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CENTRAL HUB MODEL

Strategies and Innovations Used by Rural Women's Shelters to Improve Safety and Health for Women

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INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

25%-30% of Canadian Women

Depression and PTSD

Physical health consequences

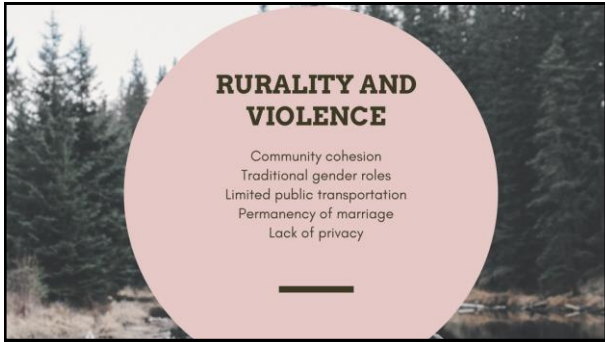


BARRIERS TO SERVICE

Unmet Need & Poor fit

2-292X






RURALITY AND VIOLENCE

- Community cohesion
- Traditional gender roles
- Limited public transportation
- Permanency of marriage
- Lack of privacy

The core mandate of women's shelters is the provision of a safe place for women during a time of crisis, and support for safety planning, advocacy, access to transportation, short-term counseling, and referral to other community services.



Women's Shelter

Given the women-centered feminist approach which is foundational in the majority of women's shelters, it is not surprising that shelters have evolved to be responsive to women's changing needs.



PURPOSE

This collaborative participatory research study examined from the perspectives of EDs, frontline service providers, and women who have accessed rural women's shelters in Ontario the strategies and innovations being adopted to strengthen delivery of services (safety and health) and supports of women who have experienced IPV

QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTION

Focus groups/Interviews using a feminist intersectoral lens
5 Rural Shelters
Rural: All the shelters served rural communities defined as having a population of less than 30,000 people and located 30 minutes drive time from census metropolitan areas
ED= 5; FSP=8; Women=5



Animals

Housing

Stretching mandates

Polarized political context

Attitudes

Health Care

Geography

Brain Drain

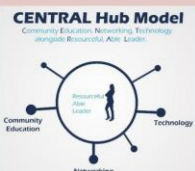
Health Care Options(MH)

Service Provision



INNOVATIONS

Community Education,
Networking, (use of) Technology,
Resourceful Able Leaders
(CENTRAL) and a Hub Model



COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Educate and re-educate community members about VAW through both formal and informal meetings to overcome the political context and prevailing attitudes towards violence



Debunking VAW Myths

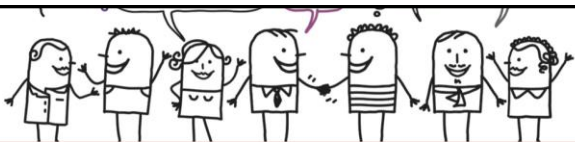
"I think that in a smaller community there's a real lack of education around the existence of abuse" (FSP)

Recognize Signs of Abuse

"Recognizing the signs, understanding how to screen or even be aware of the authority and power has when they speak of the value of marriage" (ED).

Providing Tools to Support Agencies

"We developed a resource for OPP that says all of the things we should and shouldn't say to women when investigating domestic violence, some base education" (FSP).



NETWORKING

Building connection and personal relationships to support system navigation and fill gaps in services

Facilitating Collaboration

"We have an excellent community worker luncheon up there once a month. And we have found, and each agency takes a turn and then they present on what their agency does... so [other agencies] show up and they take part and we make a lot of connections through that" (FSP)

Getting a Network Set Up

"I just think like personally what's been a challenge is that trying to get other local resources on board, so the women's shelter has helped me with that, which has been great" (W)

TECHNOLOGY

Harnessing technology in rural contexts helps to bridge gaps created by geography. Use of technology primarily included basic technology such as telephones and social media.



Basic Technology

"Even just communicating with clients by text messaging" (FSP)

Social Media


"We have to recognize that we're in the world of social media, that, you know, we really, in order to have a presence with a completely different population we really need to have a Facebook, Instagram and Twitter" (FSP)





**RESOURCEFUL
ABLE LEADERS**

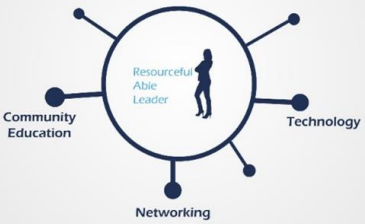
Attributes of frontline service providers capable of supporting the needs of women in the challenging rural context



Relational Capacity
"This is an extremely conservative community, so we try to foster as many good relationships with the other service agencies as we can, because that helps to bolster safety" (FSP)

Flexible
"So our outreach program is one staff. She wears three hats." (ED)

CENTRAL Hub Model
Community Education, Networking, Technology alongside Resourceful, Able Leader.



HUB MODEL: The 'gold' standard of integration that allows rural shelters to support women's safety and health through collaboration with other services, and with community members to overcome limitations associated with geography

"Where women can go to one place and get what they need" (W)

"Basically they can have a group where somebody has all of the different agencies come together and coordinate and so they have all the different representatives come; you know, somebody from the hospital and the Children's Aid and the police force and the health unit"
(ED)



POWER OF THE HUB

"Well, they're involving police, victim services, mental health, anyone that's in CAS [Children's Aid Society], anyone's involved in particular women's life and they're trying to get them at the same table so that she is not having to repeat her story in several different places" (FSP)

SAFETY PERSPECTIVE

Demonstrating that increased training for law enforcement and prosecutors resulted in improvements to service

Finding that rural areas have less trained staff, fewer IPV services (including case management, counselling/crisis intervention, hotline services, etc.), and less resources





WHY THE NEED FOR INNOVATION

- More negative health outcomes for IPV victims
- Less help seeking behaviours (confidentiality)
- Poorer community responses stemming from political context and prevailing attitudes that sanction violence



DEFICIT VS CAPACITY
