced by Indigenous Peoples is rooted in this mass expulsion from home lands and waters (Dylan, 2019; Goldman, 2012; Greenwood & Lindsay, 2019; Li, 2010; Samson, 2016). In support of this, researchers have conversely discovered that greater stewardship of the land is linked to an increased sense of self-reliance and enhanced overall health (Alexie, 2015; Barnes & Josefowitz, 2019; Fenton, 2006; Stelkia et al., 2020).”<sup>i</sup>

“Without consulting Indigenous Peoples, the Canadian government set aside tracts of land (referred to as reserves) on which “Indian bands” could live – albeit without title or ownership. This land was often relatively small and poorly resourced (i.e., access to clean water and food sources). Many reserves and settlements are also isolated – not only from other communities and services but from employment and economic opportunities. After 200 years, some still do not have basic services like running water and most experience housing shortages and inequities in funding (Farenhorst, et al., 2017; Oliver et al., 2016; Scoffield, 2011; Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal, People, 2015). Due to these hardships, the majority of First Nations people (~60%) no longer live on reserves, even though it means giving up certain services available only to on reserve populations (Statistics Canada, 2017c). On the other hand, despite the economic hardships, many communities are thriving – cultural practices are being revitalised and Indigenous languages are increasingly taught in schools and spoken in homes (Jacob, 2012; Rorick, 2017; Sarkar & Lavoie, 2013; Toulouse, 2013).”<sup>ii</sup>

“The Métis Nation is represented through democratically elected governments – the Manitoba Metis Federation, Métis Nation Saskatchewan, Métis Nation of Alberta, Métis Nation British Columbia, and Métis Nation of Ontario (Métis National Council, 2021). Alberta is the only province with a recognized Métis land base, which includes eight settlements. After the 1885 Northwest Resistance, 6 with the demise of the fur trade and as early colonial farmers settled land in the Prairie provinces, the Métis became dispersed. Between 1900 and 1960, many Métis made their homes on road allowances, which were strips of government-owned land set aside for future roads. Without a land base and facing racial discrimination by potential employers, these Métis families lived in extreme poverty, so road allowance houses were typically poorly constructed with recycled materials (Adams et al., 2013; Campbell, 2019).”<sup>iii</sup>

“Inuit people did not experience extreme forms of colonialism until the 19th century when over-harvesting by settlers decimated sea mammals, thus hampering Inuit’s ability to remain self-sufficient. To ensure a Canadian presence in the north, during the 1950s the federal government ordered the forced relocation of more than 200 Inuit to isolated settlements in the High Arctic, where extreme cold and poor resources led to widespread starvation and death, prompting the government to relocate families to marginally more southern communities (Canadian Council on Social Determinants of Health [CCSDH], 2013). In other cases, Inuit were forced to relocate because their communities were seen as too small or remote to justify the cost of federal services. While commitments were made to provide adequate housing in these communities, most Inuit settlements continue to experience inadequate and poor quality housing (Dyke & Patterson, 2017).”<sup>iv</sup>

## Disparate Housing Trends Affecting Indigenous Peoples

### **Insufficient Reserve/Social Housing and Overcrowding**

“Geophysical environments play a critical role in determining the health of populations through access to resources and services, housing, water and waste management, safety, and transportation (CIHI, 2012; Christian et al., 2015; Richmond & Nightingale, 2021). Among Indigenous Peoples, detrimental geophysical settings are the direct result of dispossession of traditional territories, the imposition of reserves or settlement structures, and the subsequent federal under-funding of housing and other infrastructure. The most pernicious outcomes of these settings include unsafe water, food insecurity, and poor home quality (Jones, 2020; Olson, 2016; Patrick et al., 2019; Robidoux & Mason, 2017; White et al., 2012). According to the Council of Canadians (2021), in May of 2018, there were 174 drinking water advisories in over 100 First Nations communities, some dating back more than 20 years, and a further 73% of First Nations water systems were at high or medium risk of contamination (Council of Canadians, 2021). Nevertheless, there are a large number of ongoing and completed projects dealing with Indigenous water and wastewater (NIEDB, 2019).”<sup>v</sup>

**Figure 1.1**<sup>vi</sup>

**Figure 1.1** Percentage of population living in dwellings in need of major repairs, by Indigenous identity group, 2006 and 2016

Population	Per cent of dwellings in need of major repairs, 2006	Per cent of dwellings in need of major repairs, 2016
First Nation on reserve	44.4	44.1
First Nation off reserve	16.6	13.8
Métis	14.1	11.3
Inuit	27.9	26.2
Non-Indigenous	7.0	6.0

Source: NIEDB (2019, p. 170).

“Crowding has been linked to a number of poor health outcomes, including increased risk of transmitting infectious diseases such as deadly lower respiratory tract infections (e.g., COVID-19), as well as higher rates of injuries, mental health problems, and family tensions (Allam, 2020; Carrière et al., 2017; O’Shea et al., 2005).”<sup>vii</sup>

Figure 1.2<sup>viii</sup>

Figure 1.2 Percentage of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis living in crowded housing, 2016

Indigenous Identity Group	One bedroom short of what is needed	Two bedroom short	Three bedroom short
First Nation	14	5	4
Métis	7	1	0.4
Inuit	22	11	7

Source: NIEDB (2019, p. 170).

“In conditions of overcrowding, children often have little room to study or play, while adults have no private space to relax (Caputo, 2019; Solari & Mare, 2012). In many cases, these conditions act as a stressor, which increases the likelihood of behavioural and learning difficulties in children and adolescents, as well as substance overuse and conflict among adults (Cant et al., 2019; Usher et al., 2020). Family violence, which is compounded by overcrowding (Makinde et al., 2016), directly impacts all family dimensions of health, especially women’s health, with a resultant negative impact on the physical and emotional health of children. In particular, intimate partner violence is disproportionately experienced by Indigenous women, many of whom live in crowded conditions (Daoud et al., 2013; Ontario Native Women’s Association, 2018). As an example, highly crowded households in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon have the highest, second highest, and third highest (respectively) rates of female victims of family violence in Canada (Public Safety Canada, 2020).”<sup>ix</sup>

“A variety of health concerns are associated with poor housing conditions related to crowding, heating, water supply and sanitation, indoor air quality and general safety reflecting inadequate housing and community infrastructure. Poor housing conditions have been associated with a wide variety of health conditions including infectious diseases, noninfectious respiratory diseases, mental health concerns and inter-personal conflicts, possibly injuries from violence and suicides and deaths or injuries from fires.”<sup>x</sup>

“The 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples identified three key problems with respect to Indigenous housing policy in Canada:

1. lack of adequate incomes to support the private acquisition of housing,
2. absence of a functioning housing market in many localities where Indigenous people live, and
3. lack of clarity and agreement on the nature and extent of government responsibility to respond to the problem (INAC, 1996).

On reserve, housing policy is further complicated by the application of the *Indian Act* (1876) and collective systems of land tenure. Similarly, a number of challenges for Inuit housing have been highlighted by Patrick (2014), including the dependence of the population on social housing due to low income levels, lack of employment and skills development opportunities; costs associated with transporting building supplies and

general maintenance in remote northern regions and climates; and housing shortages to meet the needs of the population (p. 17).<sup>xi</sup>

The challenges faced by Inuit communities also have relevance for Indigenous Communities in Northern Saskatchewan, who share many of the same or similar experiences re: dependence of the population on social housing due to low-income levels, lack of employment and skills development opportunities; costs associated with transporting building supplies and general maintenance in remote northern regions and climates; and housing shortages to meet the needs of the population.

## **Urban Migration and Access to Housing**

“Housing conditions, in conjunction with better opportunities for education and employment, access to services, and home ownership off reserve, can lead to migration to urban centres in search of a better life. However, many Indigenous people may encounter new housing challenges, including ‘economic discrimination in securing adequate and affordable housing’ (Patrick, 2014, p. 19) and/ or homelessness (Gaetz, Gulliver, & Richter., 2014). While estimates vary, a study by Hwang (2001) revealed that Indigenous people are over-represented in Canada’s overall homeless population by a factor of 10. This is especially of concern for Indigenous women, who represent 35% of the homeless population in many of Canada’s urban centres (Patrick, 2014).<sup>xii</sup>

“In Saskatoon, Indigenous peoples are disproportionately impacted by homelessness (85.5% in the 2018 Point-in-Time or PIT Homelessness Count). The 2018 PIT Count documents waiting lists of one to 1095 days [3 years] for some housing locations in Saskatoon.<sup>xiii</sup>

The proportion of Indigenous peoples impacted by homelessness in Saskatoon has since risen from 85.5% to 90.1% between 2018 and April 28, 2022; additionally, the total number of people impacted by homelessness in Saskatoon has risen from 475 (2018) to 550 (2022).<sup>xiv</sup> 2022 PIT Counts in Prince Albert find that out of 120 people experiencing homelessness, 99% were Indigenous.<sup>xv</sup> In Regina, 2021 PIT Counts reveal that out of 488 people experiencing homelessness, 79% were Indigenous.<sup>xvi</sup> These numbers (Saskatoon - 90.1%, Prince Albert - 99%, Regina - 79%) demonstrate that Indigenous residents are over-affected by homelessness in the province’s three largest centres, despite representing around 17% of Saskatchewan’s overall population (Statistics Canada, 2021).

“Homelessness includes hidden homelessness, which can involve living with friends or relatives (i.e., “couch-surfing”), living in unsafe housing due to domestic or gender-based violence or staying in a hotel or other such temporary housing. This form of homelessness is more prevalent among women, gender-diverse people, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples, im/migrants and refugees and young people.<sup>xvii</sup>

“First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth ageing out of child welfare systems are often left with no support while navigating trauma. Such a lack of support can lead directly to experiences of poverty and homelessness; in Vancouver, it is estimated that roughly half of First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth who age out of care experience homelessness, including hidden homelessness.<sup>xviii</sup>

“There are important and complex health implications associated with homelessness. Hwang (2001) reports that the homeless are at risk of dying prematurely and suffer from a wide range of health problems stemming from the physical and social conditions under which they live. They are admitted to hospital up to five times more than the general population. They have significant barriers in accessing health care that include inability to provide proof of insurance coverage, inability to afford prescription medication, and the daily struggle for the essentials of life such as food. In addition, many homeless people also suffer from mental illness or substance abuse problems, and encounter a health care system that often fails to provide adequate treatment (Hwang, 2001). Patrick (2014) states:

*[b]ecause of its devastating influence on health, homelessness can be classified as a condition that reduces one's length and quality of life....[It] can exacerbate pre-existing medical conditions, make it more difficult to recover from wounds and fractures, impede treatment and recovery and increase the risk of both infectious diseases and mental health issues. (p. 50)*

Additionally, homelessness can result in sleep deprivation and increased risk of 'medical and psychiatric conditions including heart attacks and depression' (Street Health, 2007, as cited in Patrick, 2014, p. 50).<sup>xxix</sup>

## **Impacts of Evictions**

Those who find themselves in contact or re-contact with the Criminal Justice System often face precarious housing situations, in the past and present. Evictions, and the collateral consequences of evictions, contribute to the challenges many incarcerated or formerly incarcerated persons experience. As has been shown in the preceding research, housing insecurity, incarceration, and recidivism are causally linked; the presence of one has the capacity to influence outcomes in the others.

"Given the centrality of housing and home to human life, the loss of housing through eviction can have devastating and long-lasting consequences. Research and lived experience have established that eviction can lead to the loss of employment, disruption of schooling, and loss of personal possessions. Eviction is associated with specific suffering for children and parents because it can trigger child apprehension proceedings by child welfare officials. Eviction can also make it more difficult for tenants to find housing in the future, effectively haunting tenants for years. One tenant who shared their experience with Zell and McCullough explained that they were still 'living through the ramifications of this [eviction],' months after they had moved.<sup>xx</sup>

"Substantial research has established that eviction is associated with negative physical and mental health outcomes for tenants. Eviction is associated with poor self-reported health, higher rates of cardiovascular disease, poor maternal and child health outcomes, and higher mortality rates. Research has shown that people who are evicted have higher rates of emergency room visits as compared to members of non-evicted households. Eviction is also associated with negative mental health outcomes for those who experience it, including depression, anxiety, psychological distress, and suicide. In a recent Canadian study, tenants speaking about their experience of eviction used the language of trauma to describe their experience, attributing anxiety, fear, feelings of loss, and depression to their eviction. Of course, eviction can also lead to homelessness, with all its attendant harms. ... Eviction also impacts communities more broadly. Kathryn Sabbeth writes that the 'impacts [of eviction] on health, education, employment, and economic security reverberate throughout the community.' Neighbourhoods with high eviction rates can be detrimentally impacted in terms of community cohesion. Eviction is associated with high health and other public expenditures. In sum, eviction is damaging and costly to those who experience it (keeping in mind that those targeted with eviction most often are those who are members of communities already facing multiple and intersecting oppressions) and to the community as a whole.<sup>xxxi</sup>

## Social Environment and Contact with the Criminal Justice System

“Social environments include things such as the strength of social networks within a community, social stability, recognition of diversity and culture, safety, good working relationships, civic participation, and volunteerism. A good social environment can reduce or avoid many potential risks to good health. The caring that comes from social networks brings a sense of well-being and seems to act as a buffer against health problems. Some studies have shown that high levels of trust and group membership were found to be associated with lower death (mortality) rates. A social environment that supports working together on common issues through partnerships is valuable.”<sup>xxii</sup>

Economic inequities in social environments have measurable impacts on individuals and collectives: “Kawachi and Kennedy as a result of their research in the U.S. suggest that economic inequities contribute to frustration, stress, and family disruption which then contribute to the rates of crime and violence.”<sup>xxiii</sup>

“Crime is associated with a variety of social and socio-economic issues. The same social and environmental factors that predict geographic variation in crime rates may also be relevant to explaining community variations in health and wellbeing. A report on crime in England reported in the London Health Observer stated that there are many links between crime and health. The level of crime and fear of crime affects people's quality of life and can contribute to social isolation. Personal violence and assault can have both mental and physical consequences for health in the short and long term. Abuse of children can have both short and long term effects on the health of children. The short term effects of child abuse may result in physical injury, depression, learning problems in school and behavioural disorders, while the long term consequences can affect a child's development and psychosocial functioning. Drug and alcohol are key factors in many crimes. Often drug related crime is non-violent and includes theft, shoplifting, burglary and prostitution. Alcohol consumption is strongly associated with violent crime particularly amongst men in the 15 to 25 year age groups.”<sup>xxiv</sup>

“For many, each interaction with the criminal justice system brings a unique set of life circumstances. These interactions can lead to housing instability and can exacerbate existing mental health and addictions issues, creating a cycle between homelessness and incarceration. **The causal relationships between housing, mental health and addictions, and justice issues are complex, as the presence of one can ignite a concern in the other two areas. .... Homelessness [and housing insecurity] and mental health are closely connected, where the presence of one increases the likelihood of the other. Individuals who are homeless and have mental health and/or addictions issues are then more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system.** The broader social determinants of health also reinforce these issues as poverty and social inequality can create or exacerbate housing and mental health and addictions issues, and the likelihood of criminal justice contact. ... Stigma around mental health and addictions issues, homelessness and criminal justice involvement can further affect a person's ability to access necessary services and support. This stigma can often lead to discrimination. For example, landlords may discriminate against these populations for having criminal records, showing past patterns of disruptive behaviour, having multiple complex social and health care needs, and potentially having poor tenancy histories. This creates barriers for individuals in accessing supportive housing, and therefore it is often why the ‘justice-informed’ lens is missing from many housing-related initiatives and funding opportunities.”<sup>xxv</sup>

## Housing Impacts Incarceration Impacts Recidivism

“When someone begins serving their sentence, they arrive with many struggles and barriers, such as mental health issues, poverty, addictions, and these issues often remain once they are released. Housing alone is certainly not able to address all of these issues. However, it is difficult to address other challenges without stable housing. Therefore, it is clear that housing can play a significant role in reducing recidivism rates. One American study indicates that when an individual has adequate housing upon release, **recidivism decreases by 19%**.<sup>[xxvi]</sup> Thus, it is clear that providing adequate housing can reduce rates of recidivism among Indigenous people.”<sup>xxvii</sup>

“In order to propose housing a solution for recidivism, it is first important to understand how housing decreases an individual’s likelihood of reincarceration. The Canadian Homelessness Research Network defines homelessness as:

*‘... the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household’s financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural, or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing.’*

Therefore, homelessness includes those living on the streets, those living in shelters, and those in vicarious living situations such as couch surfing. An estimated 235,000 individuals experience homelessness in Canada each year, although that number is likely quite higher due to the invisible homelessness created by those living in precarious situations. Overall, Indigenous people are more likely to be homeless than non-[I]ndigenous people. A study in 2013 found that one in 15 urban Indigenous people are homeless, in comparison to one in 128 non-Indigenous people.”<sup>xxviii</sup>

“There are several ways in which incarceration can contribute to homelessness. Individuals often exit the justice system with the same resources they came in with, and in some cases, even less. This makes them particularly vulnerable to homelessness. One reason for this vulnerability is the financial strain caused by incarceration. The cost of a trial alone can be very expensive. There is also the additional barrier of paying fines. Additionally, many people lose their jobs while incarcerated. Criminal records also negatively impact future employment opportunities, making it difficult to afford housing, particularly long-term housing arrangements. Canadian law also imposes further restrictions on certain employment for those with criminal records, such as working with children or the elderly. This limits even more employment opportunities. Therefore, many people who are released are economically disadvantaged and cannot meet the requirements to find housing. As an example, the individual may not be able to pay the first and last months rent as required in some provinces.”<sup>xxix</sup>

“Another reason incarceration contributes to homelessness is that the inmate risks losing their previous living arrangement. For example, they could lose their home if they are no longer able to make rent or mortgage payments. They could also lose their spot in public housing while serving a sentence. Incarceration can also put a strain on familial or romantic relationships, so the individual sometimes is no longer able to return home.”<sup>xxx</sup>

“Thirdly, people with criminal records can have a hard time accessing new housing. Although there are no specific exclusionary housing laws for formerly incarcerated people, there are many other ways in which accessing housing can be a barrier for them. For example, while Canada does not restrict people with criminal records from accessing public housing, the waitlists are long and so this generally is not an option immediately after release. In fact, the average wait time for public housing in Ottawa is five years and it is even longer for larger families. Many formerly incarcerated individuals will also experience stigmatization when trying to secure or mortgage or sign a lease. In fact, landlords are legally allowed to



discriminate based on criminal records in most parts of Canada, meaning there are no laws that prevent them from refusing tenancy based on a criminal record. Therefore, it is evident that those who have been incarcerated are at higher risk for living in inadequate housing or experiencing homelessness post-release. Even charges for misdemeanours can result in an individual returning to jail.”<sup>xxxix</sup>

“Housing serves an important barrier between an individual and the state. The state cannot access private property without a warrant. Thus, those without homes are also more susceptible to over surveillance by police. Increased surveillance leads to overcharging and increased rates of criminalization among the homeless population. ... Housing also preserves an individual’s dignity. Housing allows a person to engage in the most basic of human needs and wants that are not permitted in public. Canada regulates the use of public property by prohibiting activities such as sleeping, urinating, loitering, defecating, public intoxication, and engaging in sex acts. Thus, these individuals are also forced to use public spaces in ways that others are able to meet their needs in the privacy of their homes. Although many of these laws serve the purpose of keeping public spaces sanitary, unfortunately, people without homes are faced with little choice but to do these activities in public. ... Furthermore, due to all the barriers faced by a formerly incarcerated individual when accessing housing, they are more likely to seek out inexpensive housing and vicarious living situations. These are mostly available in neighbourhoods with high crime rates and lower economic opportunities, which increases the risk of reoffending. ... By understanding the barriers formerly incarcerated individuals face in accessing housing and vulnerability to recidivism while homeless, it is easy to understand why the ability to find stable housing in the first few months after release is one of the strongest indicators of recidivism. In summary, those released from prison are more likely to be homeless and homeless people are more likely to be imprisoned.”<sup>xxxix</sup>

## **Safe Housing as Long-Term Solutions**

### **Considerations for Release Planning and Community-Based Sentencing**

“[H]ousing can be used to reduce rates of recidivism among Indigenous people in Canada. Studies have demonstrated that when people have access to adequate housing after they are incarcerated, they are less likely to be rearrested, reconvicted, or return to prison. Private living permits someone to engage in acts that are illegal in public such as sleeping, urinating, loitering, defecating, public intoxication, and engaging in sex acts. Housing also acts as a barrier between a person and the state, therefore preventing surveillance by police. Furthermore, housing stability ensures that people are able to address other issues post-release such as substance abuse, mental health, financial stress, and employment opportunities. Certainly, it is difficult to achieve success in other areas without a safe living situation. ... Indigenous people face many barriers in their ability to access housing post-release. Many Indigenous people live in rural or remote areas and cannot afford to return home. In some cases, judges even prevent them from doing so. The supervision requirements by parole officers also means that individuals cannot return to remote communities. The overcrowding and poor housing quality available on many reserves and northern communities also limits the chance for Indigenous people to return home. Racism also affects Indigenous people’s ability to access housing outside of their communities. Additionally, members of the Indigenous population experience higher poverty rates and therefore, they often cannot afford adequate housing.”<sup>xxxix</sup>

“Housing refers to the physical structure that a dwelling can provide to meet the basic need of structure. However, the concept of a home includes more than a structure, it is a place where a person develops their life, where they can make choices about who and what is in their environment. It is a place to develop relationships with family and friends. In order to ensure housing solutions that are able to reduce recidivism on a long-term basis, it is important to discuss ways in which formerly incarcerated individuals can use their housing as a long-term solution and begin developing a home.”<sup>xxxix</sup>

“Incarceration impacts more than just the individual themselves, there is also significant social impact on the community. It separates parents from children, keeps spouses from each other, and severs community ties. The longer an individual is kept from their community, the greater social impact it has. One important aspect of reducing the intergenerational cycle of high incarceration rates for Indigenous people is also to ensure that families do not face long periods of separation caused by inadequate housing. For families and communities that have been torn apart for generations due to colonial practices, it is crucial that housing be looked at as a community building effort. Housing solutions post-incarceration should not only focus on the housing itself, but as housing that supports the development of relationships and community.”<sup>xxxv</sup>

While many of the barriers to housing come from structural and systemic inequities that are outside an individual, or a sentencing judge’s control, including necessary legislative and service changes, there are ways to effectively support individuals in the form of release, healing, and aftercare plans:

“When people are discharged from prison or jail, they can be overwhelmed and vulnerable with sudden changes. Therefore, they need an effective discharge plan. Release plans are used to provide an individual with guidance on resources available to them post-incarceration. They also confirm housing and employment opportunities. While some institutions do provide release plans, with so many different provincial and federal institutions, it is difficult to quantify how many people are released without one. However, the participants in a study by the John Howard Society indicated that many prisoners released did not have a proper reentry plan, particularly those in remand. One participant is quoted as saying ‘No – never [Discharge Plan]. I’ve been to jail when I was younger 15-16 times – never once has anyone ever asked me where I lived. This is how I ended up on the streets several times.’”<sup>xxxvi</sup>

“There are several ways in which social services could making housing more effective [used in combination to reduce rates of recidivism]. Although housing itself can help reduce rates of recidivism, formerly incarcerated individuals are more successfully reintegrated into society if they have access to other supports and resources. Therefore, it is essential for an individual to access support programs from their housing location. Studies have indicated that programs that focus on cultural or spiritual identity for Indigenous people reduce rates of homelessness and recidivism. However, it is also important not to stereotype; Indigenous cultural programs are not desired by every Indigenous person. Sometimes, an individual may avoid seeking support if they are required to do so in a cultural center. This could be because they are not interested in connecting with Indigenous culture during their healing journey for either personal or religious reasons.”<sup>xxxvii</sup>

## **Building a Release Plan**

“Self-determination is one of the most important determinants of Indigenous health and well-being (Reading & Wien, 2013). It is considered essential for empowering and enabling communities to build capacity and gain control over the wide-ranging forces that affect health and well-being at individual and collective levels (Garces-Ozanne, Ikechi Kalu, & Audas, 2016). ... To achieve equitable outcomes, Indigenous Peoples must be given full access to high-quality, responsive, comprehensive, culturally-relevant, and coordinated health and social services that target the diverse determinants of health, including individual and community self-determination (AFN, 2017; Greenwood, 2019; Jones et al., 2019).”<sup>xxxviii</sup>

“[T]reatment might focus on ways to advocate for and empower Indigenous clients to find meaning apart from the colonial values and practices infused into colonial societies. In other words, treatment professionals may want to assist their Indigenous clients in decolonizing their recovery by restoration of Indigenous beliefs concerning life, relations, and health.”<sup>xxxix</sup>

The principles of Self-Determination, then, must also be incorporated into determining an appropriate sentence for an Indigenous offender, while also considering the potential further impacts incarceration may have on an individual, their family, and community. This means that individuals should be involved in conversations about their rehabilitation, healing and aftercare plan, and perspectives on what constitutes meaningful healing *for them*. Merely sentencing individuals to generic treatment programs, often facilitated within jails/prisons, without exploring their unique challenges, interests, and skills is not enough to affect rehabilitation and greater wellbeing/health. Additionally, incarcerated persons **MUST** have access to necessary medications and therapeutic options, otherwise, healing and rehabilitation will be hard to achieve. For example, if an individual becomes incarcerated and is forced to stop treatment for their ADHD (i.e., through medication) this can greatly inhibit rehabilitation because they are being deprived of medication aimed to support mental health and cognitive functions. Likewise, if an individual is released from incarceration and unable to continue their medical treatment (i.e., through medication), this will also impact their ability to rehabilitate and reintegrate effectively. This means continuity of care is necessary when developing aftercare and release plans, when someone becomes incarcerated or placed in remand, and when they are released.

Therefore, it is important to consult and work with an individual on their release and aftercare plan to identify meaningful pathways of support, as well as non-custodial sanctions. This is particularly important when exploring rehabilitative, restorative, cultural, and spiritual programming. For example, if an individual does not have issues concerning substance misuse, an Alcohol Treatment program and conditions related to maintaining sobriety will not be relevant or meaningful. In fact, mandating conditions that are not relevant to an individual's rehabilitation may further impede their ability to heal, because they will not find the programming helpful to their needs. Placing unrelated conditions upon an individual that do not engage with their needs or realities increases the likelihood that they may violate their release/parole conditions. Aftercare and Release plans should address the immediate and long-term needs of an individual when they are released from custody, such as housing solutions, healthcare needs (i.e., prescriptions, medical assessments, mobility aids), transportation needs, further support programs, and community caseworkers/service-providers (i.e., John Howard Society, Elizabeth Fry Society, FASD Network. etc.).

## Locating Rehabilitative, Restorative, and Alternative Justice Programs and Sanctions

- 2019-2020 Rehabilitative Alternatives to Incarceration – A Handbook of Community & Government Programs in Saskatchewan - <https://indigenoulaw.usask.ca/publications/rehabilitative-alternatives-to-incarceration-handbook.php>
- Alternative Measures and Extrajudicial Sanctions Agencies in Saskatchewan - <https://gladue.usask.ca/node/6654>
- Community Justice Programs in Saskatchewan - <https://gladue.usask.ca/communityjusticeprograms>
- Restorative Justice Directory – Government of Canada - <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/rj-jr/programs-programmes.aspx>

## Housing Supports and Services in Saskatchewan

Please note that these are only some of the available housing and transitional services in Saskatchewan, there are many more available depending on the region and circumstances of an individual.

- Directory of **all** Housing Supports and Services - Sask 211 [https://sk.211.ca/search/?location=&looking\\_for%5B%5D=housing](https://sk.211.ca/search/?location=&looking_for%5B%5D=housing)
- Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. - <https://www.cumfi.org/>
- Community-Based Housing Agencies - Saskatchewan Government Directory <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/directory?ou=d46f9ed4-ec0b-41ae-a3f4-4cecc95aab63>
- Coordinated Access Regina – Housing and Coordinated Service Provider - <https://www.namerindhousing.ca/coordinatedaccessregina/>
- Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan – Release and Aftercare Support Planning for women and gender-diverse individuals - <https://elizabethfrysask.org/what-we-do/after/>
- Housing Programs – Saskatchewan Government Directory <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/directory?ou=4a680dfd-8024-4fb9-b947-7426d16c471d>
- John Howard Society of Saskatchewan – Services and Programs (i.e., Adults Reintegrating into the Community; My Place Program; Redemption Project; Bert’s Safe Shelter; LuLu’s Lodge; and many more) - <https://sk.johnhoward.ca/services/>
- Prairie Region Halfway Housing Association - <http://halfwayhouses.ca/en/region/prhha/>

- The Prairie Region Halfway House Association (PRHHA) is a non-profit society dedicated to providing information, education, leadership and advocacy for its member organizations all of which provide residential service facilities and programs for federal offenders in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwestern Ontario and the N.W.T. The members of our association work together to ensure the successful and peaceful transition of offenders into the community.
- The successful rehabilitation of offenders requires the use of various tools and resources. A variety of mental and physical health support programs and addiction services are offered to address the challenges and issues faced by offenders. Spiritual and guidance programs are also available.
- Prairie Harm Reduction Saskatoon – Case Management Services – <https://prairiehr.ca/pages/support-services>
- Prince Albert Housing and Healthy Living Services - <https://cbyfpa.ca/housing-healthy-living/>
- Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership - <https://www.shipweb.ca/>
- STR8 UP – Transitional Housing - <https://www.str8-up.ca/transitional-housing/>
- Saskatoon Tribal-Council - Sawēyihotān Transitional Home Program - <https://sktc.sk.ca/saweyihtotan/>
  - Saskatoon Tribal Council also provides the Īkwēskīcik iskwēwak, a transitional home designed for women moving back into the community after a period of incarceration. To learn more about Īkwēskīcik iskwēwak contact the STC - <https://sktc.sk.ca/justice/>
  - STC - Cress Housing - <https://sktc.sk.ca/cress-housing/>

## Wellness, Family, and Interpersonal Conflict Resources

In Saskatchewan, there are numerous sentencing options and alternatives that promote the development of healthy individuals, families, parenting, relationships, and divert offenders away from traditional methods of incarceration. Promoting the development of healthy families and relationships has great potential to improve outcomes in immediate health, and support the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities in the long-term. These are only some of the options available in Saskatchewan, more can be located through the 2019-2020 Rehabilitative Alternatives to Incarceration Handbook, Friendship Centres, and SASK 211.

- **Programming Responses for Intimate Partner Violence in Saskatchewan, including Health Treatment Programs** (e.g., Kanawayimik Family Violence Treatment Program, Alternative to Violence program, Family Services Saskatoon, etc.): <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/jr/ipv-vpi/p13.html>
- **Domestic Violence Courts:** <https://sasklawcourts.ca/provincial-court/therapeutic-courts/domestic-violence-court/>

- Domestic Violence Court Brochure: [https://sasklawcourts.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/PC\\_BDVTO\\_Brochure\\_2023.pdf](https://sasklawcourts.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/PC_BDVTO_Brochure_2023.pdf) \
- **Drug-Treatment Court:** <https://sasklawcourts.ca/provincial-court/therapeutic-courts/drug-treatment-court/>
- **Mental Health Court:** <https://sasklawcourts.ca/provincial-court/therapeutic-courts/mental-health-court/>
- **Substance Use Treatment Centres for First Nations and Inuit:** <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1576090254932/1576090371511>
- **Mental Health and Addictions Program – Métis Nation of Saskatchewan:** <https://metisnation.sk.com/2020/06/15/mental-health-and-addictions-program/>
- **Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. – Wellness Centre:** <https://www.cumfi.org/wellness-centre>
- **Métis Addictions Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (MACSI) – Treatment Centres and Programs:** <https://macsi.ca/>
- **Kanaweyimik Child & Family Services:** The mission of Kanaweyimik Child and Family Services is to protect children and to aid in their healing and the strengthening of families through the provision of holistic, culturally relevant services that respect the heritage, values, ceremonies, and traditions of our member communities. This program works with individuals who are currently involved in the criminal justice system, including those who with IPV, assault, or sexual related offences.
- <https://www.kanaweyimik.com/programs-and-services>
  - Child and Family Services Counselling Program: <https://www.kanaweyimik.com/programs/child-and-family-services-program>
  - Counselling Program: <https://www.kanaweyimik.com/programs/counselling-program>
  - Family Violence Program (uses the Circle Process and Smudging): <https://www.kanaweyimik.com/programs/family-violence-program>
  - Prevention Program: <https://www.kanaweyimik.com/programs/prevention-program-family-preservation-services>
- **Kanaweyimik Urban Services:** <https://www.kanaweyimik.com/programs/urban-services>
  - Intensive family support services in the home for families involved with Social Services.
  - Two Emergency foster homes available for emergency placements at all hours of the day or night.
  - Visitation services for children in care and parents to visit in a safe monitored environment.

- Transportation services for children and families involved with Social Services.
  - Traditional and structured parenting sessions for parents involved with Social Services
  - Warrior Program - Intergenerational Trauma Recovery for parents involved with Social Services.
  - Domestic Violence/Family Violence treatment program for families experiencing domestic violence in their home.
  - TAPWE Youth Inter-generational Trauma Recovery program for youth in care.
  - Life skills for parents involved with Social Services and youth in care.
- **Other Supports Provided:**
    - Elder Monitoring can be provided
    - Parents and youth will be supported to attend cultural ceremonies if they wish to attend
    - Parent Aides and Youth Aides can be provided if required
    - Healing Circles

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