



Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges

Leveraging Technology for Domestic
Violence Support in Calgary



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I recognize that I am a settler on Treaty 7 land home to the City of Calgary, known as Moh'kinsstis. Treaty 7 is home to the Blackfoot Confederacy consisting of the Siksika, Kanai, and Piikani Nations as well as the Tsuut'ina and Îyârhe Nakoda Nations. Treaty 7 is also home to the Otipemisiwak Métis Government of the Metis Nation within Alberta District 6, and all people who call Treaty 7 and the City of Calgary their home. The work undertaken in the Catamount Fellowship is made possible by the land we inhabit and the invaluable wisdom shared by Indigenous peoples, for which I am deeply grateful for as it facilitates my journey of living, learning, and evolving alongside the land.



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Introduction

Domestic violence, also referred to as intimate partner violence, is a pervasive and deeply troubling social issue that transcends geographical, cultural, and socioeconomic boundaries. It comprises a range of abusive behaviors that occur within intimate relationships, including physical, psychological, and emotional harm. In recent decades, domestic violence has gained increased attention, shedding light on the prevalence and severe consequences faced by individuals within the confines of their homes, or sometimes even in public settings. In 2013, the World Health Organization approximated that around 27% of females aged 15-49, who have been involved in an intimate relationship disclosed encountering either physical or sexual violence (WHO, 2021). These numbers are likely to have changed within the last decade, and while domestic violence affects both men and women, and those who identify as non-binary or gender neutral, it is imperative to recognize the disproportionate impact on women, who often face the brunt of its consequences. The Covid-19 pandemic only made things worse for those experiencing domestic violence, as global rates increased significantly causing notable concern (Mineo, 2022). Domestic violence has long-lasting, far-reaching, and devastating consequences for individuals, families, and communities (Nicols as quoted in Kippert, 2023). Alicia Nicols notes that domestic violence also affects the health and well-being of individuals, leading to chronic stress, mental health conditions, substance abuse, and complications in pregnancies (as quoted in Kippert, 2023).

As we delve deeper into the discussion of domestic violence, it is essential to contextualize the issue within the Canadian landscape, particularly within Calgary. Despite Canada's progressive stance on gender equality and human rights, domestic violence persists as a significant societal challenge, impacting individuals of all backgrounds. Within the Treaty 7 region, encompassing Calgary and surrounding Indigenous communities, the complexities of domestic violence are further compounded by historical, cultural, and socioeconomic factors. Understanding these nuances is crucial in developing targeted interventions and support systems that resonate with the unique needs of diverse populations. Additionally, we will explore the role of the ShelterLink app, which seeks to play a pivotal role in addressing the barriers present within the sector and providing essential resources to service providers and survivors alike.

The Context of This Project

This project was conducted through the Catamount Fellowship, which is an 8 month long program for senior-level undergraduate students passionate about building a more just and equitable world for all. Students explore and tackle complex, systemic issues within Calgary and those living across Treaty 7. Throughout the Catamount Fellowship, my research methodology was structured around a dual approach of literature review and community engagement, aimed at comprehensively exploring the utilization of technology, particularly ShelterLink, in addressing domestic violence. With the help of MRU librarian Richard Hayman, I conducted an extensive literature review utilizing databases such as SocIndex and Google Scholar, encompassing peer-reviewed articles, academic studies, news sources, and sector-generated discussion papers. I then narrowed down to sources most relevant which are present in this paper, and this approach ensured a holistic understanding of the discourse surrounding technology's role in domestic violence intervention.

Furthermore, I interacted with various individuals working within the domestic violence sector and community, including women's shelter leadership, outreach coordinators, housing liaisons, emergency service providers and other relevant individuals, gathering insights through direct communication channels. This interaction provided invaluable insights into the practical implementation of ShelterLink and its effectiveness in meeting the diverse needs of survivors. By combining theoretical insights from the literature with real-world perspectives from those working in the domestic violence sector, my research methodology facilitated a nuanced understanding of the opportunities and challenges associated with leveraging technology to support those experiencing domestic violence.

Understanding Domestic Violence

From National Trends to Local Realities in Calgary and Surrounding Treaty 7

According to Statistics Canada (2023), the rates of police-reported family violence and intimate partner violence have shown a significant increase since 2014, with a 19% rise by 2022, affecting individuals across all genders. The year 2022 saw a stabilization in these rates, with a marginal decrease for women and girls and a slight increase for men and boys. Women and girls, particularly those aged 12 to 24, continue to be disproportionately affected, with rates of intimate partner violence significantly higher than those for their male counterparts (Statistics Canada, 2023). Seniors also experienced a notable increase in family violence, with a 46% rise from 2014 to 2022. Provincially, Saskatchewan and Manitoba reported the highest rates, while Ontario and Prince Edward Island had the lowest. It's important to note that these statistics likely underrepresent the true extent of violence, as many incidents can go unreported (Statistics Canada, 2023). Additionally, service providers in Nova Scotia are calling for domestic violence to be declared a public health emergency due to increasing reports of gender-based violence (CBC, 2023). Because of this, understanding the multifaceted nature of domestic violence requires delving into its various forms, exploring the underlying causes and risk factors, and considering the far-reaching consequences on individuals and communities.

Here in Alberta, there has been an increase in reports of family violence and intimate partner violence from 2014 to 2022, which reflects the national trend of rising violence rates (Statistics Canada, 2023). In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, Alberta's domestic violence shelters saw a 19% increase in individuals sheltered, with women and seniors comprising the majority (Fikowski, 2023). Despite this, shelters faced resource limitations, leading to 7,502 unmet admission requests for women and seniors, affecting 2,955 children, a 17% increase in unmet requests from the previous year (Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, 2023). Specifically within the City of Calgary, the Calgary Police Service (CPS) has reported a notable shift in domestic violence trends, with a decrease in domestic violence incidents from 4,000 in 2020 to 3,642 in 2022, and further down to 2,552 between January and August 2023. However, there has been an increase in domestic conflict calls, with 15,729 in 2021, 18,737 in 2022, and 12,763 in the first eight months of 2023, indicating a rise in potentially dangerous situations that have not yet escalated to criminal acts (CPS as quoted in Fikowski, 2023).

In summary, domestic violence remains a pressing concern in Canada, with challenges like underreporting and limited resources persisting. Moving forward, a comprehensive approach addressing root causes, providing support for survivors, and promoting prevention through education is crucial. Collective action and sustained commitment are necessary to create safer environments for all Canadians, free from domestic violence.



For this project, it was imperative to visualize the system of domestic violence in an appropriate manner, which is why I have an Iceberg model here to effectively illustrate the nature of the systemic question I was tasked to answer. The Iceberg Model, a pivotal concept in systems thinking, employs the iceberg analogy to illustrate the multi-layered nature of a system. It prompts examination of the fundamental patterns, structures, and cognitive frameworks involved. Much akin to the visible tip of an iceberg, only a fraction of a system is readily observable, with apparent occurrences typically serving as surface-level indicators of deeper-seated concerns: entrenched mental paradigms, reinforcing frameworks, and evolving trends.

An In-Depth Understanding of Domestic Violence in Calgary

- People are being turned away from receiving shelter support
- Shelters are often at capacity which limits the amount of service they can provide
- YW Calgary & FearIsNotLove developing ShelterLink

Events

What is happening?

- Increase in domestic violence incidents
- Shelter accommodations are decreasing due to increased demand
- More and more stakeholders in sector are aware of ShelterLink

Patterns & Trends

What has been happening over time?

- Socioeconomic status & employment have played huge role in increase in domestic violence
- Charity model, funding, and Canada's relationship with Indigenous people
- Widespread adoption of technology in domestic violence sector

Underlying Structures

What is influencing the repeating behaviour?

- Patriarchy, toxic masculinity, 21st century dating culture
- Challenges in mental health
- Racism, classism, homophobia, sexism, individualism, colonialism
- Attitudes towards technology

Mental Models

What beliefs stimulate the behaviour?

Identifying Sectoral Challenges

Barriers in Streamlining Domestic Violence Support

Addressing domestic violence is fraught with challenges, with various barriers impeding effective interventions and prevention efforts. From systematic inequalities to cultural stigmas, these barriers complicate the task of providing adequate support and protection to survivors. By examining the root causes and implications of these obstacles, we can develop targeted strategies to dismantle them and foster safer communities.

Capacity and Funding Challenges

One of the foremost barriers in domestic violence support services is the persistent struggle with capacity and funding constraints. Research conducted by Maki (2019) underscores the challenges faced by Violence Against Women shelters in Canada, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive support and resources. Insufficient and unsustainable resources force shelters to operate beyond capacity, compromising the quality and accessibility of services provided to survivors. Limited funding exacerbates the situation, leading to staff turnover, burnout, and inadequate facilities in need of repairs. From a local context, competition for funding in Calgary can prevent collaboration amongst shelters as there are limited funding streams, thereby causing shelters to be siloed in their approaches. This competition can lead to inequality in resource allocation, requiring domestic violence shelters to be creative or frugal with the funding that they do have. The lack of affordable housing further complicates the struggle for survivors seeking secure accommodation, exacerbating the capacity constraints faced by women's shelters. These challenges underscore the critical need for sustainable operational funding and comprehensive support to align with the standard of living costs.

Intersectionality and Policy Implications

Accounting for equity, diversity, and inclusion, shelters within Calgary have done an exceptional job in accounting for the diverse population that they serve. The Awo Taan Healing Lodge is one example that provides culturally appropriate services which include supporting Indigenous women and families fleeing domestic violence (Awo Taan Healing Lodge Society, n.d.). The Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) also provides various programs that address the challenges in gender-based violence that affect immigrant women and their families (CIWA, n.d.). However, numerous challenges in serving those fleeing domestic violence still persist impacting shelters and their ability to provide effective support to those they serve. Providing services to those with different accessibility-related, cultural, religious, gender and sexual orientation based needs creates specific challenges that certain shelters experience more than others. Voolma (2018) underscores the critical intersection of domestic violence support and immigration policies, highlighting the disparities in access to support services for immigrant women based on their legal status and the country's immigration control priorities. This research aligns with the findings of Fonteyne et al. (2023), who also emphasize the unique vulnerabilities of immigrant women facing domestic violence in Canada. Fonteyne et al. (2023) illustrate that Canadian immigration policies can create dependency on partners, and the process for immigrant women with precarious status to remain in the country is often lengthy and costly, further complicating their ability to seek help and access safety.



Along with this, there are few shelter spaces within the City of Calgary that can serve those with different needs based on religious or cultural needs such as a specific room layout or a space for prayer leaving them with limited options. Emergency shelters in Calgary are also facing capacity issues with supporting multi-generational families leading to limited cultural capacity to provide equitable and inclusive support (personal communication, Kate Bowers, March 28, 2024). Moreover, even though various shelters have created accessible spaces to meet the needs of those who are amputees, in a wheelchair, or have impaired mobility, these spaces are few in number (personal communication, Kate Bowers).

Beyond accommodating cultural and accessibility needs, Calgary's domestic violence shelters face challenges in adequately supporting LGBTQIA2S+ individuals. While some progress has been made in inclusivity, a lack of public information about LGBTQIA2S+-friendly shelters and fear of mandatory reporting laws persist as barriers to accessing support. This uncertainty exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and hampers efforts to seek safety. Prioritizing visibility, promoting inclusive policies, and safeguarding privacy are crucial steps toward creating a more accessible and supportive environment for LGBTQIA2S+ survivors in Calgary. The North Carolina LGBTQ Domestic Violence Response Initiative highlights the importance of building the capacity of domestic violence service providers to offer safe, affirming, and effective responses to LGBTQIA2S+ survivors, emphasizing the need for agency policies and staff training that acknowledge and cater to the unique needs of this community (Sechrist et al., 2022). Prioritizing visibility, promoting inclusive policies, and safeguarding privacy are crucial steps toward creating a more accessible and supportive environment for LGBTQIA2S+ survivors in Calgary. By learning from initiatives like the one in North Carolina, Calgary can develop strategies to overcome these barriers and ensure that LGBTQIA2S+ individuals receive the support they need.

Overall, addressing the diverse needs of survivors of domestic violence in Calgary necessitates a comprehensive approach that acknowledges and accommodates various intersecting identities and circumstances. From the challenges faced by immigrant women due to immigration policies to the limited availability of culturally and religiously appropriate shelter spaces, and the ongoing struggle to provide inclusive support for LGBTQIA2S+ and those with accessibility related needs, there is a clear imperative for concerted efforts towards equity, diversity, and inclusion in domestic violence services. By prioritizing visibility, promoting inclusive policies, and safeguarding privacy, domestic violence shelters can take significant strides towards creating a more accessible and supportive environment for all survivors in Calgary.

Impact of Mandatory Reporting Laws

Mandatory reporting laws compel certain professionals, notably healthcare practitioners, social workers, and educators, to report suspected instances of abuse, including intimate partner violence, to legal or governmental entities (Lippy et al., 2020). These legislative measures, conceived to shield vulnerable demographics and confront violence often shrouded in privacy, inadvertently erect formidable barriers for survivors endeavoring to seek assistance. Lippy et al. (2019) underscore the deleterious ramifications of mandatory reporting, particularly poignant for marginalized cohorts such as LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, BIPOC communities, and refugees/immigrants. Within these demographics, the apprehension of having their personal data disclosed and the prospect of entanglement with the criminal justice system or child protective services frequently dissuade survivors from seeking aid, thereby amplifying their susceptibility.

The disparate impact of mandatory reporting laws predicated on gender identity, racial/ethnic background, and sexual orientation underscores the exigency to re-evaluate such legislative frameworks to ensure they do not encumber survivors' access to supportive resources. Empirical evidence indicates that upwards of a third of survivors might abstain from seeking assistance owing to apprehensions stemming from mandatory reporting, encompassing anxieties regarding legal ramifications, child custody interventions, or immigration-related repercussions (Lippy et al., 2020). Additionally, these laws can engender survivor isolation by curtailing access to informal support networks, given that acquaintances and familial relations may be mandated reporters within specific jurisdictions.

Moreover, reports filed pursuant to mandatory reporting laws often compound the adversity experienced by survivors, accentuating the vulnerability to further abuse and jeopardizing their stability. Regrettably, only a marginal fraction of survivors report deriving benefit from such disclosures (Lippy et al., 2020). These unintended consequences underscore the imperative for policy reforms and procedural adaptations to safeguard against the potential hindrance posed by mandatory reporting laws to the capacity of intimate partner violence survivors to solicit and access requisite support.



There is very little support for men as perpetrators of domestic violence as there aren't many agencies that offer counseling services or mental health care to those committing the act itself

Community Response and Prevention

Johnson & Stylianou's (2022) systematic review and Turner et al.'s (2018) discussion paper emphasize the importance of coordinated community responses and prevention strategies in addressing domestic violence. Fragmented service systems and a lack of coordination among service providers pose significant barriers to effectively meeting the needs of survivors. Coordinated community responses involve partnerships between law enforcement, domestic violence advocates, community organizations, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders to expand the reach of support services and address systemic issues contributing to domestic violence. Pointing to a local sphere, the Equally Safe program, which is a partnership between the Calgary Police Service, YW Calgary, Awo Taan Healing Lodge, FearIsNotLove, and Calgary Immigrant Women's Association exemplifies a practical application of addressing the multifaceted challenges of domestic violence. Law enforcement recognizes that they are not equipped with the expertise in psychology, addiction treatment, or counseling to resolve complex issues such as alcoholism, substance use, mental health issues, and childhood trauma that often underlie domestic violence situations. Therefore, they share information with community partners like YW Calgary to provide better support for individuals involved in domestic disputes. The police service acknowledges the importance of partnerships with community agencies to fill the gaps in their capabilities, which goes for other agencies like Alberta Health Services as well. Alberta Health Services does offer support to those experiencing domestic violence, however they are not equipped to handle every situation which points to benefits in collaboration with community agencies.

Additionally, shifting towards prevention-oriented approaches that extend beyond traditional shelter models to encompass broader societal and community interventions is crucial for addressing the root causes of domestic violence. There is very little support for men as perpetrators of domestic violence as there aren't many agencies that offer counseling services or mental health care to those committing the act itself. Within Calgary there are few agencies, FearIsNotLove being one of them, that offer support to men and perpetrators involved, however the ones that do offer services are also challenged with high demand. Butters et al. (2021) emphasizes the need for intimate partner violence perpetrator treatment to be tailored to individual needs, moving away from one-size-fits-all approaches like the Duluth model and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). The Duluth model is a feminist-based therapeutic approach focusing on power and control dynamics within relationships, while CBT is a psychotherapeutic technique that addresses dysfunctional thoughts and behaviors. This article highlights the importance of considering co-occurring issues such as substance abuse and mental health, as well as readiness to change, in treatment planning (Butters et al., 2021). The authors call for the use of risk assessment tools in conjunction with practitioner expertise to effectively address perpetrator behavior and prevent future victimization.

How The Domestic Violence Sector in Calgary Can Streamline Service Provision With ShelterLink

The Potential of Technology in Domestic Violence Support

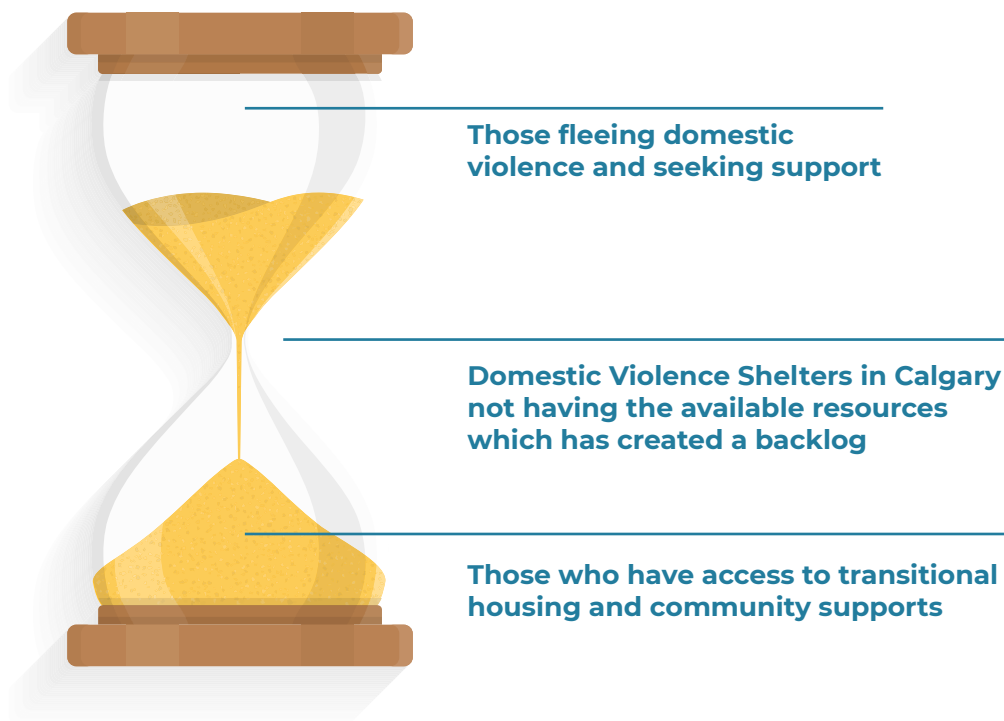
The integration of technology in the domestic violence sector is not only about resource management but also about empowering survivors and providing them with accessible information and support. Case (2023) emphasizes the need for modernization in domestic violence support, proposing the digitization of police domestic violence protocols and the development of a gateway application for survivors. This gateway application would serve as an interface to help survivors navigate through resources, delivering tailored information and referrals based on their specific needs (Case, 2023).

Furthermore, the potential of technology to nurture social connections and facilitate healing is significant. Storer et al. (2023) highlight how digital technology can enhance service provision in teen dating violence organizations, suggesting that survivors' access to technology should be considered as part of their safety plans. They advocate for strategies that balance the risks and benefits of technology adoption, addressing the digital divide that may exist among organizations (Storer et al., 2023). The acceptance of digital support tools is growing, as Micklitz et al. (2023) note the societal context factors influencing this trend, including the limited capacity of the current support system. However, they also point out barriers such as digital literacy and resource availability that must be addressed to ensure the effective integration of technology in the DV sector (Micklitz et al., 2023). Incorporating ethical considerations such as information sharing, data collection, and privacy protection is also crucial in the integration of technology within the domestic violence sector, ensuring that survivors' autonomy and safety are prioritized. Experts within the field also call for technology to be a tool for empowerment rather than control, emphasizing that these devices should be easily incorporated into the daily lives of survivors without stigmatizing them (Gorfinkiel, 2021).



ShelterLink: Shaping Domestic Violence Support Through Technology

Within the City of Calgary and surrounding Treaty 7, an innovative tool called ShelterLink is currently being implemented to streamline service provision for families experiencing domestic violence. ShelterLink is a computer based application that addresses the issue of domestic violence support through facilitating the sharing of bed availability among shelters, industry partners, and emergency service providers (YW Calgary, 2023). Created in collaboration between YW Calgary and FearIsNotLove, two prominent women’s shelters in Calgary, this endeavor directly confronts the persistent challenges faced by domestic violence survivors in Calgary and Treaty 7, where demand consistently exceeds capacity. Those who are seeking services are constantly being turned away due to the lack of available resources at a time of crisis, leading them to retell their story over and over again to different shelters in hopes of receiving support. Rooted in the Shelter 2.0 paradigm, ShelterLink not only enhances shelter effectiveness but also drives the evolution of practices aimed at violence prevention and cessation (Turner et al., 2018). ShelterLink’s innovative approach to addressing the bottleneck effect in emergency shelters is a prime example of how technology can be leveraged to improve the domestic violence support system. Incorporating these insights, ShelterLink stands as a testament to the transformative power of technology in the domestic violence sector. By facilitating real-time communication between shelters and service providers, it exemplifies how digital solutions can streamline support services and ultimately contribute to the prevention and end of violence (Babych, 2023; YW Calgary, 2023).



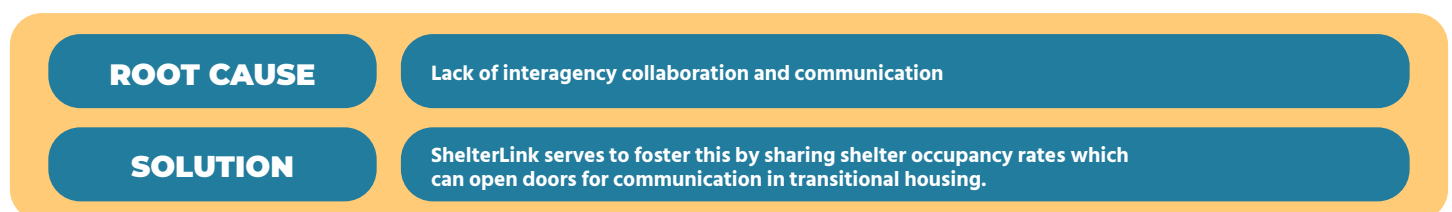
ShelterLink was created to address a notable challenge that has emerged within the social services domain, where a bottleneck effect within emergency shelters is happening due to inadequate transitional housing support, exacerbated by domestic violence survivors needing more time than the standardized 21-day stay imposed by service providers. Shelter seekers are staying past the 21 days due to the fact that some may not feel comfortable leaving or are unable to find and secure safe and affordable housing for themselves and their families. This has led to service providers not being able to accommodate those seeking shelter but also not able to help those looking to move into transitional housing after they have received support. This strain on resources prompts service providers to seek collaborative solutions to ensure broader access to their services. This has led organizations within the domestic violence sphere to integrate technology to better serve those affected by domestic violence.

How is ShelterLink Positioned to Empower Service Providers and Ultimately Assist Domestic Violence Survivors?

ShelterLink is positioned in a way that alleviates some of the stress within the sector that has been creating the bottleneck as described in the previous section. It can also serve as a centralized intake system that would be useful to service providers upon first interaction with those seeking support. Without ShelterLink, it is typical for those seeking shelter services to contact multiple agencies to only be turned away because there is no space available. Unfortunately because of this, what ends up happening is that some may have no other option but to stay in an unsafe situation, which can lead to dire consequences such as continued abuse and even murder. There is this feedback loop of people seeking shelter by contacting various organizations within Calgary leading to a 'no' almost every time which leaves shelter seekers with troublesome options such as the street, a hotel which can cause financial strain, or a friend's house. However, these are temporary solutions to a problem that can be solved with the organizations already in place equipped to deal with these issues.

Throughout my research, it was also important to ask 'why'. I find that embracing curiosity as an emerging changemaker not only drives exploration, innovation, and learning, but it also propels us to seek new knowledge and understand the world around us. This diagram is a 5 Whys diagram, a tool that systematically probes the underlying causes of a problem by iteratively asking 'why', aiding in uncovering the root cause and facilitating effective problem-solving.

Understand Why Domestic Violence is Happening in Calgary





By consolidating available space data from various agencies and shelters, ShelterLink minimizes the need for individuals to exhaustively contact multiple organizations in their search for accommodation. This not only saves time and frustration for shelter seekers but also ensures that those in need are swiftly connected with appropriate services. Moreover, ShelterLink's comprehensive approach goes beyond merely providing shelter availability. It works to match individuals with the most suitable support services based on their unique circumstances, whether it be safety-related services, counseling, or other forms of assistance. This targeted approach reduces the likelihood of individuals falling through the gaps in the system or resorting to risky alternatives.

By serving as a central hub for shelter-related information and assistance, ShelterLink plays a vital role in providing support and reducing the challenges individuals face when navigating Calgary's support network, including the cycle of rejection and uncertainty. Instead of facing repeated dead ends and the prospect of unsafe living situations, ShelterLink offers a reliable pathway to stability and support, ultimately contributing to the well-being and safety of vulnerable members of our community.





Directions for Future Research

This paper lays the foundation for exploring how technology can bolster support for domestic violence survivors in Calgary and the broader Treaty 7 region, while also deepening our understanding of the multifaceted nature of domestic violence and the systemic hurdles survivors face. One possible avenue for exploration involves the development of personalized support applications, inspired by Case's (2023) gateway application concept. These apps could provide tailored features like safety planning, legal resources, and mental health connections, catering to individual needs and examining the potential success of such applications in a Calgary context would be intriguing. Additionally, artificial intelligence shows promise in revolutionizing service provision for families fleeing domestic violence. Future research could focus on integrating AI into existing support systems to streamline processes, predict shelter needs, and identify high-risk situations, facilitating proactive support. Moreover, AI could enhance domestic violence shelters by managing administrative tasks and aiding in data analysis to improve service delivery and measure program impact.

Addressing the digital divide is imperative as technology becomes more integrated into support services and future endeavors should prioritize equitable access to technology, especially for marginalized communities, and overcoming barriers related to digital literacy. Expanding technology's role in prevention efforts is also crucial, involving the development of educational apps, community awareness campaigns, and online platforms to engage men and boys in discussions about healthy relationships and masculinity. Ethical considerations regarding survivor privacy and data security must not be overlooked and future research should also focus on developing secure platforms that protect user data and mitigate risks such as data breaches and cyberstalking. Lastly, the study of the long-term impact of technology would also provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of digital tools in supporting survivors and informing best practices for technology integration. Through these efforts, we can harness technology's potential to create a more responsive and effective support system for domestic violence survivors, empowering them and enhancing services for those affected by domestic violence.

Summary

In conclusion, this paper has highlighted the urgent need for innovative solutions to address the pervasive issue of domestic violence in Calgary and the broader Treaty 7 region. By examining national trends, local realities, and sectoral challenges, we have underscored the importance of prioritizing equity, diversity, and inclusion in domestic violence support services. The integration of technology, exemplified by initiatives like ShelterLink, offers promising opportunities to streamline service provision, enhance accessibility, and empower survivors. ShelterLink's innovative approach not only addresses the bottleneck effect within emergency shelters seen in our city but also serves as a centralized platform for connecting individuals with tailored support services. Moving forward, continued research and collaboration are essential to harnessing technology's potential and fostering systemic change that seeks to have all individuals live free from violence and abuse in safer, more inclusive communities.

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