

# Shelter Pulse

## Reconciliation and Restitution Policy Primer

The guidelines and checklists below provide indicators of best/promising practices from research and serve as recommendations and benchmarks for ongoing policy evaluation and evolution

### *Policy Primer*

Reconciliation requires policy-level change including in relation to organizations' relationship with Indigenous peoples as service users and partners (with government and civil society) (RDN Shelter Pulse Environmental Scan, 2022). Policies should be "restorative, Indigenous-centered and community-designed forms of justice" (RDN Shelter Pulse Literature Review, 2022). Focusing on restoration and healing is part of the reconciliation process and the integration of cultural practices and renewal are crucial components of this process (Parent 2011; TRC Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015; Waterfall, 2018). Culturally safe shelters facilitate connection to one's culture as a source of strength and as an opportunity for healing. Feminist approaches are key to understanding and addressing sexism which perpetuates VAW/GBW and the application of Native Feminism, in particular, as a grounding principle for rural and Northern shelter practices is crucial to bringing Indigenous women's issues to the forefront of shelter policy (RDN Shelter Pulse Literature Review, 2022).

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## *Policy Checklist (Adapted from: Poole et al., 2013)*

The following criteria may be considered in assessing or evolving policy using a reconciliation and restitution approach:

- Policies concerning interventions and supports for victims and survivors:
  - Policies establish culturally appropriate GBV/IPV supports and services for Indigenous women.
  - Policies promote and function to enhance interventions, program and support resources, programs and services for Indigenous women and girls.
  - Policies are dedicated to developing partnerships with First Nations communities, the federal and provincial government and other stakeholders for VAW/GBV outreach programming and crisis intervention services.
  - Policies include an evaluation component to the GBV/IPV programs involving analysis of program effectiveness and overall reach.
  - Policies indicate an agency's goal to develop or improve the delivery of holistic, culturally appropriate and trauma-informed interventions and support Indigenous people experiencing GBV/IPV.

-  Policies on staff/employee training:
- Policies aim to increase knowledge and provide training on addressing issues of violence against Indigenous shelter seekers.
  - Policies speak to cultural safety training, which includes components focused on Indigenous history, colonialism and historical trauma, and the impact of organizational policy and legislation on Indigenous peoples.

#### References:

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