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CANADA'S SHELTERS FOR ABUSED WOMEN, 1999-2000

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HIGHLIGHTS

- In 1999-2000, 96,359 women and dependent children were admitted to 448 shelters for abused women across Canada. In comparison, 90,792 women and dependent children were admitted to 413 shelters in 1997-1998.
- In a snapshot taken on April 17, 2000, there were 5,351 residents in 464 shelters: 53% were women and 47% were dependent children.
- 81% (2,281) of women in shelters on April 17, 2000 were victims of abuse and the remainder were admitted for reasons other than abuse such as housing problems.
- On snapshot day, 55% of all women in shelters seeking refuge from abusive situations were admitted with children. Of those abused women who had children, the majority (73%) took them to the shelter. About three-quarters of the children were under 10 years old.
- On April 17, 2000, 163 women and 77 children departed before noon from 446 shelters across Canada. While 1 in 6 women left the shelter and returned to their spouse, the majority of women did not return to their spouse. More than 1 in 4 women (28%) left the shelter for new housing without their spouse, 12% went to stay with friends or relatives, 9% returned home without their spouse and 9% found other housing.
- On April 17, 2000, 89 shelters turned away 476 people: 254 women and 222 children.¹ More than 7 in 10 of these shelters (71%) turned women and children away because the shelter was full.
- The majority of shelters offer the following in-house services to women residents: individual short-term counselling (90%), advocacy (89%), specialized services for women aged 55 and older (84%), housing referral (82%) and parenting skills (75%).
- In 1999-2000, 67% of shelters provided group counselling, down slightly from 71% in 1997-1998. Similarly, the percentage of shelters that provided parenting skills decreased from 82% in 1997-1998 to 75% in 1999-2000. However, the percentage of shelters that provided a crisis telephone line and medical services rose from 60% to 64% and from 55% to 59% respectively.²
- Results from the 1999-2000 survey indicated a slight decrease from 1997-1998 in the percentage of shelters that provided individual counselling (69% versus 75% in 1997-1998), and programs for children who have witnessed or experienced abuse (51% versus 53% in 1997-1998).
- Since 1997-1998, there has been a 23% increase in the number of shelters with staff who communicate and provide services in languages other than English and French.
- Facilities reported providing an average of 43 outreach hours per week. Outreach work included supplying information, accompanying victims of abuse to court, and participating in drop-in centres.

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¹ *A person may be turned away from more than one shelter on snapshot day.*

² *Where there have been slight increases or decreases in the various types of services offered, many of these changes may be explained by shifts or changes in the type of shelters responding to the survey.*



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