

WOMEN USING SHELTER SERVICES IN MANITOBA

MANITOBA ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S SHELTERS 2018 REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

Since the early 1970s, women's shelters in Canada have provided a crucial service for women who have experienced violence and abuse from intimate partners. Initially, shelters offered services to women who were fleeing violence from their male partners and provided them with temporary accommodation, opportunities to explore options, support to access income assistance and affordable housing, and help with legal issues.

Over time, shelters in Manitoba, similar to other across Canada, expanded the services they offer to meet the complex needs of the women who use their services, which include substance misuse, mental health difficulties, and lifelong histories of trauma. Shelter mandates have also expanded to include women leaving abusive family members, follow-up services for women after they exit shelters, and off site counselling services for women and men.

Outside of women's shelters, there is little recognition of the complexity of women's situations and needs when they access shelter services. Since 2000, MAWS has maintained an administrative database that contains information about women when they enter shelter services in Manitoba. One database, (VOICES) was used from 2000 to 2012. In 2014, MAWS began to use a software program (Women in Safe Housing (W.I.S.H.) developed by GRASP Software Corporation) to collect information from women as part of standard in-take processes.

This report describes the information contained in both databases. The first section presents women's information contained in the VOICES database and the second section describes the women's information contained in the W.I.S.H. database.

INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE MAWS DATABASES

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Age, immigration status, cultural background, first language, number of children who stayed at the shelter, educational attainment, family income, primary source of income, total family income, and family size.

TYPE & SEVERITY OF VIOLENCE

Type of abuse/violence experienced by shelter admission, if abuser abuses alcohol or drugs, has outstanding warrants, and weapons, previous abusive relationships, number of times left current abusive relationship, police intervention in past six months, and court orders.

COMPLEXITY OF NEEDS

Length of stay in shelter, client used follow up, number of moves, physical and mental health, number of medications, treatment for alcohol/drug use, charges against client, type and amount of involvement with other agencies.

VOICES DATABASE

This database contained information on 8884 women's visits to the nine provincially-funded shelters in Manitoba. Eight of the shelters are located in the rural areas of Manitoba, outside of Winnipeg and one shelter within the city of Winnipeg. In 2000-2001, one shelter used the database. In 2002, four shelters used the database. By 2003, seven shelters used the database.

From 2004 to 2012, all nine shelters used the database. Because the 8884 visits included one or more visits from the same women, only information from each woman's first visit to the shelter was used for the analysis. Information from 5867 women was used in the findings presented below.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF WOMEN USING SHELTER SERVICES IN MANITOBA

When asked to describe their cultural background, many of the women residents stated that they were Canadian (43%), while the remaining women provided a variety of cultural backgrounds.

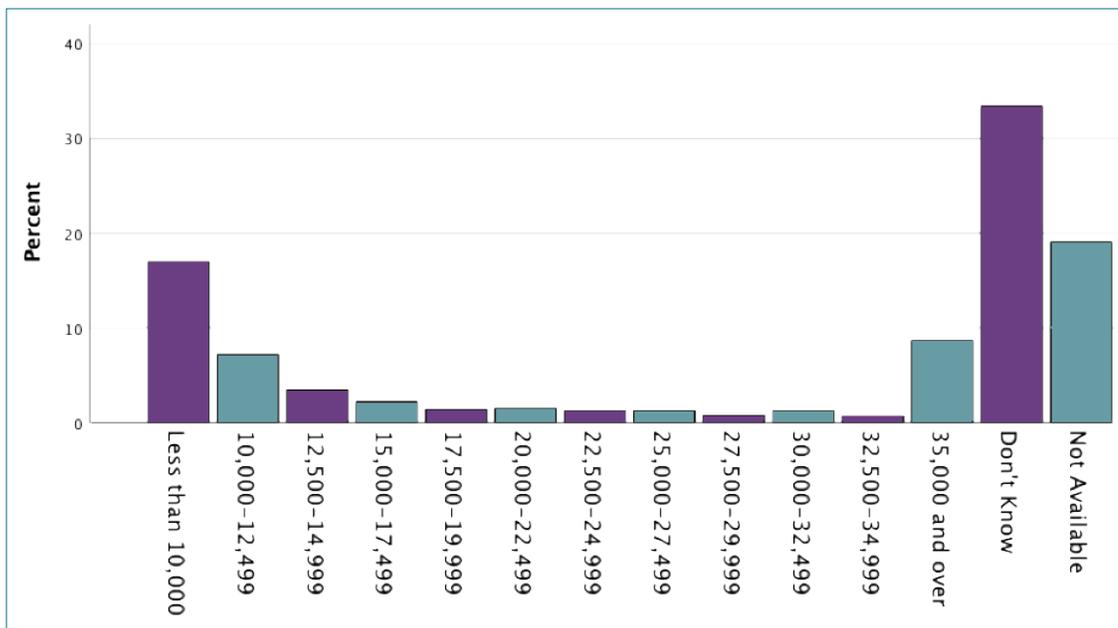
The diversity of these responses is shown below:

- British
- Chinese
- French
- German
- Japanese
- Mennonite
- Phillipines
- Polish
- Ukrainian
- Mexican
- Hispanic
- Irish/Scottish
- Irish
- Scottish
- Dutch
- Spanish
- Taiwanese
- French Canadian
- East Indian
- African
- El Salvadorian
- Romanian
- American
- Russian
- Hutterite
- Bosnian
- Jamaican
- Portuguese
- Hungarian
- Icelandic
- Sikh
- Swiss
- Sudanese
- Argentinian
- Pakistani
- Italian
- Swedish
- Columbian
- Brazilian
- Korean
- Greek/Ukrainian
- Belgian
- South Indian
- Rwanda
- Arabic Ubyan
- Ecuador
- Indonesian
- Haitian
- East Indian/West Indian
- Inuit & Newfoundland
- Spanish Honduras
- Russian/Jewish
- French/Italian
- Taiwanese/American
- Jewish
- Metis/Jewish
- Vietnamese
- European
- African Canadian
- African Ethiopian
- Celtic, Scandinavian
- Hispanic American
- Latin American
- Islamic
- Icelandic/Scandinavian
- Greek/Australian
- Ukrainian & Menonite
- Norwegian
- British/Icelandic
- Ugandan, Somalian
- Canadian/American
- Italian & Canadian

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF WOMEN USING SHELTER SERVICES IN MANITOBA *continued*

About 60% of the women identified themselves as Aboriginal and 83% of these women stated that they are First Nation, 14% as Metis, and less than 1% as Inuit. Most of the Indigenous women indicated that they had status (80%) and many stated that they had lived on reserve (30%). Only a minority of the women identified as new immigrants (2%) or refugees (11%). Most women reported that their first language is English (78%) or a First Nation language (12%), with other women indicating a variety of other languages, including Chinese, Filipino, French, German, and Polish.

Most of the women residents stated that their primary source of income was social assistance (38%), followed by their partner's employment income (16%), or a combination of their and their partner's employment income (12%), and then their own employment income (11%). Other sources of income varied from band sponsorship/assistance (5%), disability insurance (2%), employment insurance (2%), and pension income (less than 1%). Many of the women stated that their total family income was less than \$20,000 per year (about 30%) and 17% of them reported a total family income of under \$10,000 per year. Only 9% of the women reported a total family income over \$35,000 per year. Some women residents reported that they had lost income due to the abuse they experienced (25%).



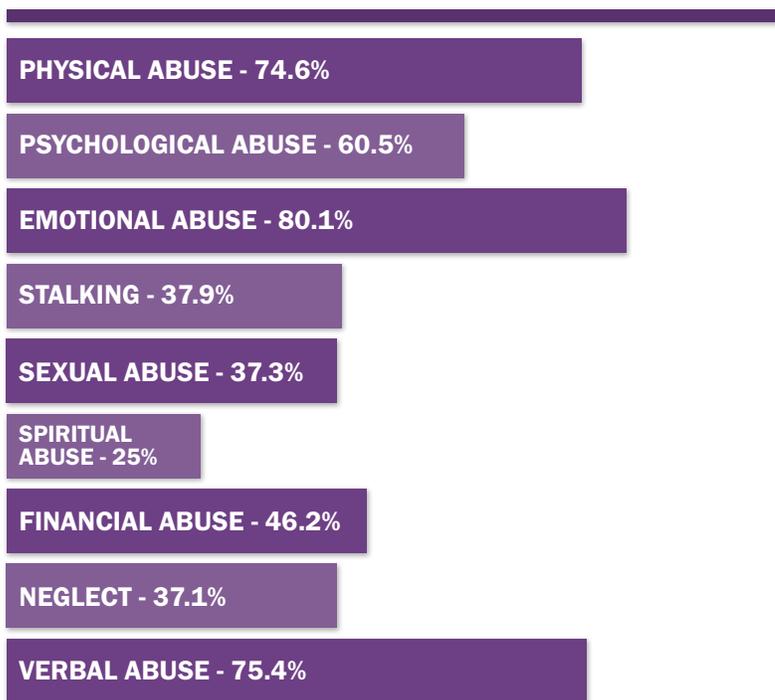
When asked about their education background, about a third of the women reported that they had graduated from high school (33%). Of the 36% of the women residents who indicated that they had completed formal education, 19% reported that they had completed high school upgrading, a further 30% completed a post-secondary certificate or diploma, and 11% had obtained a university degree.

A majority of the women reported that they had children (78%) and many indicated that they were responsible for the care of these children during the shelter stay (60%). About 10% of the women residents were pregnant during their shelter stay. About half of the women reported that they had lived in a single adult (42%) or two adult (52%) family.

TYPES & SEVERITY OF VIOLENCE & ABUSE EXPERIENCED

When provided with a variety of categories to indicate the types of abuse they experienced, the majority of women residents reported that they had largely experienced physical (75%), psychological (61%), verbal (75%), and emotional (80%) forms of abuse.

Smaller percentages of the women residents also indicated that they experienced sexual abuse, financial abuse, spiritual abuse, and stalking.



WITNESS TO ABUSE OF OTHERS

Some women also indicated that they witnessed abuse of their children (16%), other family members (24%), and pets (9%). Almost half of these women indicated that they had also been in at least one other previous relationship that was also abusive (45%).

About half of these women indicated they had one other abusive relationship (53%), while smaller percentages reported that they had two other relationships (25%), three other relationships (11%), or four or more other abusive relationships (10%).



VIOLENCE & ABUSE EXPERIENCED

Overall 27% of the women indicated that they had physical injuries from the abuse they experienced. Although the most commonly reported injury was bruises (20%). They identified a variety of injuries, including cuts, choking, hair pulling, burns, whiplash, stabbing, injury to hearing and vision, being bitten, and miscarriages. Some women also stated that they had broken bones (arms, legs, collar bones, ribs, jaws, teeth, and noses) (79 women) and soreness and pain in their backs, necks, arms, legs, hands, feet, face, nose, and torso (205 women).

The majority of the 5867 women indicated that the person who abused them was male (88%) with another 130 women indicating that the abusive person was a woman (2%) and 2 women who reported that this was a transgender or intergender person. Most of these women residents indicated that the person abusing them was a partner (either spouse, common law, or boyfriend/girlfriend) or ex-partner (87%). The remaining women reported another type of relationship, including child, in-law, sibling, gang relationship, parent, in-law, step-parent, building manager, neighbour, and pimp. Most of the women also reported that the length of the relationship with the abusive person was longer than five years (40%) and 10% of the women stated that the length of the relationship was less than one year. The women residents indicated that the person who abused them had access to firearms (19%) and a vehicle (37%), and had charges laid against them in the previous two years (32%). Another 60% reported that this person also had addictions and 35% of the women stated that the person had been in past relationships that were abusive.

The majority of these women reported that their children had witnessed the abuse and violence directed at them (70%). Many of them (58%) reported that the person who abused them was also either the biological parent (41%), the step-parent (13%), or a parental figure (4%) to their children.

Although 37% of the women residents stated that they requested police intervention during in the past six months before entering the shelter. Only 19% indicated that they had a court order in place due to the abuse.

TYPES OF COURT ORDERS

PROTECTION ORDER	- 42.9%
PREVENTION ORDER	- 6.9%
NO CONTACT ORDER	- 18.7%
NON-MOLESTATION ORDER	- 0.8%
RECOGNIZANCE ORDER	- 4.8%
UNDERTAKING	- 1.6%
RESTRAINING ORDER	- 6.5%

COMPLEXITY OF WOMEN'S NEEDS & SITUATIONS

Sixty-two per cent of the women residents indicated that they had left the relationship before coming to the shelter for a first visit.

Most of these women indicated that they had left the relationship between 2 – 4 times (43%) and about a third of them had had to move at least two times in the previous twelve months (30%).

NUMBER OF TIMES LEFT THE RELATIONSHIP

ONE TIME - 24.0%

2-4 TIMES - 42.7%

5-7 TIMES - 11.4%

MORE THAN 7 TIMES - 17.2%

NUMBER OF MOVES IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

NONE - 16.8%

1 TIME - 23.7%

2 TIMES - 13.4%

3 TIMES - 7.0%

4 TIMES - 4.0%

MORE THAN 5 TIMES - 6.1%

Some of the women indicated that they had a physical illness or disability that was diagnosed by a medical doctor (28%) and others reported that they had been diagnosed with a mental illness (23%).

Depression (16%) and anxiety (10%) were the most frequency reported mental illness diagnoses. About a third of the women residents stated that they were on medication during the shelter stay (34%).

NUMBER OF MEDICATIONS TAKEN

ONE MEDICATION - 39.3%

2-3 MEDICATIONS - 42.0%

4-6 MEDICATIONS - 12.5%

MORE THAN 6 MEDICATIONS - 6.2%

Some of the women residents indicated that they had been in treatment for drug or alcohol abuse (23%). About half of these women reported that had attended a treatment program one time (49%), while a smaller percentage stated that they had attended treatment more than 3 times (12%). A minority of the women residents reported that there are criminal charges against them (10%).

When asked about involvement with other community agencies and services prior to coming to the shelter, the women residents indicated greater involvement with institutional services (72%), such as child welfare (21%), the police (19%), and social assistance (32%) and less connection with community-based services (29%).

INVOLVEMENT WITH OTHER AGENCIES

CHILD WELFARE AGENCY - 20.6%

POLICE - 19.4%

INCOME ASSISTANCE - 31.7%

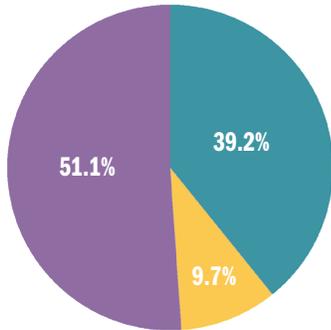
COUNSELLOR - 10.7%

MENTAL HEALTH - 7.5%

WOMEN'S ADVOCACY/
VICTIM'S SERVICES - 10.4%

WISH DATABASE

The database contained information from 891 women’s visits to the three shelters from 2014 up to and including 2017. The findings below present information on 579 women’s first visits to three of the provincially funded shelters; YWCA Westman Women’s Shelter in Brandon, Parkland Crisis Centre in Dauphin, and Nova House in Selkirk.



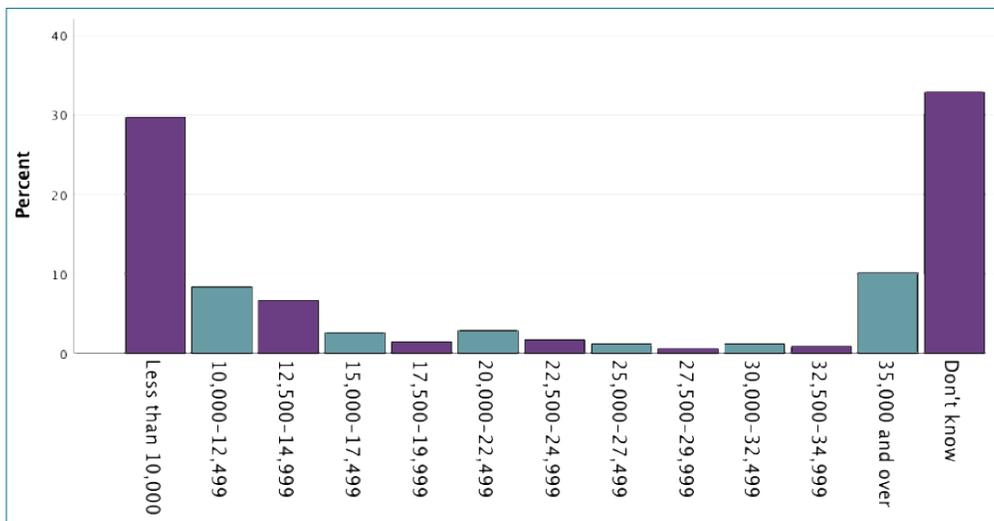
SHELTER RESIDENCE

- NOVA HOUSE - 39.2%
- PARKLAND CRISIS CENTRE - 9.7%
- YWCA WESTMAN WOMEN'S SHELTER - 51.1%

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF WOMEN USING SHELTER SERVICES IN MANITOBA

The majority of the women residents reported that they are Canadian citizens (93%) or permanent resident (4%). Smaller numbers of women indicated that they are landed immigrants, sponsored immigrants, or had a temporary work permit. Just over half of the women residents reported their ethnic origin as Canadian (54%) and about one third described themselves as Aboriginal (33%). Other women identified as African, British, French, Mennonite, Pilipino, Polish, South American, and Ukrainian. Most of the women identified that their preferred language is English (97%). The other languages identified were Dakota, French, Oji-Cree, Spanish, and Punjabi. Women residents’ reported ages when they entered the shelter varied from 13 to 77 years old. Most of the women were between the ages of 20 to 40 years old.

When asked about their primary source of income, most women residents stated that this was social assistance (36%), their partner’s income (15%), or band sponsorship/assistance (14%). Smaller percentages of the women reported that their primary source of income was their own employment income (7%), or a combination of their and their partner’s income (7%), employment insurance (6%), disability insurance (6%), or pension income (3%). Slightly more than half of the women residents reported that their total family income was less than \$20,000 per year (52%) and 30% of this group indicated that their total family income was under \$10,000 per year. Only ten percent of the women reported having an income over \$35,000 per year.



DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF WOMEN USING SHELTER SERVICES IN MANITOBA *continued*

Thirty-nine percent of the women stated that they lost income due to the abuse they experienced. Less than half the women residents reported that they had graduated from high school (46%). When asked about formal education beyond high school, 10% stated that they completed high school up-grading or GED, 27% reported that they had completed a post-secondary certificate or diploma and 7% reported that they had obtained a university degree.

Just under half of the women residents stated that their children were with them when they entered the shelter (43%). Fifteen percent reported that they were pregnant during this first shelter stay. For sixty percent of the women residents, this first visit to one of the three shelters was also their first stay in a shelter. Most of the women reported that they had not stayed at the shelter more than twice (90%). The average length of stay for most women was around 14 days and between 10-20 days. The length of stay for the women residents varied from 1 to 90 days.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN THAT STAYED AT THE SHELTER

0 - 56.6%	4 - 2.4%
1 - 18.0%	5 - 0.7%
2 - 15.4%	6 - 1.0%
3 - 5.5%	7 - 0.3%

NUMBER OF STAYS

1 - 59.4%	4 - 2.8%
2 - 30.4%	5 - 0.3%
3 - 7.1%	

TYPES & SEVERITY OF VIOLENCE & ABUSE EXPERIENCED

The majority of the women residents reported that they experienced emotional abuse (65%), verbal abuse (62%), physical abuse (56%), controlling behavior (45%), and psychological abuse (37%).

Many of the women also reported that the person who abused them also abused alcohol (67%) or drugs (64%). Almost 30% of the women indicated that this person had outstanding charges or warrants and 49% stated that the person had access to weapons. Over half of the women reported that their children had witnessed the abuse that was directed at them (60%). Twenty-six percent of the women reported that they had not left this relationship prior to entering the shelter, but 30% of them also indicated that they had left the relationship 2-4 times in the past. Although thirty-seven percent of the women residents indicated that they did not have a previous relationship that was abusive, a similar percentage (44%) stated that they had been in one or two other relationships that were also abusive.

TYPES OF ABUSE EXPERIENCED

CHILD ABUSE - 1.4%
CONTROLLING - 45.4%
CYBER STALKING - 1.6%
EMOTIONAL ABUSE - 65.5%
FAMILY/FRIEND ABUSE - 4.45%
FINANCIAL ABUSE - 28.1%
PHYSICAL ABUSE - 55.9%
PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE - 36.8%
PET ABUSE - 0.4%
SPIRITUAL ABUSE - 4.5%
STALKING - 15.9%
SEXUAL ABUSE - 6.4%
VERBAL ABUSE - 62.1%
NEGLECT - 11.2%
OTHER - 0.9%

NUMBER OF TIMES LEAVING THE RELATIONSHIP PRIOR TO SHELTER STAY

0 TIMES - 25.9%
1 TIME - 16.3%
2-4 TIMES - 29.7%
5-7 TIMES - 9.5%
MORE THAN 7 TIMES - 14.7%

NUMBER OF PREVIOUS ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

NONE - 37.1%
1 - 24.9%
2 - 18.8%
3 - 8.9%
4 - 4.2%
5 - 1.9%
6 OR MORE - 4.2%

Although 77% of the women residents stated that they did not have a court order in place, close to half of them also stated that they had required police involvement in the past 6 months (46%).

COMPLEXITY OF WOMEN'S NEEDS & SITUATIONS

The majority of the women residents reported that they had left the abusive relationship at least once prior to this first visit to the shelter (74%) and 88% indicated that they had moved one or more times in the past.

NUMBER OF MOVES IN THE PAST

NONE	- 13.3%
1 TIME	- 24.3%
2 TIMES	- 13.3%
3 TIMES	- 16.4%
4 TIMES	- 5.6%
MORE THAN 5 TIMES	- 16.4%

About a third of the women residents reported that had a physical illness that was diagnosed by a medical doctor (33%) and close to half of them reported that they had been diagnosed with a mental illness (48%).

The most frequently reported mental illness diagnoses were depression (21%) and anxiety (18%). Just over half of the women indicated that they were taking at least one medication when they entered the shelter (53%).

NUMBER OF MEDICATIONS TAKEN

NO MEDICATION	- 46.8%
ONE MEDICATION	- 13.3%
2-3 MEDICATIONS	- 23.6%
4-6 MEDICATIONS	- 9.9%
MORE THAN 6 MEDICATIONS	- 3.9%

Although the majority of women residents reported that they had not been treated for drug or alcohol addiction (66%), 15% indicated that they had attended treatment once, and a further 18% indicated that they had attended treatment two or more times. A minority of the women reported that there are criminal charges against them (10%).

When asked about involvement with other community agencies and services prior to coming to the shelter, the women residents indicated greater involvement with institutional services (67%), such as child welfare (23%), the police (18%), and social assistance (27%) and less connection with community-based services (31%).

INVOLVEMENT WITH OTHER AGENCIES

CHILD WELFARE AGENCY	- 22.5%
POLICE	- 18.1%
INCOME ASSISTANCE	- 26.6%
COUNSELLOR	- 7.9%
LAWYER	- 7.9%
MENTAL HEALTH	- 8.5%
WOMEN'S ADVOCACY/ VICTIM'S SERVICES	- 6.6%



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