

Indigenous Homelessness in Toronto.

MAPPING THE SYSTEM

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In the Canadian context, Indigenous homelessness is a condition that affects First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families and communities from acquiring stable, permanent and appropriate housing.



However, a full understanding of Indigenous homelessness is only possible by incorporating Indigenous worldviews.



Thus, Indigenous homelessness is not merely a lack of housing, but also isolation from their relationships to the environment, family, cultures, languages and identities.

12 DIMENSIONS

OF INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS



HISTORIC DISPLACEMENT

from pre-colonial Indigenous lands

CONTEMPORARY GEOGRAPHIC SEPARATION

from Indigenous lands after colonial control



SPIRITUAL DISCONNECTION

from Indigenous worldviews or connection to the Creator or other equivalent deity

MENTAL DISRUPTION AND IMBALANCE

caused by colonization's social and economic marginalization



CULTURAL DISINTEGRATION AND LOSS

from culture and web of relationships

OVERCROWDING

that contributes to unsafe and unhealthy living spaces



RELOCATION AND MOBILITY

when mobile Indigenous homeless people travel over geographic distances

GOING HOME

after a period away can cause individuals to experience hostility when securing housing



NOWHERE TO GO

with a complete lack of access to shelter and shelter services, housing or accommodation

ESCAPING OR EVADING HARM

from unstable, unhealthy, unsafe or overcrowded homes for safety or survival



EMERGENCY CRISIS

after natural disasters, environmental manipulation or human mischief where the system is unable to meet housing demands

CLIMATIC REFUGEE

where lifestyles, subsistence patterns and food sources, and relationship with animals, land and water has been greatly altered by climate change



A BRIEF HISTORY OF

COLONIZATION IN CANADA



UP TO 1500 AD SEPARATE WORLDS

Indigenous and non-Indigenous societies develop their own territory far from each other with different cultures and forms of social organization

This changes when Europeans begin to settle in North America



1871-1969 DISPLACEMENT & ASSIMILATION

Respect of Indigenous neighbours stopped

Interventions in the lives and lands of Indigenous Peoples grow as the dominant culture set up policies that forcefully absorb Indigenous land and people into the Canadian mainstream

Colonization (*noun*) is the act of settling and establishing control over Indigenous Peoples in an area.



1500-1870 CONTACT & ACCORD

A growing non-Indigenous population seeks ways to foster co-existence through trading and military alliances

Each society left to govern its own internal affairs



1970 TO PRESENT NEGOTIATION & RENEWAL

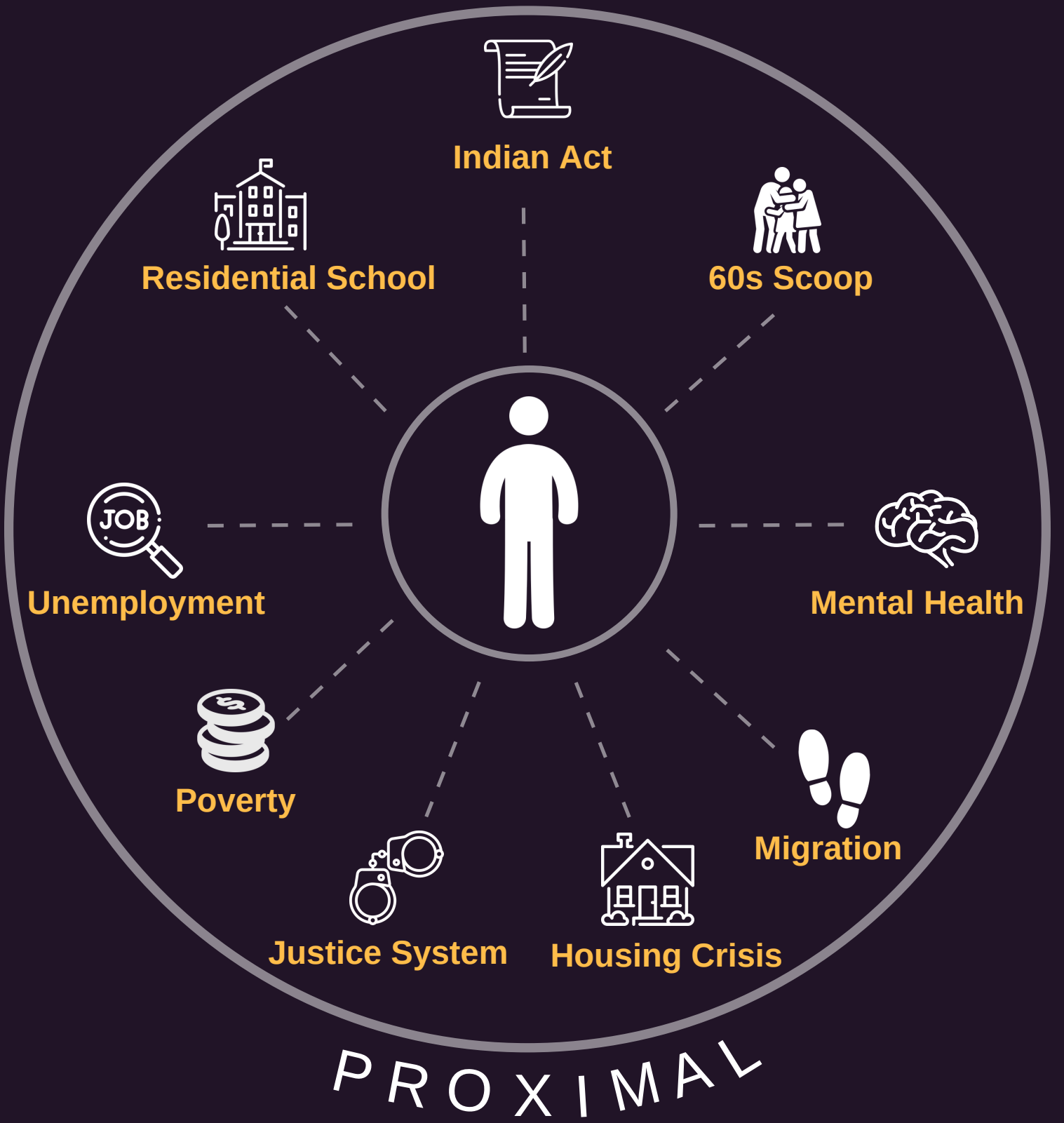
Supreme court victories for Indigenous Peoples

Recognition that assimilation was a failure compelled non-Indigenous society to begin seeking change to the relationship through dialogue, consultation and negotiation

Problems Landscape

DRIVERS

DISTAL



ONGOING EFFECTS



Powerlessness and Low Self-Esteem



Normalization of Violence



Alcohol & Drug Abuse



Struggle to Find Peace



Loss of intergenerational relationships & cultural identity

ROOTS OF COLONIALISM TODAY

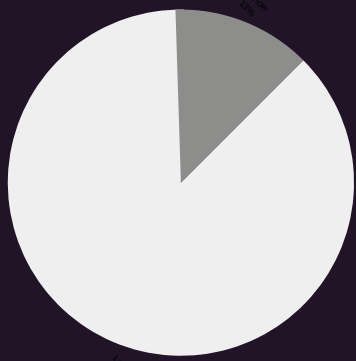
Colonialism continues to impact Indigenous Peoples and communities to this day.



Some have described colonialism as the roots, Indigenous Peoples as the leaves, and falling leaves as those **falling into homelessness.**

THE SCOPE

OF PROBLEMS TODAY



87% of the Indigenous population in Toronto **LIVES UNDER** the Low Income Cut Off

IN TORONTO

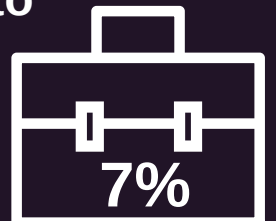
 **84%**

of Indigenous adults **think racism is an issue in the city**



of Indigenous adults are **UNEMPLOYED** in Toronto

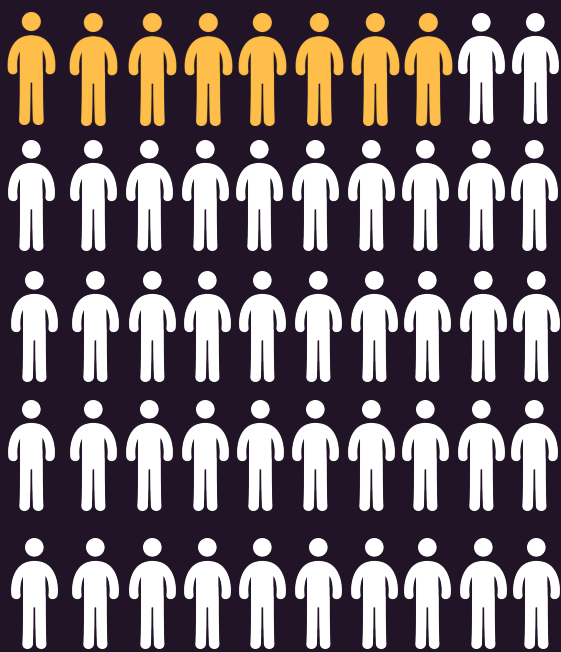
vs. Non-Indigenous adults



LESS THAN **2%**

of federal homelessness funds are dedicated **towards Indigenous homelessness**

TORONTO HOMELESS POPULATION



16% are Indigenous

despite making up only 2% of the Toronto population

Indigenous Peoples in major urban areas are **8X** **MORE LIKELY TO** experience homelessness

AGE OF FIRST HOMELESSNESS

25
years

31
years

LENGTH OF HOMELESSNESS



9 months



7 months

**stats in yellow represent Indigenous people*

36% of Indigenous adults **have given up** key needs to meet housing related costs **AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH**

SYSTEM STRESS

COST OF HOSPITALIZATION



\$2,495 per person

COST OF POLICE SERVICES



\$85,092 total

**Above estimates are per year*

Solutions Landscape

GLOBAL

Australia



National housing initiatives specifically targeted towards Indigenous Peoples with the establishment of genuine formal partnerships to eliminate the gap between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people

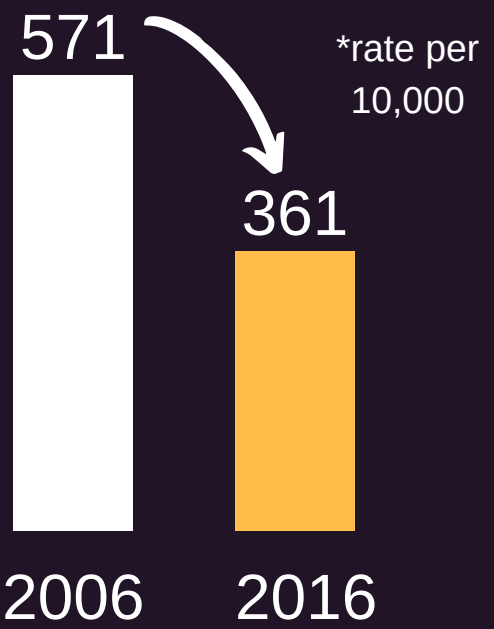
National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing

\$5.4 billion over 10 years to address overcrowding, homelessness, poor housing conditions, and the severe housing shortage in remote Indigenous communities

Closing the Gap Refresh

Roughly based off the Safe Tracks framework to improve housing affordability and supply

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare



Indigenous homelessness declined by 37% from 2006 to 2016.

Safe Tracks Framework



FEDERAL



PROVINCIAL

National Housing Strategy

In accordance with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the federal government plans to spend \$638 million on housing for Indigenous Peoples living in cities and urban areas

Distinct lack of coherent goal and insufficient capacity in Federal programming

Ontario Aboriginal Housing Initiative

A \$20 million program that provides funding to service providers on an application basis to tackle Indigenous homelessness

LOCAL & COMMUNITY



Native Women's Resource Centre

Culturally-relevant programs and services on education, housing, and employment to support Indigenous women and their families in building self-sufficiency



Indigenous Health Strategy

Strategy aimed at reducing health inequities in Indigenous Peoples, influencing the Social Determinants of Indigenous Health, and harmonizing Indigenous services



Native Men's Residence

Abstinence-based model focused on multiple points of intervention including housing, employment, mental health and addictions while fostering Indigenous culture and identity

ACTORS

IN THE TORONTO LANDSCAPE



Media



Advocates



Service Providers



Academics



Individual



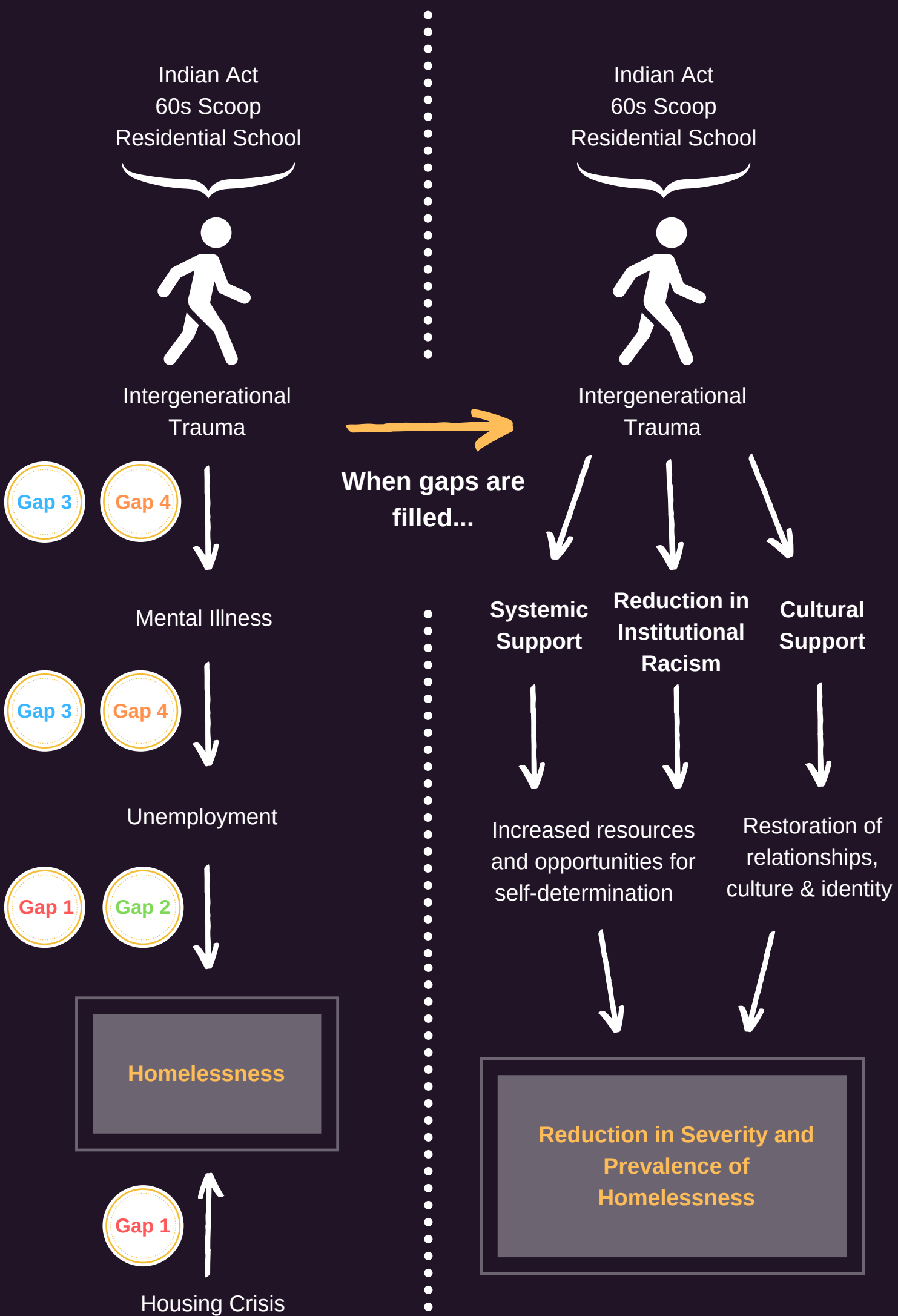
Government

Through our research, we have noticed that there is a lack of media representation of Indigenous homelessness in comparison to other issues, despite its prevalence.

Additionally, there is a lack of advocates for Indigenous homelessness outside of the Indigenous community.

ONE JOURNEY

TO HOMELESSNESS



GAPS

AND LEVERS OF CHANGE

Gap 1: Funding & Transparency

1. Increase funding
2. Multi-year funding and straightforward renewal
3. Establish reporting guidelines

Dimensions targeted:



Gap 2: Homeless Services

1. Flexibly designed, Indigenous-led culturally-based services
2. Culturally-relevant care via Non-indigenous services
3. Multi-service delivery

Dimensions targeted:



Gap 3: Power & Advocacy

1. Political decision making initiatives
2. Colonization awareness program
3. Indigenous housing monitoring committee

Dimensions targeted:



Gap 4: Knowledge Integration

1. Two-eyed seeing approach
2. Curriculum on Indigenous history and impact of colonization
3. Collaboration with Elders and Knowledge Keepers

Dimensions targeted:



FUTURE FOCUS

INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY & RESOURCES FROM NON-INDIGENOUS INDIVIDUALS

Capacity-Building,
Partnerships and
Development



Research and
Evaluation



Accountability and
Policy



Incorporation and Acknowledgement of Indigenous Views & Voices

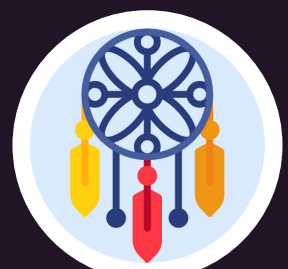
Two-Eyed Seeing
Model



Indigenous Self-
Determination and
Governance



Cultural Reconnection
& Community-Directed
Governance



This report was only possible through the knowledge and insight of our community partners.

Thank you.