

## Gender Based Violence – Access to Shelter Resources

### Analyzing Ontario's Gender Based Violence Strategy

#### Background

Gender-based violence is any form of violence based on gender, gender expression or gender identity.

#### What We Need to Address about Gender Based Violence

- Approximately every 6 days, a woman is killed by her intimate partner.
- Violence against women costs the government millions of dollars each year.
- It has a profound effect on children. Children who witness violence in the home have twice the rate of psychiatric disorders.

#### Description:

Ontario's Gender Based Violence Strategy is a comprehensive plan to end gender-based violence, and a commitment to a safer future for women and girls in this province. () The Strategy plans to provide Ontario with up to \$242 million to reinforce the government's commitment. The new strategies includes four key areas:

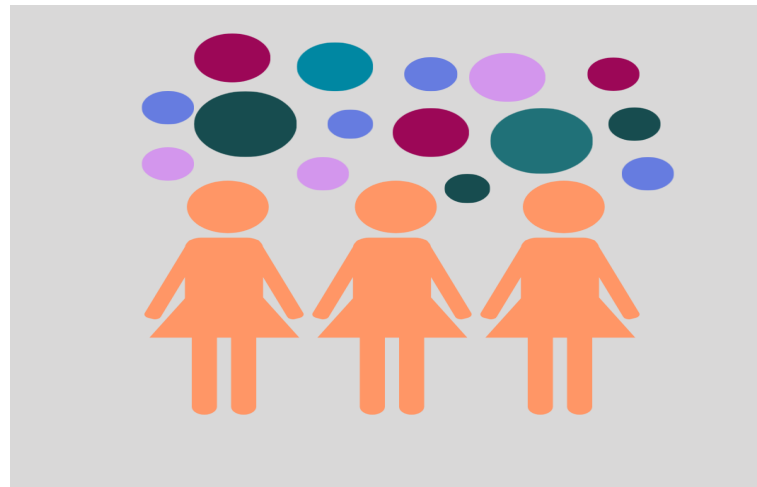
- 1) Improve services and supports
- 2) Early intervention
- 3) Changing attitudes
- 4) Improved system response

Specific to this issue, I will address the lack of shelter supports guaranteed by Ontario's Gender Based Violence Strategy by means of access to funding to provide access to resources in which sustain mental and physical health of survivors.

#### Sources:

CBC News: London, Ontario  
City of London Emergency Plan  
Ontario Gender Based Violence Strategy

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#### Issue and Local Context

Anova is Ontario's largest women's shelter. Data that has been released from the organization shows that women were turned away from shelter and security more than 2500 times due to lack of shelter beds. In 2020, there is only an increasing demand for shelter resources.

In the 2019 report, Anova released the following data:

- The crisis lines receive approximately 31 calls per day, which equals to around 11,195 calls per year.
- A single family support court worker served 383 families
- Two counsellors delivered 903 hours of sexual assault counselling
- 75 women had to be put on a waitlist for sexual assault counselling
- The average length in stay is 49 days
- Almost 400 women were support by just one family support counsellor

#### Policy Options

Ontario's Gender Based Violence Strategy's includes everything that is needed in order to improve policy and the view around the shelter crisis in London, Ontario.

The OGBVS addresses:

- The definition of gender-based violence
- Different kinds of supports and services
- Youth programs
- Improved justice system responses.
- The policy must include these strategies in order to be effective.

#### My Policy Recommendation

- I would recommend doing an individual strategy for each municipal government where it sees need. I would recommend that the city of London meet with all of the emergency shelters in the city to gather relevant and current data about what is missing in our support system.
- I would then compare what is missing with the goals put in the OGBVS. If the Ontario government is backing funding towards the marginalized populations, we need to see a difference in the way the funding is spent.
- There should be a separate committee dedicated to coming up with funding strategies for how to integrate more beds into the emergency shelters, more counsellors available for supports and a way to eliminate the waitlist for social supports.

Ways we can see this happen:

- Individualized committees focused solely on Gender Based Violence
- Working with community organizations once a month to keep up with relevant data
- Quarterly meetings with shelters to properly assess needs and services