

# The Experience of Indigenous Homelessness in Nogojiwanong

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## Background

A home is more than a physical building, Thistle (2017) describes home for Indigenous people as a place of accountability and relationship. Indigenous homelessness is reaching at critical point. National and local enumerations find that Indigenous people are overrepresented, making up over a quarter of the respondents.<sup>1,2,3</sup> Similarly, here in Nogojiwanong (Peterborough) this overrepresentation is also seen within our community.<sup>1,2</sup> In the House of Commons report on Indigenous housing several factors were identified that are key to Federal action on Indigenous homelessness. Literature has found that solutions need to include Indigenous data, be Indigenous led, build community, and are comprehensive.<sup>4</sup> Solutions for the Indigenous community is best to come from the community, as the community knows what the community needs.<sup>3,4,5</sup>

## Way of Knowing

### Participatory Action

- Collaborative between individuals participating considered co-learners.
- Knowledge being generated is believed to be within the community already, it is through the relationship formed during the project that this existing knowledge can be shared.

### Relational Accountability

- Respecting and considering the web of relations that all co-learners engaging in the project at all levels.

## Existing Knowledge

- Addressing Indigenous homelessness needs to be led by Indigenous people, guided by Indigenous point of view and teachings (Thistle & Smylie, 2020; Casey, 2016).
- Indigenous people who experience homelessness experience multiple layers of oppression, home has been disrupted by the history of colonialism in Canada (Thistle & Smylie, 2020).

## Indigenous Homelessness

“...has been incorrectly understood by settlers as being without a structure or being roofless (Somerville, 1992), when Indigenous homelessness is being without All My Relations.” - Jesse Thistle, 2017

## All My Relations

Represents the interconnectedness of the individual. A reminder of who you are and relationship to kin. Also the relationship to the earth, the animals, human beings; a web of interconnectedness.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

## How We Learned

The project consists of five interviews with members of community who self-identified as Indigenous and have experienced homelessness at any point in their life within Nogojiwanong. Interviews were participant-led and co-learners were able to extend sessions if needed. After sharing was completed, interviewer transcribed and completed thematic analysis. Co-learners then reviewed the transcripts and provided feedback to the researcher on the themes, quotes, and the transcript from the interviews. Feedback was integrated into the final themes and quotes.

## Project Outcomes

Materials that share themes and quotes from interviews along with relevant information sharing the experience here in Nogojiwanong with relevant literature.

- A slide deck
- An infographic

## Research Question

What is the experience of Indigenous homelessness in Nogojiwanong?

## Purpose of the Project

The essence of this project is to emphasize the Indigenous voices and stories in Nogojiwanong to hear what is truly needed and what the experience of being unhoused is for Indigenous people in our community. This project hopes to begin exploring the concerning over-representation.

## Resources

- 1.Oliver, D., & Smith, L. (2018). A Roof Over My Head | 2018 Enumeration Report | Peterborough.
- 2.United Way.Point in Time Count 2021: A survey of people experiencing homelessness in the City of Peterborough. (2022).
- 3.Quayum, S., Love, C., & Chen, L. (2023). Everyone Counts 2020-2022: Preliminary Highlights Report. The Government of Canada. <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/homelessness-sans-abri/reports-rapports/nit-counts-dp-2020-2022-highlights-eng.html#h27>
- 4.Casey, S. (2021). INDIGENOUS HOUSING: THE DIRECTION HOME Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. [www.ourcommons.ca](http://www.ourcommons.ca)
- 5.Thistle, J., & Smylie, J. (2020). Pekiwevin (coming home): Advancing good relations with Indigenous people experiencing homelessness. In CMAJ (Vol. 192, Issue 10, pp. E257-E259). Canadian Medical Association. <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.200199>
- 6.Thistle, J. A. (2017). Indigenous Homelessness in Canada. <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/what-is-an-aboriginal-medicine-wheel>
- 7.Wilson, S., Wilson, P., Cardinal, L., Friedel, T., Giroux, P., Hanohano, P., Jones-Smith, B., Labouchan, R., Martin, J., Sawan, B., Steinhauer, N., Steinhauer, P., & Turner, M. (1998). Editorial Relational Accountability to All Our Relations With participating students from the First Nations Graduate Education Program (in alphabetic order).



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