



Definition of

# Indigenous Homelessness

in Canada

# About The Definition's Design

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The colour scheme (red, black, white and yellow) and the representation of the colours as the four directions are used on the cover and within this report to embody significant meanings that exist within First Nations, Métis and Inuit Indigenous cultures.

A central philosophy for many Indigenous Peoples is connectedness. Across Indigenous cultures, the circle serves as a recurring shape that represents interconnectivity, as seen with Indigenous medicine wheels and the Indigenous perspective of “All My Relations.” This is the circle of life.

“All My Relations” is represented by the circular placement of the fireweed, sweetgrass and mayflowers. It is a phrase that encompasses the view that all things are connected, linked to their families, communities, the lands that they inhabit and the ancestors who came before them. Therefore, all beings—animate and inanimate—are viewed as worthy of respect and care and in possession of a purpose are related.

Fireweed is a symbol of Indigenous resistance and perseverance; it is also used as a medicine by many Indigenous cultures across Turtle Island. Its young shoots provide springtime nourishment, its mature stems provide a tough fibre for string and nets, and its flowers produce sweet nectar for bees and other insects. Fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*) grows virtually everywhere in North America, as does sweetgrass (*Hierochloa odorata*) and so these plants were chosen to represent of all three Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, braided sweetgrass is burned as an incense in various Indigenous ceremonies and can be counted as one of the most sacred medicines of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples on Turtle Island. It is still widely traded and used as a gift.

The deep red-purple of the fireweed signifies success and resistance during challenging times, as this particular flower blooms in summer, but the shoots emerge at the end of the winter season when the remnants of snow are still around.

The greyish-white mayflower is representative of Euro-style colonial settlement, as the first successful colony of English settlers in North America was aboard the Mayflower galleon. Mayflowers, despite their colonial representation, do have a spot within the circle of All My Relations – Algonquin, Cherokee, and Haudenosaunee Peoples have long used mayflowers (*Epigaea repens*) as medicine for kidney disorders, arthritis and relieving pain during childbirth. Therefore, mayflower, as depicted in the circle, represents both the invasive and destructive aspects of settlement, as well as hope because it can be incorporated into the relationship web of All My Relations for its pre-colonial uses to Indigenous Peoples.

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# About The Definition's Design

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Black, yellow, white and red are the four Indigenous colours commonly displayed in a well-known Indigenous medicine wheel. These four colours are often divided into four quadrants and hold meanings that are linked to the seven aspects of life's specific stages: four directions, four elements of life, four medicines, four seasons, and four stages of well-being. The yellow and red placements of the colours throughout the definition work are explicit in graphics. The white and black, however, are implicit and are represented in the white of the background and the black of the texts. The white and the black colours of the medicine wheel literally carry the message of Indigenous Homelessness and articulate it to the world with the help of the red and yellow accents; therefore, the document itself is the medicine wheel.

The placement of the title in its off-centre position was done intentionally, to signify that Indigenous experiences of homelessness are counter to the interconnectivity that is so central to Indigenous cultures. Indigenous individuals who are without home and shelter have been symbolically, as in their lived experiences of homelessness, displaced from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, their cultures, languages and identities.

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# Definition of Indigenous Homelessness in Canada

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*Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews.*

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## I) The Definition

Indigenous homelessness is a human condition that describes **First Nations, Métis** and **Inuit** individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing. Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships (Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012).

The complex interactions between these factors in Indigenous homelessness produce situations that intersect with the typology of four kinds of homelessness, as presented in the Canadian Definition of Homelessness. These include: Unsheltered, Emergency Sheltered, Provisionally Accommodated and At Risk of Homelessness. While aspects of these four categories are tied to current housing markets and the limited availability of affordable housing, Indigenous homelessness is not simply a response to such circumstances, but is best understood as the outcome of historically constructed and ongoing settler colonization and racism that have displaced and dispossessed First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples from their traditional governance systems and laws, territories, histories, worldviews, ancestors and stories.



Colonization of Indigenous bodies, minds and lands has had the historic and contemporary effect of traumatizing generations of First Nations, Métis and Inuit by disrupting traditional and vital domestic and territorial systems of governance, and obliterating timeless institutions responsible for the socialization of Indigenous Peoples. Linguicide<sup>1</sup> (McCarty, Romero, & Zepeda, 2006), the calculated extermination of Indigenous languages, was the key tool employed by the Canadian state in the intentional undermining and, in some cases, destruction of essential Indigenous social systems, cultures and worldviews. This deep cultural destabilization has produced—and continues to produce—individual and community traumas, responsible for the disproportionate levels of mental, cognitive, behavioural, social and physical challenges faced by Indigenous individuals, families, communities and Nations (Christensen, 2013). This thorough, complex and intentional unravelling of traditional social and cultural systems, known as cultural genocide, has created and prolonged, and continues to perpetuate, Indigenous homelessness in Canada (Menzies, 2007; The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015).

*Racism and discrimination aimed at Indigenous peoples are firmly entrenched in Canadian society*

The observable manifestations of intergenerational trauma in Indigenous Peoples, such as intemperance, addiction and street-engaged poverty, are incorrectly assumed to be causes of homelessness in popular and worldwide blame-the-victim discourses. Obscured behind these discourses are the historical processes and narrative prejudices practiced by the Canadian state and settler society that have produced Indigenous homelessness. Discourse about these processes disappears into myths about flawed Indigenous individuals: mental “illness,” substance abuse, recidivism, delinquency, and other myths.

Racism and discrimination aimed at Indigenous peoples are firmly entrenched in Canadian society, producing impenetrable systemic and societal barriers, such as a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, insufficient and culturally inappropriate health and education services, irrelevant and inadequate employment opportunities, and a crumbling infrastructure in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities. The fiduciary abandonment of Indigenous communities by the state, which has greatly contributed to Indigenous homelessness, is manifested by chronic underfunding by the federal, provincial and territorial governments of Canada.

The key to understanding a healthy community, Indigenous or not, is appreciating that cultivation of the human spirit is grounded in emplaced networks of significance. Grounded emplacement gives positive meaning to individual and collective life in social groups and society as a whole, and produces a healthy “sense of place,” as well as a healthy sense of identity. Yet the ineffective political and economic conditions cited above contribute to an assault on the socio-cultural practices and confidence of Indigenous populations, which has made impossible a meaningful sense of emplacement necessary for dignified social experiences for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples within broader Canadian society. External and foreign factors contribute greatly to rural and urban Indigenous homelessness by neglecting and starving healthy Indigenous relationships—

personal, social, cultural, spiritual and political. These factors are not innate to Indigenous cultural practices; they are instead external and state driven, imposed on, rather than generated by, Indigenous cultural practices.

In addition to uprooting the material and social vectors of experience that predated colonialism, European-style settlement on Indigenous land has extended colonialism's attack on Indigenous Peoples through official policies such as the Indian Act, residential schools, the Métis scrip system, Inuit relocations, and the encroachment and management of national and provincial parks (Sandlos, 2011), among others.

These policies, as well as unfulfilled treaties, physically displaced First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples into unviable, marginal geographic spaces. In these scattered urban and rural ghettos—considered by some to function similarly to African systems of apartheid—poverty, poor housing and economic disadvantage have become normalized.

In some of these marginalized reserve and community spaces, Indigenous Peoples have managed to prosper, but they are a small minority, and most people continue to experience great marginalization in these geographic and social settings. Contemporary Indigenous Homelessness can therefore be understood only by recognizing the injustice that undergirds these settlements and broken treaties (Peters & Robillard, 2009).

*Canadians  
must finally  
agree on some  
difficult truths...*

### **Canadians must finally agree on some difficult truths:**

1. Indigenous people do not choose to be homeless;
2. The experience is negative, stressful and traumatic;
3. Homelessness itself forces a disproportionate number of Indigenous people into activities deemed criminal by the state; and
4. The higher mortality rate in First Nations, Métis and Inuit has been ignored too long.

Lastly, and most importantly, because a lack of home, much as a sense of place or homeplace, is a culturally understood experience, we must develop and recognize an Indigenous definition of homelessness that must inform policy-making to solve the tragedy of Indigenous homelessness.





# **The 12 dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness**

as articulated by Indigenous Peoples  
across Canada

## Historic Displacement Homelessness

Indigenous communities and Nations made historically homeless after being displaced from pre-colonial Indigenous lands.



## Contemporary Geographic Separation Homelessness

An Indigenous individual's or community's separation from Indigenous lands, after colonial control.



## Spiritual Disconnection Homelessness

An Indigenous individual's or community's separation from Indigenous worldviews or connection to the Creator or equivalent deity.



## Mental Disruption and Imbalance Homelessness

Mental homelessness, described as an imbalance of mental faculties, experienced by Indigenous individuals and communities caused by colonization's entrenched social and economic marginalization of Indigenous Peoples.

## Cultural Disintegration and Loss Homelessness

Homelessness that totally dislocates or alienates Indigenous individuals and communities from their culture and from the relationship web of Indigenous society known as “All My Relations.”



## Overcrowding Homelessness

The number of people per dwelling in urban and rural Indigenous households that exceeds the national Canadian household average, thus contributing to and creating unsafe, unhealthy and overcrowded living spaces, in turn causing homelessness.

## Relocation and Mobility Homelessness

Mobile Indigenous homeless people travelling over geographic distances between urban and rural spaces for access to work, health, education, recreation, legal and childcare services, to attend spiritual events and ceremonies, have access to affordable housing, and to see family, friends and community members.



## Going Home Homelessness

An Indigenous individual or family who has grown up or lived outside their home community for a period of time, and on returning “home,” are often seen as outsiders, making them unable to secure a physical structure in which to live, due to federal, provincial, territorial or municipal bureaucratic barriers, uncooperative band or community councils, hostile community and kin members, lateral violence and cultural dislocation.

## Nowhere to Go Homelessness

A complete lack of access to stable shelter, housing, accommodation, shelter services or relationships; literally having nowhere to go.



## Escaping or Evading Harm Homelessness

Indigenous persons fleeing, leaving or vacating unstable, unsafe, unhealthy or overcrowded households or homes to obtain a measure of safety or to survive. Young people, women, and LGBTQ2S people are particularly vulnerable.



## Emergency Crisis Homelessness

Natural disasters, large-scale environmental manipulation and acts of human mischief and destruction, along with bureaucratic red tape, combining to cause Indigenous people to lose their homes because the system is not ready or willing to cope with an immediate demand for housing.<sup>2</sup>

## Climatic Refugee Homelessness

Indigenous peoples whose lifestyle, subsistence patterns and food sources, relationship to animals, and connection to land and water have been greatly altered by drastic and cumulative weather shifts due to climate change. These shifts have made individuals and entire Indigenous communities homeless.



# Defining Homelessness

## II) Understanding Home and Homelessness in an Indigenous Context as well as the Historical Context of Indigenous Homelessness in Canada

The following background section is intended to walk the reader through the historical context of Indigenous homelessness in Canada, providing a deeper understanding of what the concepts of “home” and “homeless” mean to First Nations, Métis and Inuit, as told to our research team by Indigenous community members during the consultation process between January 2016 and June 2017. Being disconnected from the holistic web of “All My Relations” (an Indigenous worldview common in First Nations, Métis and Inuit societies that sees all things in existence as interconnected) by Canadian colonization was cited again and again as the root cause of Indigenous homelessness in Canada. This section provides a brief overview of that disconnection, what caused it historically and what maintains it today, and also how it affects different subsets of Indigenous Peoples, including Elders, two-spirit people, youth, and others. This background section also parses the impact that settler perceptions, racism and the actions of state institutions have had on Indigenous Peoples over time, and how these have combined to produce Indigenous homelessness.

### Defining Homelessness

The Canadian Definition of Homelessness describes homelessness as “a range of housing and shelter circumstances, with people being without any shelter at one end, and being insecurely housed at the other.” This typology describes four kinds of settler homelessness in Canada: 1) Unsheltered (living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation); 2) Emergency sheltered (those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence); 3) Provisionally accommodated (those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenancy); and 4) At risk of homelessness (those who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards) (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012). This definition is rooted in Western ideas of homelessness. However, the Canadian Definition of Homelessness does not qualitatively distinguish between the experience of settler homelessness and Indigenous homelessness in Canada. Furthermore, the processes of settler colonialism dating back to the early 1600s have displaced and dispossessed Indigenous Peoples from their lands and—in some circumstances—



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*In many Indigenous cultures, the concept of “home” differs from Canadian settler understandings.*

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divorced them from their histories as pre-colonial people. The impact of separating Indigenous Peoples from their lands, waterways and cultures was calculated to achieve disintegration, as the colonial state imposed laws and acts upon Indigenous Peoples to assimilate or eradicate them. Examples include the Gradual Civilization Act, the Indian Act, Enfranchisement, the residential school system, widespread displacement of lands and traditional subsistence patterns, and others. Today’s exclusion of Indigenous people from housing has its roots in this early and ongoing purposeful destabilization of culture, which depended on the ethnic cleansing, linguicide, and domicide of Indigenous Peoples (Porteous & Smith, 2001).<sup>3</sup>

Recognizing Canada’s deliberate destruction of Indigenous domiciles and linguistic and cultural matrices in the past is a start, but we must still address the problem of Indigenous homelessness in current terms. The disproportionate exclusion of Indigenous people from suitable and stable housing in Canada is largely due to the failure of Canadian society to prioritize supporting the diversity of culturally appropriate housing systems that correlate to Indigenous expectations about “home.” Of course, a mechanism to ascertain Indigenous understanding of home in all its myriad forms and ranges is needed to solve the puzzle of Indigenous homelessness; with a clear understanding of what defines an Indigenous home, we can finally define an Indigenous range of housing options, and make this a priority. Establishing Indigenous concepts of home will allow governments, service providers and Indigenous people themselves to direct ample funding to culturally sensitive social, cultural and material supports for Indigenous Peoples, especially those in crisis situations (The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2012).

In short, Indigenous homelessness in Canada today can be explained, and solutions to it envisioned, only if we pay attention to the broader legacy of marginalization and displacement created by settler colonialism. With this in mind, we can deconstruct how specific current laws and prejudices in the housing sector link to key historical experiences of physical, cultural and spiritual displacement of Indigenous individuals, families, communities and Nations.

## Home

In many Indigenous cultures, the concept of “home” differs from Canadian settler understandings. Home is described from a Western perspective as an “animate social force that was generative of proper gender roles, work habits, and domestic ways,” (Homeward Trust Edmonton, Blue Quills First Nations College, & IRM Research and Evaluation, 2015, p. 19) and is commonly anchored to a brick and mortar building or another physical structure of habitation. In contrast, Indigenous worldviews conceptualize home more deeply as a web of relationships and responsibilities involving connections to human kinship networks; relationships with animals, plants, spirits and elements; relationships with the Earth, lands, waters and territories; and connection to traditional stories, songs, teachings, names and ancestors (Memmott, Long, Chambers, & Spring, 2003; Turner, 2008; Turner, 2014). The holistic Indigenous



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Scholar Julie Christensen further describes the Indigenous concept of home as a feeling of “rootedness,” meaning that an Indigenous person, community and Nation feel at home when they have a reciprocal responsibility...

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concept of home is understood as circles of interconnectedness that together form the heart of healthy Indigenous social and spiritual emplacement. These are known in Nehiyaw (Cree) and Michif (Métis) as *miyo wahkohtowin* (Kinship Relationships) (Homeward Trust Edmonton et al., 2015) or *niw\_hk\_m\_kanak* (All My Relations) (Chartrand, 2007); in Lakota as *mitakuye oyasin* (All My Relations) (Pengra, 2000); in Anishnaabemowin as *nindinawemaaganidok* (All My Relations); and in Inuktitut as *ilagiit* (kindred), to name only a few (Trott, 2005). Scholar Julie Christensen further describes the Indigenous concept of home as a feeling of “rootedness,” meaning that an Indigenous person, community and Nation feel at home when they have a reciprocal responsibility and stable relationship with such things as place, geography, animals, community, sense of belonging, identity, family, ancestors, stories and independence (Christensen, 2013). Without these connections, Indigenous Peoples feel “rootless,” unanchored or “homeless” (Christensen, 2013, p. 809). In 1893, the early sociologist Emile Durkheim outlined the importance of interpersonal solidarity and ritual public and private performances to reinforce and affirm the integrity of social webs of significance. These webs of significance, claims Durkheim, offer a sense of community and home to individuals, families, and communities (Durkheim, 1893). His work has influenced generations of thinkers and can shed new light on the myriad experiences of Indigenous homelessness. Durkheim’s work on social solidarity, and Christensen’s social theory of what constitutes home, are evidenced by the way colonial agencies mobilized to eradicate key Indigenous ritual practices and cultural institutions, such as matriarchy, adoption, ceremony and languages, en route to creating Canada’s housing apartheid.

The Indigenous concept of home, then, is a holistic metaphysical understanding of emplacement, rather than a built environment. Some sociologists and anthropologists have long understood the difficulty in accommodating Indigenous webs of significance, or cultures, into Western concepts of home, because Western ideas of home prioritize built forms over socially necessary connections. Kenneth Jackson (1985) and other housing scholars and historian Ian MacKay have provided ample evidence of how the Western ideal of home, associated with individual ownership of space and private property, became dominant under colonization (Jackson, 1985; Ian, 2000).<sup>4</sup> In the establishment of the liberal order framework of colonialism in Canada, webs of significance became less associated with a sense of place, replaced by structures of habitation, which are easily measured, valued and commodified, so that relationships of ownership came to be normalized in prevailing modern concepts of home.

Still, the modern Western description of home bears some similarity to that of Indigenous worldviews, in that each meaning concerns relationships and lifestyles that occur in places. Even so, each group—Indigenous and non-Indigenous—had very different beliefs, traditions and ideas about the politics of daily life, as stated by Adele Perry, so that the very concept of home was, in a sense, at the forefront of the conflict between settlers and Indigenous Peoples in Canada (2003). In fact, all major discussions of homelessness in urban and rural contexts address the conflict between dominant capital-driven notions of home space as a commodity and the anchor of social relationships (Lefebvre, 1991; Jackson, 1985; Caton 1990; Gans, 1995; DePastino 2003; Harvey 2008).

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Long before colonial rule imposed restrictions on Indigenous use of land and territories, Indigenous Peoples could opt to sleep under the stars, and would not necessarily have been classified as homeless by their communities, even when they did not live in traditional settlements or family domiciles. Settler discourses, and Canadian settlement itself, have transformed the Indigenous experience of being placed or rooted in territorial spaces and within All My Relations, reframing Indigenous existences into being without an adequate place to “be” within the foreign colonial polis. Indigenous Quandamooka Scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson asserts that the very existence of the settler colonial state serves to “define [Indigenous Peoples], the original owners, as not belonging, but as homeless and out of place” (Moreton-Robinson, 2003, p. 24). One’s place in nature and on the land, one’s relationships, and living in one’s community and territory were, in part, how home was conceptualized by pre-colonial Indigenous people. Structures of habitation may have been included in these older pre-colonial Indigenous understandings of home, but these understandings assumed that such structures were secondary in importance.

Furthermore, the terms “homeless” and “homelessness” are relatively modern Western concepts that became notable in discourses and policies in the latter half of the 1900s (Bahr, 1968; Jackson, 1985; Weissman, 2013). Some scholars argue that the problem of homelessness became a critical policy issue only in the late 1980s and 1990s, with the reduction in social services that provided housing and social supports for low-income Canadians. The sudden loss of support and housing stock forced thousands of people onto Canada’s streets and into its shelters, creating a bulge in homeless populations. This increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness caused a shift in the optics of homelessness; it redefined what the term homeless meant, as well as creating an increased interest in the issue. Hulchanski et al. (2009) showed that between the years 1851 to 2005, 4744 journal articles contained references to homelessness, and of those, 87% were published between 1985 and 2005 (Hulchanski, Campsie, Chau, Hwang, & Paradis, 2009). In light of the modern focus on the issue of homelessness, we can say that it took the increasing numbers of vulnerable settler women, children and veterans on Canadian city streets to shed light on the largely unexamined and out-of-control issue of Indigenous homelessness—a chronic, largely ignored and out-of-proportion problem that has existed in Canada for well over 200 years.

To put it plainly, hundreds of years of colonialism have eroded, undermined and supplanted Indigenous cultural practices and their inclusive concept of home, replacing these with the Western ideals of patriarchy and a personally owned independent home (Christensen, 2013). Thus, Indigenous homelessness has been incorrectly understood by settlers as being without a structure of habitation or being roofless (Somerville, 1992), when Indigenous homelessness is also about being without All My Relations. Being without a physical structure is only a symptom of the root causes of Indigenous homelessness, which are being without healthy social, cultural, spiritual, emotional and physical relationships (Christensen, 2013).

# All My Relations

*Despite Canada's ethnic diversity and praises for its multiculturalism, it remains difficult for the average citizen to feel they are part of an Indigenous kin system—to be included in All My Relations.*

It should be very clear by now that Indigenous homelessness in Canada is a continuum of experiences of homelessness that must include a study of relationships and laws, policies, market mechanisms and other factors. These vectors of experience for Indigenous societies demonstrate the Canadian state's failure to act as a role model for the mainstream population to be good kin members to Indigenous Peoples. Despite Canada's ethnic diversity and praises for its multiculturalism, it remains difficult for the average citizen to feel they are part of an Indigenous kin system—to be included in All My Relations. Yet Indigenous worldviews are inclusive: everyone is kin by virtue of our interconnectedness in time and space, or in experience and territory, if those words are better understood. We are all members of the community, and so creating this sense of membership becomes central to understanding what it means to be Indigenous and without home.

The key to creating this membership is recognition by the state of how Indigenous Peoples imagine and experience homelessness on their own terms. This is presented in the last section on the dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness. These collectively articulate the traumatic loss of relationships caused by colonial projects—residential schools, Inuit relocations, Métis dispossession after 1869 and 1885, among countless other colonial operations—imposed by settler authorities and civilians upon Indigenous Nations, communities and people (Menzies, 2007; The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015).

## The Impact of Perceptions

Indigenous homelessness has traditionally been debated through the lens of what Indigenous people are perceived to be lacking: good judgement, morality, industry, ability to plan, and other qualities. The perception that Indigenous people experiencing homelessness lack good character or moral fibre is a common misdirection in the blame-the-oppressed narrative so common in North American settler discourses. Because of their disproportionate numbers and high visibility in cities, homeless Indigenous people have been unfairly ridiculed, and their homelessness wrongly equated to their personal failings. This blame-based narrative is also a direct result of

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*Less understood, and harder to admit, are the deficiencies of the Canadian state in dealing with Indigenous Peoples.*

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a public education system that almost entirely lacks a truthful and accurate depiction of the country's history of Indigenous policy. Therefore, the state is not only responsible for the circumstances themselves, but also for the continued misrepresentation of colonial history that has caused such chronic structural issues as Indigenous homelessness. Furthermore, this blame-based narrative happens because the typical settler simply cannot see, or wilfully fails to admit, that the colonial system from which they benefit has caused the chronic structural issue of Indigenous homelessness in Canada. Simply put, it is easier to blame the oppressed than it is to rationally evaluate the problem or to admit complicity—unwitting or not—in the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous Peoples.

Less understood, and harder to admit, are the deficiencies of the Canadian state in dealing with Indigenous Peoples. Until recently, the state's role has been almost ignored in examining the root causes of Indigenous homelessness. These deficiencies include the government's lack of culturally appropriate policies and practices in dealing with Indigenous Peoples, the broken treaty promises it fails to address, the lack of supports to Indigenous people in rural and urban settings, inadequate housing and tenancies on and off reserve, and the state's failure to deliver vital infrastructure, health, education and employment services and opportunities to Indigenous communities—even when evidenced by clear and urgent need. Moreover, the failure to deliver often comes in the form of inter-jurisdictional bureaucracy and confusion. The constant failure of siloed federal, provincial, territorial and municipal bureaucracies to communicate effectively and work together to deliver services to Indigenous individuals and communities has been colloquially described as “passing the buck,” which also leads to easily preventable forms of Indigenous homelessness (see “Dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness – Emergency Crisis Homelessness” at the end of this document).

Moreover, some scholars have argued that capitalist states like Canada produce negative spaces—“the streets”—to warehouse their oppressed, poor and underprivileged; these marginalized people are known to the general public as “the homeless” (Lefebvre, 1974; Rotenberg & McDonough, 1993; Wright, 1997). Scholar Cornelius Castoriadis (1987) further asserts that dominant cultures project a set of social expectations on society's most vulnerable, leading these imagined social performance demands to become the dominant narratives (Castoriadis, 1997). Over time, these dominant narratives have evolved in Canada to become racialized, so that homelessness is viewed as an acceptable and even appropriate place for Indigenous Peoples to be (Weissman, 2017). Seeing Indigenous people being homeless, and then imposing a narrative to cast Indigenous homeless actors, has happened largely because the state and settlers have successfully displaced their blame for Indigenous homelessness onto the Indigenous individuals themselves. In this sense, keeping Indigenous people on the streets as a struggling group, with the rest of the “worst off cases,” reinforces the twisted imaginary of the city and its orders, or ranks, as decreed by the capitalist settler structure.

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*Research has shown that 1 in 15 Indigenous people in urban centres experiences homelessness, compared to only 1 in 128 for the general population (Belanger, Awosaga, & Head, 2013).*

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As a result of the stigma, prejudice, and state deficiencies within the more powerful mainstream, Canada's Indigenous Peoples experience homelessness at disproportionate rates in comparison with their non-Indigenous counterparts. But even this important comparison is simplistic. Because Indigenous Peoples are not a homogeneous group, it is necessary to examine the problems leading to Indigenous homelessness in a First Nations context, both on and off reserve, a Métis context, and an Inuit context. Profiles of Indigenous homelessness can be further broken down by examining general trends within the mixed Indigenous population to see which groups, based on age, gender classifications, and other markers are overrepresented within Indigenous populations. Schiff et al. (2016) have addressed how rural and urban contexts make easy comparisons about housing experiences more difficult (Schiff, Schiff, Turner, & Bernard, 2016).

## Statistics on Indigenous Homelessness

Research has shown that 1 in 15 Indigenous people in urban centres experiences homelessness, compared to only 1 in 128 for the general population (Belanger, Awosaga, & Head, 2013). In fact, in some Canadian cities, such as Yellowknife or Whitehorse, Indigenous people make up 90% of the homeless population (Patrick, 2014). Places like Thunder Bay and Winnipeg fare somewhat better, with an average of 50-70% of homeless people being Indigenous (CBC News, 2014). In Toronto, Canada's largest urban centre, Indigenous people constitute around 15% of the city's homeless population, even though they make up only around 0.5% of the total population (Statistics Canada, 2010). These statistics reveal that urban Indigenous people are eight times more likely to experience homelessness than non-Indigenous people.

Additionally, Indigenous homelessness is considered more wide-ranging than homelessness in the mainstream population, since it more often affects entire families; it has even been described as a community problem (Young, 1998) and "cultural depression" (Young, 1998, p. 60). As for all those who have endured homelessness, regardless of ethnicity, the lack we should speak of is not of moral character, but a loss of the sense of belonging to close social groups vital to our shared experience of dignity. On this point, research from *Raising the Roof* (2015) confirms that homelessness does indeed disproportionately affect families, especially "women and children – from Indigenous and racialized communities" (Gulliver-Garcia, 2015, p. 55). For example, consider that in Canada, "40% of Indigenous children live in poverty compared to the national average of 19%" (Gulliver-Garcia, 2015, p. 59). When we speak of Canada, then, we are addressing the second largest country on Earth as if it presented relatively uniform geographical and social conditions from place to place. Obviously, this is not so, and therefore the location where homelessness happens has implications for how it is experienced.



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*Data from the 2006 Census, CMHC (2011), states that: “over half (53%) of on-reserve Aboriginal households were living in homes that did not meet adequacy or suitability standards...”*

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Most of Canada’s Indigenous population resides off reserve, so it is understandable there would be significant housing issues among Indigenous people residing in urban centres. But dire, often tragic, housing issues also exist on reserve. Data from the 2006 Census, CMHC (2011), states that: “over half (53%) of on-reserve Aboriginal households were living in homes that did not meet adequacy or suitability standards, meaning these homes either needed major repairs, were crowded, or both,” which is a higher proportion than that of Indigenous people living off reserve (Patrick, 2014, p. 15). Based on data about urban housing stock, it has been shown that this standards failure rate of on-reserve housing is three times greater than that of housing in most urban centres.

Unfortunately, research on Métis and Inuit populations experiencing homelessness is limited, as most studies focus on status First Nations Peoples (Patrick, 2014). Research by Peters (2008), however, notes that Métis populations may be disproportionately disadvantaged due to their socio-economic status (Patrick, 2014). Moreover, CMHC (2004), highlights that while Indigenous groups residing in the Arctic and Subarctic face similar challenges as other First Nations and Métis populations (e.g., overcrowding and lack of affordable or adequate housing), they also face some unique challenges linked to the remote locations of Northern communities and the extreme climates they experience, such as exceptionally high “building materials and maintenance/operation costs (i.e., electricity, heating, water, wastewater services)” (Patrick, 2014, p. 17).



# Women, LGBTQ2S, and Child Homelessness

*... although studies on LGBTQ2S people are scarce, it is suspected that Indigenous people who identify as such are also disproportionately facing housing and related struggles.*

The composition of Canada's homeless Indigenous populations includes women, LGBTQ2S people, youth and Elders. For these vulnerable subgroups, the statistics and problems are particularly convoluted. According to Patrick, "Aboriginal females of all ages experience a disproportionate burden of housing problems," (2014, p. 39) and, as noted by the Native Women's Association of Canada (2011) and Culhane (2003), "Aboriginal women also face specific and persisting vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation, violence, and murder" (Patrick, 2014, p. 39-40). Such gendered experiences are common in the context of Indigenous homelessness and are not limited to women.

For example, although studies on LGBTQ2S people are scarce, it is suspected that Indigenous people who identify as such are also disproportionately facing housing and related struggles. Other research indicates that particular sexual identities and choices are heavily stigmatized in the housing sector. Once again, we can look at research on people living with HIV as having some bearing on this point. OHTN found that those living with HIV are disproportionately stuck in inferior housing. On this point, Heath et al. (1999) identified that "First Nations gay men were more likely to be unstably housed, living in poverty, depressed, to have been sexually abused as children, to have been raped and to have been prostituted than non-Aboriginal gay men" (Patrick, 2014, p. 48). Several studies (Higgitt et al., 2003; Novac et al., 2002; CMHC, 2001) have shown that LGBTQ2S youth are overrepresented among Canadian youth experiencing homelessness (Patrick, 2014). We know that Indigenous youth in general experience homelessness disproportionately, but again, research is scarce. However, the existing literature demonstrates the seriousness of this issue. For example, CMHC (2011) says that in Ottawa (2001), the number of Indigenous youth represented only 1.5 percent of the city's total population, but accounted for nearly 20% of the city's street youth (Patrick, 2014). Meanwhile, Goldberg et al. (2005), note that in Vancouver, Indigenous youth represent a meagre 2% of the city's overall population, but were 30% of its youth experiencing homelessness (Patrick, 2014).

Indigenous youth homelessness is one of the most challenging and prominent issues in homelessness, and understanding the issue today means confronting the dark architecture of the colonial divide-and-conquer mentality that many Canadians find hard to believe. Indigenous youth homelessness is rooted in the extremely damaging

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*Sheltering provided by Elders is not exclusively for grandchildren. Many Elders will allow their adult children to reside with them to protect them from homelessness.*

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social engineering projects of the residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and the massive numbers of Indigenous children in state care, which continues today. The sheer malevolence of these programs and the suffering imposed on Indigenous youth of all genders by residential schools and the Scoop is only now more widely understood. Beyond the unimaginable mistreatment of children at the hands of their colonial keepers, these projects were largely responsible for the breakdown of contemporary Indigenous family units, a dismantling that today contributes directly to youth homelessness and intergenerational trauma.

This is not solely a Canadian experience. In countries where efforts at reconciliation are more advanced, we find evidence to support the importance of our efforts here. In Australia, Keys Young identified the loss of parenting skills in Aboriginal parents as a key component impacting youth homelessness and underpinning child abuse, which may also be a driving force for youth homelessness and intergenerational trauma (1998). The Australian research also states that this loss has occurred due to “the removal of children from their families, the relocation of families from their communities, overcrowding, health problems, substance abuse, the fragmentation of the extended family and kinship networks ...what many people refer to as ‘the vicious circle,’” (Young, 1998, p. 57) a set of circumstances also representative of Indigenous experiences in Canadian society.

## **Reliance on Elders and Elder Homelessness**

KeysYoung (1998) notes that kin (usually grandparents) sometimes protect youth from homelessness by taking young people into their homes when parents are unable to care for them (Young, 1998). This observation about the role of community members brings us to our final category: Elders. Through supportive roles, Indigenous Elders shelter their kin from homelessness. We should note that traditionally, in some settler groups, this kind of care is a last resort and considered an anomaly. While to other non-European settler groups, Elders do commonly shelter their kin from experiencing homelessness. However, in recent years, it seems that adult children are living longer with their parents or elders, even in settler cultures. The key point here is that in the Indigenous worldview, such care is seen as typical or natural, rather than as an anomaly.

Sheltering provided by Elders is not exclusively for grandchildren. Many Elders will allow their adult children to reside with them to protect them from homelessness. Taking in grown family members is seen as traditional hospitality, and can make Elders vulnerable to a host of potential health and situational problems. For example, research has shown the ongoing demands on Elders to be pillars of the family takes a toll. As a result of ageing and poor health, many Elders need respite care and could benefit from moving into a long-term care facility. However, many opt not to do so in order to assist their families, or because specific Elder care does not exist on reserves, in remote communities, or in some urban centres. Not only are these Elders sacrificing

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*The inability of older generations to communicate the significance of what was taken from them, as well as the values and philosophies buried with the languages, leads to a generational breakdown of Indigenous values.*

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the care they need, they are risking their lives to provide childcare, and are exposed to substance abuse, domestic abuse, overcrowded conditions and other problems.

It is well known that precarious housing situations create a climate that fosters housing predators and housing takeovers affecting vulnerable people (Butera, 2013). The care role that Elders take on from a sense of loyalty predisposes them to predation and harm, as occurs with non-Indigenous people. Very often, Elders are subjected to the needs and whims of those they care for, but are also vulnerable to limitations in culturally specific care, which simply does not exist for them. Anecdotal information suggests that in the context of many Indigenous communities where drugs and alcohol use have reached epidemic proportions in young people, this can lead to sometimes violent treatment and displacement of Elders, or the removal of predators to the streets and shelters, if not to jail. Given their struggles with intergenerational trauma, systemic racism, and more, the probability that many of these youth (or their parents) will transition into the supportive caregiver role in their respective families is likely rather low. That said, fears of an increase in homelessness—youth homelessness, adult homelessness and family homelessness—as a result of pressures on Indigenous kinship degrading support networks are warranted. Support provided by Elders across communities is unsustainable and lacks adequate government supports. Regrettably, as this generation of grandparents passes away, many members of the younger generations (i.e., the parents and children that bear the burden of intergenerational trauma) will likely be ill-equipped to play the support role to their kin that their Elders have done. Linguicide and state-directed cultural destruction imposed by residential schools, Métis displacements and Inuit territorial dislocations, among other acts play a prominent ongoing role in this cycle of intergenerational trauma. The inability of older generations to communicate the significance of what was taken from them, as well as the values and philosophies buried with the languages, leads to a generational breakdown of Indigenous values.

# State Institutions

*Some scholars have named the purposeful attempts by state institutions at the extinguishment of Indigenous cultures, worldviews, and relationships (collectively known as All My Relations) as cultural genocide.*

Before presenting the dimensions, we must address the dubious proposition of the Canadian state. A number of sociologists suggest that institutions are not by themselves malevolent; that is, they don't exist to create problems for people. They are instead necessary and inevitable systems of negotiation, arising out of the history of cultures and the perpetual experience of people's movements through webs of cultural significance and the material world. However, some scholars, such as Luc Boltanski (2011), argue that the people, including those who empower institutions through electoral practices, are to be held accountable for troubling institutional performances. This may sound negative, but is actually hopeful: it means we can change how institutions work for people by repopulating them with better people and ideas, through re-education and reformation. However, dominant governing Canadian institutions have a dark history of treating Indigenous Peoples poorly, even despicably. Some scholars have named the purposeful attempts by state institutions at the extinguishment of Indigenous cultures, worldviews, and relationships (collectively known as All My Relations) as cultural genocide.

The state-sponsored erosion of All My Relations is further compounded by an Indigenous fear of colonial institutions that have had long and far-reaching effects upon First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. Indigenous Peoples in both rural and urban settings will, in some circumstances, avoid interaction with Western institutions. Avoiding settler colonial institutions can represent an Indigenous effort to assert agency, preserve dignity, ensure cultural autonomy and maintain traditional worldviews; it may also represent a basic lack of trust. However, there are times when interactions with institutions are desired or required. The quandary then is that even when the will to access institutional supports exists, many First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities are so remote, and the people so unsure of how to use the system, that, in practical terms, the system's existence and the will to use it are of no use (Turner et al., 2010).

Moreover, First Nations, Métis and Inuit from remote communities will often travel great distances between urban and rural settings to attempt to access health, education, legal and governmental services, yet have great difficulty accessing those services, having never been provided with adequate information or knowledge about interacting with either relatively close or far-off Western services. Distance, lack of knowledge and culture shock all make accessing services nearly impossible for sojourning Indigenous people. For example, an Inuit from Resolute Bay may want to procure identification

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*...by not investing in Indigenous Peoples on par with investments made in larger settler society, Canada has forced First Nations, Métis and Inuit to rely on temporary solutions to survive systemic poverty...*

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to work and access education for a planned move to Ottawa, but does not know what an identity clinic is, what forms to fill out, what ID is needed to obtain work or where to acquire such forms for that ID, and may not even speak English or French to be able to fill out the forms or communicate with state representatives. To be Indigenous means to understand exclusion and marginality from a number of geographic and social positions, and these are quite distinct from mainstream experience.

Exclusion takes many forms. Beyond the common spatialized understanding we have of remoteness, in which an Inuit might be very far from a city, for many of Canada's Indigenous Peoples, exclusion is subtler, understood by the social, economic and political isolation forced on people regardless of where they live, including cities. Language barriers, lack of knowledge, culture shock and racism isolate, impede and exclude Indigenous individuals from straightforward fruitful interactions with mainstream society. This reinforces a sense of low self-worth and loss of connectedness, contributing directly to the disproportionate number of Indigenous homeless people in Canada (Turner et al., 2010).

Conversely, as noted by Turner et al., many Indigenous individuals have had so much lifelong interaction with Western institutions—through state imposition and interference—that they have become “institutionalized,” (Turner et al., 2010, p. 8) or “left socially dependent and unable to address their personal [or community] needs” (Turner et al., 2010, p. 10). Over time, and in the absence of meaningful economic and social opportunities on First Nations reserves, in Métis or Inuit settlements, or in cities, dependence on welfare and other aid is inevitable. Furthermore, widespread Canadian opinion has historically and continues today to incorrectly assume that Indigenous welfare dependency is desired by First Nations, Métis or Inuit Peoples. It is important to know that the false assumption that Indigenous people want to be dependent on the state has been created and reinforced by Canada's many Indigenous management state institutions—the reserve system, the Indian Act, Treaty Status and provincial welfare programs, among others, being the main causes of this kind of institutional dependency—and not by Indigenous people's desire to remain dependent (Turner et al., 2010; Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012).

Thus, the root of First Nations, Métis and Inuit institutional dependency rests not on those who have been made dependent by the state, but on the chronic and intergenerational conditions of poverty and marginalization created by the federal, provincial and territorial governments of Canada. The subsequent underfunding of Indigenous languages, education, vocational training, housing, transportation, health services and infrastructures in Indigenous communities remains a legacy of unchanged governmental policies and practices (Turner et al., 2010). Indigenous lawyer and scholar Pam Palmater notes that by not investing in Indigenous Peoples on par with investments made in larger settler society, Canada has forced First Nations, Métis and Inuit to rely on temporary solutions to survive systemic poverty, limited opportunities and a complete lack of adequate housing and health care; in doing so, Canada has failed to act as a “good relation” within the Indigenous worldview network of All My Relations (2011).<sup>5</sup>



# Racism

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*Finding a place to live in rural or urban Canada can be extremely difficult if you are Indigenous; more so if you are Indigenous and already dealing with homelessness.*

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Underscoring our discussion of the pathways to Indigenous homelessness is the climate of racism in Canada. Historical and contemporary settler racism towards First Nations, Métis and Inuit is well documented. Racism makes accessing Canadian society difficult, and even impossible, for those Indigenous individuals and families at risk of being homeless, or those already homeless. Whether living in urban or rural settings, Indigenous people describe the uncertainties of life caused by the underlying racism that dominates settler society as making it hard to find work, obtain safe, secure and tenable housing, and access support services with dignity.

Finding a place to live in rural or urban Canada can be extremely difficult if you are Indigenous; more so if you are Indigenous and already dealing with homelessness. Landlords and employers often screen and exclude prospective First Nations, Métis and Inuit renters and employees—on physical phenotypic (visual) grounds, or on seeing Indian status or Métis citizenship cards, or the applicant's self-identification as Indigenous. These exclusionary tactics are once again based on false racial assumptions and stereotypes, learned symbolic imageries, such as the “drunken homeless Native” and the “lazy Indian,” each of which uses the optics of homelessness to script false expectations about people, and to make it extremely hard for Indigenous people to procure work or housing. This is especially true of Indigenous women who have low incomes or are single mothers, or both, who are presumed to be promiscuous, or “on welfare.” The poverty rate for the latter group is more than double that for non-Indigenous women, and their housing issues are “exacerbated by the racism” they experience (Homeward Trust Edmonton et al., 2015). As suggested earlier, the housing that Indigenous peoples do manage to secure is often without secure tenure, unfit for human habitation, or is found located in marginalized or dangerous neighbourhoods. We can conclude from this that marginal spaces and zones of the city are left for the most marginalized, and this includes a disproportionate number of Indigenous people.



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*Indigenous Peoples in Canada, both housed and homeless, in urban and rural settings, describe settler-on-Indigenous racism as pervasive, debilitating, limiting, suffocating, unending, violent, demeaning and something to be endured daily.*

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Racism is also a force that dehumanizes social experiences. Often, when a person moves from a rural community to an urban setting to seek a better life, a certain degree of culture shock is to be expected. However, most Indigenous people experience stark racism that both discourages their enthusiasm and works against their successful reestablishment. Even those Indigenous people who have been raised in and are familiar with urban settler life describe the ubiquitous and restrictive nature of racism, which keeps them from full, fruitful and unimpeded participation in Canadian society.

In sum, Indigenous Peoples in Canada, both housed and homeless, in urban and rural settings, describe settler-on-Indigenous racism as pervasive, debilitating, limiting, suffocating, unending, violent, demeaning and something to be endured daily. Racism pervades all levels and structures of Canadian settler society, both institutional and individual—government, front-line and emergency services, community supports, law enforcement, education, work life, and more—and it creates, complicates, perpetuates and ensures patterns of Indigenous homelessness across Canada (Homeward Trust Edmonton et al., 2015).

With this final word on racism, we can now look at a concrete list of the 12 dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness compiled from the lived and expressed collective experiences of Indigenous contributors. In doing so, we are departing from settler-scribed approaches by seeking to express a diversity of homelessness definitions, rather than reducing Indigenous homelessness to a simplified formula. Simplifications are easier to fund and manage, but they do not speak to the reality of Indigenous homelessness experiences.



# **The 12 dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness in Canada<sup>6</sup>**

How to Use the 12 Dimensions

The 12 dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness come from over 1.5 years of consultation with Indigenous scholars, front-line workers, community members, and those who have experienced homelessness first-hand or who work in the field of Indigenous homelessness. The consultation pool consisted of over 50 Indigenous people. As we spoke with First Nations, Métis and Inuit from across the country, 12 specific kinds of Indigenous homelessness were identified. It was apparent that each person and community had experienced degrees of homelessness, and that each had endured them in different ways. Some Indigenous communities and individuals had experienced one, two, or three of the dimensions of Indigenous homelessness described here, while others had experienced all 12. The severity to which a community or person had experienced Indigenous homelessness depended largely on how many different dimensions were directly affecting them. In this way, the 12 dimensions can be layered, one on top of the other, to illustrate the scope and severity of an Indigenous individual's or community's homelessness, as well as to find solutions to their particular needs.

To offer an example of the layering of the dimensions as it relates to a residential school survivor, we may see that the family of the person in question may have been displaced historically and lost stores of traditional knowledge associated with their ancestral lands (dimension 1 - *Historic Displacement Homelessness*), which created a base layer of trauma in their kin group. That same person's time in residential school would most likely have destroyed or greatly harmed their connection to kin, language and Indigenous spirituality (dimensions 3 - *Spiritual Disconnection Homelessness* and 5 - *Cultural Disintegration and Loss Homelessness*). The loss of culture and community, and the trauma that accompanies these losses, could also have created an unbalanced or unhealthy mental state in that person as they grew up in a loveless environment (dimension 4 - *Mental Disruption and Imbalance Homelessness*). Upon returning to their home community, that residential school attendee would most likely be seen as an outsider who has little in common with their kin or community; thus, through exclusion and alienation, they are pushed out and left with nowhere to live in their home community (dimensions 8 - *Going Home Homelessness* and 9 - *Nowhere to Go Homelessness*). Upon seeing that they do not fit in culturally, or possess knowledge of how to subsist and hunt (skills learned while growing up in a community), and are houseless and unwanted on the home reserve, that residential school survivor would decide to move to the city to establish themselves and put it all behind them (dimension 7 - *Relocation and Mobility Homelessness*); but, upon arrival, they face an impenetrable wall of racism and general lack of knowledge of how to access urban employment and housing services. The totality of this one Indigenous person's homelessness (dimensions 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9) will eventually lead to a chronic state of unsheltered homelessness, as defined by the Canadian definition of homelessness. By identifying the dimensional layers, or degrees, of that residential school survivor's Indigenous homelessness, we can at last articulate all the contributing factors leading to their particular experience of homelessness, which we hope can be used to help find a tailored solution to housing needs that is also sensitive to the need for healthy community relationships. The same layering strategy must be applied on an individual basis to understand, articulate and help find solutions for each homeless First Nations, Métis or Inuit person or community.



**1) Historic Displacement Homelessness:** Indigenous kin groups, tribes, communities and Nations removed or displaced from pre-colonial lands, territories, waterways, mobility patterns, seasonal travel, hunting and subsistence patterns, and harvesting and berry-picking grounds.

Subsistence, for many Indigenous populations, depended (and may still depend to a certain extent) on access to traditional lands and resources (Horvath, Dickerson, MacKinnon, & Ross, 2002). Colonial projects have ensured that Canada's Indigenous Peoples are alienated from such lands and resources. Historic displacement homelessness has a spiritual facet through the loss of languages and traditions that were integral to culture, and which were damaged by separation from traditional lands and being unable to carry out traditional activities, such as seasonal hunts. However, colonial projects that achieved historical displacement also created another facet of displacement homelessness, since these projects ensured that Indigenous Peoples were placed in precarious economic positions, were rendered dependent and lacked opportunities to thrive. This dimension overlaps with mainstream concepts of homelessness, as it is about living in substandard conditions that contribute to a myriad of serious problems, and ultimately put people at risk of homelessness. Consider the following four colonial projects.

### The Reserve System

Reserves are regions of land allocated exclusively to Indigenous people (typically First Nations bands) as per the Indian Act and treaties, but are not actually owned by those people. Instead, the Crown holds the parcel of land in trust for the band. While band members have rights to reside on reserves, the Indigenous and Northern Affairs actually controls a great deal of activity on a reserve.<sup>7</sup>

Reserves were seen as a way to overcome land disputes that arose with increasing migration of settlers who would occupy traditional Indigenous lands without consent from the bands.<sup>8</sup> The reserve system as we know it today was not mutually agreed upon; in some cases, bands chose to negotiate and share land with the settlers in exchange for guarantees that "traditional activities such as hunting and fishing would continue undisturbed," but did not consent to being "confined within a small allotment indefinitely."<sup>9</sup> In fact, many reserves are located on only a fraction of a band's traditional land, or not on traditional land at all. Also noteworthy is that these reserves tended to be located on undesirable rural or remote plots of land that were unfit for large-scale farming (despite the alleged European settler aim of encouraging the adoption of agriculture by Indigenous Peoples).<sup>10</sup> Tanya Gulliver-Garcia notes that, "Conditions on reserves and in many northern and rural communities are horrendous, with [many] lacking basic necessities including electricity or clean, running water" (2015, p. 55) Not only can such displacement from traditional lands lead to cultural and spiritual losses and therefore spiritual homelessness, but the disadvantages associated with residing on such remote and insufficient land puts Indigenous Peoples at increased risk of homelessness.

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*The pass system is said to have been implemented to ensure that Indian Affairs Agents had control over business activities on a reserve...*

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### **The Pass System**

Another colonial project established in connection with the reserve system and in response to uprisings of Canada's Indigenous Peoples is the pass system, which existed from 1884 into the 1940s, and was repealed in 1951 (Joseph, 2015). The pass system is said to have been implemented to ensure that Indian Affairs Agents had control over business activities on a reserve, so that permission from the Agent was required for an outsider to do business with a band member on the reserve (Government of Canada, 2010). However, it was interpreted and applied quite differently, with First Nations people required to obtain permission from the Agent in order to leave the reserve, creating a prison-like situation (Government of Canada, 2010).

The pass system, of course, relates to historic displacement homelessness in many ways. Notably, if a band was nomadic, semi-nomadic, engaging in seasonal travel or seasonal hunts, in need of accessing natural resources off reserve due to the poor condition of many reserved lands, and so on, the pass system could be very problematic as decisions surrounding mobility would be at the discretion of the Agent assigned to a given region. Moreover, given that reserves often dislocated First Nations Peoples from traditional lands, important ceremonial sites would often be located off reserve, so that accessing those lands would continue to be an integral part of culture and spirituality for the band.<sup>11</sup> The pass system also contributed to the subsistence barriers created by the reserve system, which ensured a lack of opportunity to thrive, and further alienated First Nations people from their traditional lands and cultural practices, rendering many spiritually homeless.

### **Destruction of the Métis and First Nations Bison Hunts**

Another colonial project aimed at forcing Canada's Indigenous Peoples into a stationary and agricultural lifestyle was the destruction in the Nineteenth Century of the Métis and First Nations seasonal bison hunts. Following the bison required a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle, as herds were transient, moving among pastures through the seasons in search of mature grass to feed on. The bison hunts were integral to Métis culture in particular—it was, for many, their primary source of food, played a significant role in their economy (e.g., the fur trade) and governance structure, and was, in essence, the key to an independent lifestyle (Young & Préfontaine, 2003).

Colonialism played both inadvertent and intentional roles in the destruction of the bison hunts. Inadvertent actions reduced the bison population in three ways. Agriculture was at the forefront of Canadian settler society, and farming required planting grains to feed cattle, which took away from natural prairie grasses, the bison's primary food source; the construction of railways also reduced the availability of natural grasses (Young & Préfontaine, 2003). Canadian settlers also sought to join bison hunting for both food and economic purposes, which meant the bison were severely overhunted (Foster, 2015). Technological advancements in hunting weapons also allowed for greater ease of use and accuracy, thus contributing to the overconsumption.



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*The destruction of the bison hunt, along with many other factors that followed, led to the dispersal of the Métis throughout the continent.*

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In terms of intentional harms, the American government implemented policies to systemically hunt the bison to cause their extinction, which was an attempt to “starve Aboriginal peoples into dependence” (Foster, 2015). This, of course, affected Canada’s Indigenous Peoples as well. While the bison were not made extinct, they became endangered, and could no longer be relied upon for subsistence by the Métis, which motivated First Nations and Métis to enter into treaties with the Canadian government (Foster, 2015). The destruction of the bison hunt, along with many other factors that followed, led to the dispersal of the Métis throughout the continent. With the loss of the bison, a core component of Métis culture (mobility and free commerce), and various difficulties the Métis had navigating Canadian settler society, they were historically displaced and put in a precarious situation much like those of other Canadian Indigenous groups, leaving them at a loss spiritually, and lacking the tools for subsistence. Many other Métis ways of living, such as fur trading and small-scale hunting, were also restricted by settler encroachment on traditional lands. The loss of the bison is just one of many historical displacements suffered by the Métis and First Nations plains peoples.

### **Métis Scrip**

In Saskatchewan and Manitoba’s settlement period (1860–1929), many Métis families, including women with children, did not have land allotment as did First Nations nations and people living on reserves. The Métis had their Aboriginal title to the land, a right enshrined in the Royal Proclamation of 1763, extinguished through the Scrip system, first implemented after the first Red River Resistance (commonly known as the First Riel Rebellion) of 1869, the Northwest Resistance of 1885, and the Numbered Treaty Era that ran from the 1870s to the 1920s. These dispossessed and landless Métis were known as squatters or “Road Allowance people” who lived on Crown land, living in ditches or on the side of roads and railways. Road Allowance life, and the extreme poverty and liminality it entailed, has been described as one of the worst cases of marginalization and erasure of Indigenous Peoples in Canadian history. So thorough was the marginalization of Road Allowance people that few Canadians, Indigenous or otherwise, even know about or understand the plight and history of these historically dispossessed and landless Métis (Leclair, 2002; Andersen, 2008; Graham & Dayoren, 2015).

### **The Inuit High Arctic Relocations**

The last colonial project we discuss here is the High Arctic relocations of Inuit people that “involved two movements of Inuit [from Inukjuak, Quebec] in 1953 and 1955” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994, p. 1 & 7). This brought about the migration of about 92 Inuit, including some Pond Inlet Inuit from Baffin Island, who “assisted the Quebec Inuit in adjusting to conditions in the High Arctic” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994, p. 1 & 7) Inukjuak and Pond Inlet had been home to Quebec Inuit Peoples for centuries, whereas the High Arctic Islands had not (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994). In most ways, Inukjuak was better set up

for habitation than the High Arctic Islands, yet the Canadian government has asserted that “life in Inukjuak was not sustainable...[and] that, despite some misunderstandings and unfulfilled promises, [and] although there was some unforeseeable hardship and a very difficult first year in the High Arctic, overall, life was satisfactory for the relocatees” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994, p. 2). Were this true, perhaps so many relocated Inuit would not have returned to Inukjuak in the 1970s and 1980s (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994).

This particular colonial project has been uniquely difficult to address, as the Canadian government and Quebec Inuit Peoples have incredibly different accounts of what happened leading up to, during and after the relocation. For example, consider the following from a report on the relocations by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1994, p. 1 & 9):

The relocatees have asserted for many years that they were treated unjustly. Their cause has been supported by the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the national political organization representing Inuit, and its regional affiliate in northern Quebec, Makivik Corporation... The relocatees consider that the relocation was unnecessary because their life in Inukjuak was satisfactory; that the relocation scheme was misrepresented to them; that the government made promises it had no intention of keeping; that the relocation was imposed on them against their own wishes [by the Department of Resources and Development, which was responsible for Inuit affairs at the time]; that they suffered great hardship and became virtual prisoners in the High Arctic. They believe they were sent to the High Arctic to assert Canadian Sovereignty.

Despite many discrepancies between these two perspectives of the relocations, there are some undisputed facts, and for our purposes in the context of historic displacement homelessness, it is particularly noteworthy that it was common knowledge at the time that Inuit people had a distinct relationship to their traditional land (Inukjuak included) and to their kinship networks, and so it was reasonably foreseeable that “any relocation to a distant place for an extended period would be very” disruptive to their way of life (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994, p. 21). Much like the other three colonial projects described here, this project also ensured separation from traditional lands, which undermines culture, subsistence patterns and kinship networks and creates spiritual losses. It also pushed the Quebec Inuit into a substandard, dependent lifestyle lacking necessities.

The examples cited here are not the only means by which Indigenous Peoples have been dispossessed of their historic homelands and ways of life, but have been used to show how First Nations, Inuit and Métis, although very different kinds of Indigenous Peoples, have all experienced historic displacement homelessness.



**2) Contemporary Geographic Separation Homelessness:** An Indigenous individual's or community's separation from current tribal, community and national lands, territories, waterways, mobility patterns, seasonal travel, hunting and subsistence patterns, and harvesting and berry-picking grounds. Historic displacement homelessness and contemporary geographic separation homelessness are dimensions that speak to the severing of Indigenous Peoples from their relationship to the land and its resources, caused by settler encroachment and state usurpation of the Indigenous lands, territories and waterways. Together, these two types of homelessness stand as the largest contributors to and kinds of Indigenous homelessness in Canada.



**3) Spiritual Disconnection Homelessness:** An Indigenous individual's or community's separation from the ethos of Indigenous culture, which includes, but is not limited to: a connection to traditional lands (in the absence of which one experiences feelings of a lack of belonging); connection with family and kinship networks; having knowledge of one's role and place in Indigenous community, which allows for a sense of identity (Young, 1998); and a connection to the Creator or equivalent deity. On the last point, it is particularly noteworthy that in separating Indigenous Peoples from spiritual belief systems, there has been near-total destruction of and disconnection from traditional spirituality, including worldviews, ceremonies, teachings, stories (Bird, 2011), Elders (Christensen, 2013), ancestors, other-than-human helpers and spirits. This is to say that spiritual homelessness, in part, describes the loss of connection to a belief system practiced by and within the web of All My Relations. The spiritual disconnection dimension is best understood as a disconnection from Indigenous "spirit," which includes, but is not limited to, separation from: traditional lands; family and kinship networks; identity; language; and the practice and knowledge of spirituality, worldviews or cosmology. While a loss of such facets of Indigenous culture are pertinent to other dimensions discussed in this section, such as historic displacement homelessness, contemporary geographical separation homelessness, and cultural disintegration and loss homelessness, spiritual disconnection homelessness is more about "a state of mind [and spirit]... rather than a physical state of being" (Young, 1998, p. 26). Spiritual homelessness can perhaps be best thought of as a broad category that is interrelated with and forms an umbrella over many of the other typologies of Indigenous homelessness.



**4) Mental Disruption and Imbalance Homelessness:** Indigenous urban and rural homelessness contains an imbalance of "a good frame of mind," or as said in Anishnaabemowin "*mino bimadiziwin*;" it is a mental disruption and homelessness caused by settler colonization's entrenched policies of discrimination, racism, exclusion, attempts at forced assimilation and economic marginalization experienced on an enormous scale by Indigenous Peoples. The mental disruption and imbalance homelessness dimension highlights the loss of healthy mental functioning that occurs in Indigenous Peoples after they are subjected to the rigours of colonial pressures, which ultimately, despite assimilative projects, worked to exclude Indigenous Peoples from Canadian settler society. A loss of healthy functioning, or "*mino bimadiziwin*," has led to mental health challenges in First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families and

communities, and is passed across generations through a breakdown of generational socialization, which has expressed itself as a form of Indigenous homelessness in Canada. In some cases, this intergenerational trauma and mental disruption have actually led to the development of mental disorders, and tends to be related to substance use, domestic violence and child abuse. Indigenous people struggling with such disabilities and related issues are at very high risk of homelessness.



**5) Cultural Disintegration and Loss Homelessness:** An Indigenous individual's or community's loss of Indigenous cultures, knowledges, identities, names, languages, gender roles, songs, traditions, rites of passage, kin groups, clans, moieties and broader community supports. The cultural disintegration and loss dimension of homelessness speaks to the loss of family and cultures endured by Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Being without family, culture, language and identity totally dislocates and alienates Indigenous individuals, families, communities and Nations from the relationship web of Indigenous society, or All My Relations, and represents one of the most egregious forms of colonial violence perpetrated upon First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples by Canadian colonialism.

A particularly important facet of cultural disintegration and loss homelessness pertains to the loss of matriarchy in relation to Indigenous concepts of home. In traditional Cree societies, women run their households, and are said to care for both the physical being and the spiritual aspect of their families. Women are revered, and cannot be separated from concepts of home. Colonization has, among other things, effectively dismantled matriarchy and enforced patriarchy, so that we are now in an era where Indigenous women are significantly devalued. Consider the alarming rates of domestic violence against Indigenous women and missing and murdered Indigenous women. The devaluing of women, who were once a central part of many Indigenous cultures, has left a spiritual and cultural void in the fabric of Canadian society (Homeward Trust Edmonton et al., 2015).

Another important facet of cultural disintegration is the inability to live “in a good way,” part of which involves “having a clear mind and a clear understanding of your gifts and how they can be used to help people” (Homeward Trust Edmonton et al., 2015, p. 27). This involves “all aspects of who we are as individuals, families, and communities” (Homeward Trust Edmonton et al., 2015, p. 27). This speaks to notions of reciprocity and the holistic nature of Indigenous cultures. Colonization has created hurdles to living “in a good way.” For example, so many Indigenous people are facing individual struggles as a result of colonization and various colonial projects (e.g., struggling to overcome trauma, homelessness, mental health issues, substance use issues, identity crises, and other struggles) that they may be unable to assist others in connecting to, enjoying and sharing their Indigenous cultures the way they would if they were thriving. This impediment can also be tied to a loss of language, which some research notes as one of the most significant losses faced by Indigenous Peoples (Homeward Trust Edmonton et al., 2015). Loss of language is associated with a loss of purpose in life, in that language and other facets of culture are the keys to understanding one's societal

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role (Homeward Trust Edmonton et al., 2015). Language, in particular, is said to have been the vehicle through which moral standards were entrenched within Indigenous societies, and its loss brought about “confusion and normalization of dysfunctional roles and behaviours such as poor parenting, loss of attachment, poor education and [eventual] homelessness” (Homeward Trust Edmonton et al., 2015, p. 31). It is not only the loss of languages that is significant, but also the manner in which languages were forcefully repressed. Generations of residential school survivors were made to believe their languages and cultures were savage and inferior, and they were physically, emotionally and sexually abused as methods of discouraging the use of their languages. The sense of shame associated with this history continues to deter the transmission of languages to today’s youth. The consequence is that entire generations of Indigenous Peoples feel caught in a type of purgatory between cultures, not feeling a sense of belonging to either. It is the psychological and social consequences of the residential school system that have predominantly led to the symptoms listed here.



**6) Overcrowding Homelessness:** The number of people per dwelling First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, and in urban and rural Indigenous households, that exceeds the national Canadian household average (Government of Canada, 2015), thus contributing to and creating unsafe, unhealthy and overcrowded living spaces, in turn causing homelessness. Additionally, it can place unreasonable strain on family finances, energy utilities, health standards and comfortable living space. These stressors can exist singly or occur in constellations to qualify as overcrowding. Overcrowding also creates a risk that the official tenant may be evicted as a result of falling behind in paying rent, which may happen with the higher utilities and food costs seen with more people sharing a dwelling than the dwelling is designed to house, especially if not everyone has money to contribute); another risk is neighbours complaining about the density population of the household (Young, 1998). It is important to understand that, from an Indigenous perspective, overcrowding should be viewed through both density measures and the stress that can result from overcrowding (Merritt et al., 1991). This is to say that:

With small living conditions that do not cater for the number of people living in a house, it can be suggested that the living conditions are not suitable and are causing stress. Large numbers of people within a small setting may impact substance consumption and social interactions with those in close proximity. Another stress inducing stimuli is the inappropriate behavior of people as a result of substance abuse.<sup>12</sup>

For example, overcrowding is sometimes a direct pathway to crisis situations that may escalate to domestic violence or result in a breakdown of family dynamics. This may best be elucidated in the following quotation from an Indigenous Community Organization that participated in the Keys Young study (2006, p. 101):



If you've got six adults and eight children, which is pretty common, you have health and hygiene problems, and social problems, with families being exposed to arguments with other members of their family because of children being chastised. Then these things lead to other things...families break up, move out somewhere. It leads to a breakdown in family groups.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that to some Indigenous Peoples, overcrowding may be a problem—a symptom of a lack of affordable housing—but to others, it may be a cultural practice and a choice (Memmott et al., 1991). Likewise, not all living arrangements that appear as overcrowded conditions occur due to financial hardships, and as noted by Memmott et al., “it certainly cannot be assumed that high household densities regarded as ‘crowded’ by non-Aboriginal standards are necessarily perceived as being stressful by Aboriginal groups” (1991, p. 12). Thus, the members of a household need to be consulted about whether they consider their homes to be overcrowded, while also exploring areas such as health, financial costs and level of comfort with the number of people living together.



**7) Relocation and Mobility Homelessness:** Mobile Indigenous people experiencing homelessness travel over both short and long geographic distances, and between urban and rural spaces. This travel may be temporary, seasonal, intermittent or cyclical, with some people using two or more of these four types of travel. Mobile Indigenous homeless people travel for access to work, subsistence, health services, education, legal proceedings, access to childcare and visiting children under state or private care, attendance and participation in spiritual events and ceremonies, recreation, access to affordable housing, and to see family, friends or community. For many Indigenous people, the driving factor attracting them to urban centres is often economic opportunity, while the most common motivation to return to a home community is a death (e.g., returning home to attend a funeral) (Homeward Trust Edmonton et al., 2015). Some research suggests that “mobility is often cyclical, with the same individuals moving [back and forth] between urban and community-based locations,” and that moving back to one’s home community actually necessitates subsequent moves, rather than remedying primary issues (Homeward Trust Edmonton et al., 2015, p. 38).

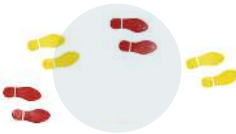


**8) Going Home Homelessness:** An Indigenous individual or family who grew up outside their home community, territory or lands, who returns “home” and cannot secure a physical structure in which to live due to federal, provincial, territorial or municipal bureaucratic barriers, uncooperative band or community councils, hostile community and kin members, lateral violence and cultural dislocation (returnees are often seen as outsiders or dubbed “city Indians,” and are made to feel like “outcasts,” or “unwanted”). Going home homelessness also encompasses those Indigenous individuals and families who grew up in their home communities, but ventured to other communities for work, health services, education, or to meet other needs, only to return home to find they and their returning family are now perceived as unwelcome

outsiders. The feeling of not belonging in this situation has been described as a kind of homelessness, which goes hand in hand with, but is not limited to, not having a physical space or habitable dwelling in the home community where their family, clan, or Nation originated (Porter, 2014).



**9) Nowhere to Go Homelessness:** A complete lack of access to stable shelter, housing, accommodation, shelter services or relationships; literally having nowhere to go, due to: lack of kin supports; lack of knowledge about access to temporary housing or emergency housing services, even when such services exist; lack of funds to pay for travel to housing, shelter or accommodation; community banishment; poor or no release planning from penal, mental health or other health institutions; distance away from temporary or emergency shelter; inability to rent due to racial discrimination, even when tenant space is available; and inability to procure travel due to racism, even when possessing the funds to travel.



**10) Escaping or Evading Harm Homelessness:** Indigenous persons fleeing or vacating unstable, unsafe, unhealthy or overcrowded households or homes to obtain a measure of safety or to survive. Young people, women and LGBTQ2S people are particularly vulnerable, and are those most affected by all forms of violence, and therefore are those most often escaping harmful circumstances.



**11) Emergency Crisis Homelessness:** Natural disasters, forces of nature and large-scale environmental manipulation, combined with bureaucratic red tape and confusion; a lack of will to help by institutions, governments and their employees; racism and discrimination; a breakdown of social system supports under extreme pressure and volume; and a lack of emergency plans or government mandates to deal with emergency crises can lead to, cause and complicate emergency crisis homelessness. Examples of this kind of Indigenous homelessness include the repeated floods in Attawapiskat First Nations reserve (flooding in many other James Bay First Nations reserves is common and, though not as galvanizing in the public imagination as floods in Attawapiskat, remains quite frequent) (CBC News, 2013), the 2016 Fort McMurray fire, and in individual accounts in rural and urban settings across Canada.

An example of an Indigenous individual's emergency crisis homelessness is found in the case of Cree-Métis Althea Guiboche, who, in 2011, was flooded out of her home in Ochre River after the provincial government of Manitoba built a levee in an effort to prevent the flooding of the city of Winnipeg; the levee caused water levels to rise in the Dauphin Lake region (CBC News, 2011). Left homeless in the aftermath of the flood, Guiboche and her five children petitioned the provincial government and various emergency service providers for housing, but were left homeless, as these agencies did not have an adequate emergency plan in place to deal with such an immediate crisis, nor did the different crisis agencies communicate effectively with one another. Moreover, in the confusion, Guiboche's case was passed from agency to agency, and from bureaucracy to bureaucracy, while her and her children's condition worsened. Only the intervention of Guiboche's mother, who drove 800 km from Norway House, Manitoba,

to transport Guiboche and her children 300 km to Winnipeg to access emergency shelter, alleviated their homelessness. In light of these circumstances, it is difficult to place Guiboche under the escaping or evading harm homelessness dimension because she wasn't escaping violence and she was comfortable and happy in her home before the emergency. Furthermore, she tried to access temporary or emergency services, but was denied help in the chaos. The denial of services to Guiboche could have been due to racism or the lack of communication between agencies, but either way, she and her children remained homeless, with no support and no one willing to help. Given the events that led to Guiboche's homelessness, the dimension emergency crisis homelessness fits circumstances such as hers, where people lose their homes because of natural disasters or government mandates, and the system is not ready or willing to cope with the demand for housing from Indigenous Peoples (Guiboche & Cook, 2016).



**12) Climatic Refugee Homelessness:** A First Nations, Métis or Inuit person whose lifestyle, subsistence patterns and food sources, relationship to animals, and connection to land and water have been greatly altered by drastic and cumulative weather shifts due to climate change. These drastic shifts have disrupted or displaced Indigenous Peoples from their historic and contemporary ways of life, societies, homes and habitation patterns. Perhaps hit hardest by climatic refugee homelessness have been Inuit people who live in Arctic and Subarctic regions, but this sub-dimension of Indigenous homelessness is by no means restricted to Arctic and Subarctic Inuit. Inuit people across the North have collectively endured a loss of shelf ice, combined with rising sea levels, and starving or drastic reorientation of migration patterns of vital life-sustaining animal populations, which have occurred due to annual increases in temperatures caused by climate change. Food sources have become scarce, abundant populations of animals that were once dependent on the cold have dwindled due to starvation or migration; and whole villages and communities have disappeared, either submerged in rising seas levels or made to relocate entirely because of shifts in food sources. Moreover, the rise in temperature has destroyed hunting and fishing patterns dependent on the cold, since cold temperatures ensure permafrost, the landscape foundation for migrating herds of caribou and elk. Without solid permafrost, herds cannot migrate or travel as they once did. Inuk Sheila Watt-Cloutier says the increase in Northern temperatures represents one of the biggest threats to Inuit lifestyles, homes and society today, and it is a shift that is making the Inuit essentially homeless. To Watt-Cloutier and other Inuit, the cold itself, and all the life it supports, is their home (Watt-Cloutier, 2015).

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*The 12 dimensions underscore the loss of relationships endured by Indigenous Peoples through the processes of Canadian colonization and the disconnection from the Indigenous understanding of home as All My Relations.*

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The 12 dimensions of Indigenous homelessness work in tandem, in clusters, or in constellations to cause, compound and entrench Indigenous homelessness in Canada. These 12 dimensions also intersect with the four kinds of settler homelessness, as defined in the Canadian Definition of Homelessness, to create the problem of Indigenous homelessness in Canada. It is worth noting that the experiences of homelessness among Indigenous people, as defined by the 12 dimensions, are not limited to those who are without shelter. The 12 dimensions underscore the loss of relationships endured by Indigenous Peoples through the processes of Canadian colonization and the disconnection from the Indigenous understanding of home as All My Relations.

# Endnotes

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1. 'Linguicide' is defined by scholars Teresa L. McCarty, Mary Eunice Romero and Ofelia Zepeda as languages that have been exterminated and have died "not because this has been a 'natural' development, but because they have been 'helped' on their way. They have not 'died' because of old age or lack of adaptability—they have been murdered." State actors, agencies and policies of assimilation have led in large part to the "death" of many Indigenous languages in Canada, according to McCarthy et al.
  2. Althea Guiboche and Crystal Cook – May 25, 2016. Consultation of the 17th draft of the definition of Indigenous Homelessness in Canada between Jesse Thistle, Althea Guiboche (CEO of *Got Bannock*, a front-line private agency that feeds Winnipeg's homeless in the North End) and Crystal Cook (an Indigenous Master's student at the University of Manitoba). Guiboche and Cook work together at *Got Bannock* and have extensive experience with Winnipeg's homeless Indigenous population.
  3. "Domicide" is a new word, coined by Porteous and defined as the planned, deliberate destruction of someone's home, causing suffering to the dweller.
  4. McKay states that the style of colonization in Canada privileged and reinforced the liberal order from pre-confederation times until today. The liberal order is a system of governance and land occupation formed by Western laws and governance structures that upholds and enforces enlightenment ideals that imagine every person in Canada as an individual actor who owns private property, and who sees themselves as equal to everyone around them. The liberal order's concepts run counter to many Indigenous societies' concepts of collective identity and concepts of communal land occupation, as well as Indigenous Peoples' special constitutional place as original Peoples to Canada, who hold special rights and privileges.
  5. Palmater speaks directly to the reserves system and the Indian Act when outlining Canadian government mismanagement, but her logic can be applied more broadly to all three Indigenous Peoples in Canada (First Nations, Métis and Inuit), as state underfunding is known to greatly impact health in all three Indigenous Peoples, and in many cases, it causes chronic disease and death.
  6. The twelve dimensions of Indigenous homelessness in Canada are expansions and refinements of concepts found in the Australian Definition of Aboriginal Homelessness, as found in the 1998 KeysYoung Report and 2006 AHURI SAAP study, and the 2015 Homeward Trust report on urban Indigenous homelessness in Edmonton, Alberta, along with data compiled from consulting with this project's Regional Advisory Committee of 50, and the National Steering Committee of 10. The Australian Definition of Aboriginal Homelessness identified five distinct types of Indigenous homelessness in Australia: 1) Spiritual homelessness (separation from traditional land or from family). 2) Overcrowded living conditions (both rural and urban settings—largely caused by displacement from traditional lands, coupled with chronic underfunding) 3) Relocation and transient homelessness (Aboriginals moving between geographic locations to access work, health, or education). 4) Escaping from an unsafe or unstable home (mainly women and young people fleeing violence). 5) Lack of access to any stable shelter (simply no shelter available—often described as "nowhere to go"). Using the four spheres of the Medicine Wheel, a Western Indigenous worldview, the 2015 Homeward Trust report described urban Indigenous homelessness as an outcome of settler colonialism, and does so through: 1) The East – the Physical Realm of Indigenous Homelessness: the dispossession and severing of Indigenous Peoples from their relationship to land. 2) The South – the Mental Realm of Indigenous Homelessness: an imbalance of "a good frame of mind." 3) The West – the Emotional Realm of Indigenous Homelessness: the massive loss of Indigenous culture, identity, language, traditions, and kin and kith relationships. And 4) The North – the Spiritual Realm of Indigenous Homelessness: the ongoing effects of historic sites of trauma and responses to that trauma; mainly, intergenerational trauma brought on by colonialism, which has cut Indigenous individuals, families and communities from their spiritual connections to Creator as well as to Mother Earth, Nations, traditional ways and ceremonies.
  7. Hanson, E. (2009). Reserves. Indigenous Foundations. First Nations and Indigenous Studies, The University of British Columbia. Retrieved from: <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/reserves/>
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  12. Amanda Amodio, "Are overcrowded housing environments ruining the lives of Indigenous Australia," (2014), 9-10. (Date accessed: August 3, 2017) [http://www.academia.edu/8873762/Are\\_overcrowded\\_housing\\_environments\\_ruining\\_the\\_lives\\_of\\_Indigenous\\_Australia](http://www.academia.edu/8873762/Are_overcrowded_housing_environments_ruining_the_lives_of_Indigenous_Australia)
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