

Changemaking Toolkit 2026

Safety, Dignity, and Economic Security

Addressing the Intersection of Poverty and Violence Against Women in Rural Communities

Part 3: Calls to Action

Huronia Transition Homes

Huronia Transition Homes

... working to end all violence against all women



About Us

Huronia Transition Homes (HTH) is a charitable organization that has operated across Simcoe County since 1984.

Contact Us

Huronia Transition Homes
P.O. Box 54, Midland, Ontario, L4R 4K6
admin@rosewood.on.ca
705 526 3221

Our Mission

We believe that all violence against all women and children must end. We are community members who are committed to education, advocacy, harm reduction, and poverty reduction as a means to end violence. Huronia Transition Homes is also committed to providing shelter and support to abused women and their children and to providing counselling to women survivors of sexual assault and socioeconomic opportunities through social enterprise.



CALLS TO ACTION

HOW **YOU** CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

HURONIA TRANSITION HOMES

Purpose of the toolkit

This systems change toolkit equips the North Simcoe Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) Network, advocates, organizations, and allies to advance structural change at the intersection of violence against women and poverty, grounded in women's lived experience and feminist trauma-informed practice. It translates evidence from Huronia Transition Homes' research project (funded by Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) into clear demands, systems change strategies, and messaging tools to support coordinated action across systems.



What's in the toolkit

This toolkit is divided into 3 parts:

1. **Awareness:**
   - Self-care in advocacy
   - HTH Research Project
   - Key Messages
   - Dignity Based Systems Change
   - Policy Position:
     BIG as violence prevention
     and essential element of dignity-based systems change
2. **Recommendations for Policy Makers**
3. **Calls to action**
   - how YOU can make a difference!
   - Resource List
   - Get Connected

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CALLS TO ACTION

HOW **YOU** CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Call to action 1:
Demand that all levels of government in Canada adopt and implement a Basic Income Guarantee as a cornerstone of gender-based violence prevention.

Call to action 2:
Call on decision makers, leaders, and policy makers to centre women's lived experience in system design to advance cross-sector system reform.

Call to action 3:
Demand that all levels of government to move from crisis response to prevention, integrating solutions to poverty reduction and violence prevention.

Call to action 4:
Demand that all levels of government strengthen access to safe, affordable, and *supportive* housing.

Call to action 5:
Call on all levels of government to fund feminist, trauma-informed, low-barrier services led by Violence Against Women and Indigenous Women's organizations

CALLS TO ACTION

HOW **YOU** CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Call to action 6:
Call on all government services to explicitly recognize and respond to economic abuse across systems.

Call to action 7:
Call on all policy makers, ministries, organizational leaders, and staff to reduce the gendered burden of system navigation.

Call to action 8:
Demand that Federal and Provincial governments redesign income supports to promote autonomy and reduce conditionality.

Call to action 9:
Demand that the Federal government continue expanding eligibility for Disability Tax Credit and Provide Adequate Canada Disability Benefit

Call to action 10:
Demand that all levels of government fund Indigenous culturally grounded supports and remove colonial barriers from laws, policies, and programs.

Call to action 1:

Demand that all levels of government in Canada adopt and implement a Basic Income Guarantee as a cornerstone of gender-based violence prevention.

System Change Tools

- **Decision-maker ask:** Commit to BIG as a structural response to gender-based violence embedded within broader dignity-based systems reform; not as a pilot or charity model.
- **Design requirements:** Ensure BIG is unconditional, individualized, and adequate to meet basic needs.
- **Implementation principle:** Embed BIG within broader systemic reforms that address gendered, racial, disability, and colonial inequities; ensure adequate, accessible services for all.

Next steps to engage with key decision makers:

- **Municipal:** Ask candidates in the municipal election about their position on a BIG and ask that they commit to supporting one.
- **Provincial:** Write your MP about the need for a BIG to prevent violence in order to "build Ontario Strong."
- **Federal:** Show your support for Bill S206! Send a letter to the Senate Finance Committee asking them to pass Bill S206.

Engage in discussion where, and with whom, it feels safe to do so:

- Use this hook to talk about the need for BIG with people who do not agree: Affordability creates community well-being and is a strategic investment saving downstream costs.
- In other words: not providing a BIG will cost the taxpayers more money in the long run.

Share broadly

- **Key message:** Income security is violence prevention.
- **One-sentence framing:** No woman should have to choose between poverty and abuse.
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Call to action 2:

Call on decision makers, leaders, and policy makers to centre women's lived experience in system design to advance cross-sector system reform.

System Change Tools

- **Decision-maker ask:** Create paid lived-experience advisory groups, drop-ins, and engagement spaces that shape policy, funding, service design, and project development from the beginning.
- **Implementation principle:** Make participation safe and accessible by providing childcare, transportation, honoraria, trauma-informed facilitation, plain-language materials, and ethical protections.
- **Accountability lens:** Require cross-sector planning tables to demonstrate how women's lived experience, Indigenous leadership, disability justice, anti-racism, and rural realities shape decisions.

Next steps to engage with key decision makers:

- **Municipal and Regional governments:** Ask councils, service managers, and community planning tables how women with lived experience are meaningfully involved in housing, poverty reduction, transportation, and community safety decisions.
- **Provincial and Federal governments:** Call for lived-experience evidence to be embedded in gender-based violence, poverty reduction, housing, disability, community safety and wellbeing, and Indigenous justice strategies.

Share Broadly:

- **Key message:** Women are experts in the systems that shape their lives.
- **One-sentence framing:** Systems work better when they are designed with the women most affected by them, not for them or around them.
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Call to action 3:

Demand that all levels of government to move from crisis response to prevention, integrating solutions to poverty reduction and violence prevention. Make both pillars of Community Safety and Wellbeing plans.

System Change Tools

- **Decision-Maker Asks:**
  - Commit to integrated Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Poverty Reduction Action Plans.
  - Align Community Safety and Wellbeing (CSWB) Planning with this integrated approach, make anti-poverty and gender-based violence pillars of CSWB Plans and prioritize integrated approaches to violence prevention, economic security, and life stabilization.
- **Implementation Principles:**
  - Shift investment toward prevention-first approaches rather than crisis management in violence, poverty, housing, healthcare, and justice sectors.
  - Address patriarchal norms, gender inequality, and harmful constructions of masculinity, including increased online misogyny and tech assisted violence, alongside addressing economic conditions that sustain and exacerbate violence.
  - Ensure coordinated action across housing, income security, health, education, justice, and social services systems.

Share broadly

- **Key Message:** Poverty reduction is violence prevention.
- **One-Sentence Framing:** We cannot end gender-based violence without addressing the economic conditions that make women vulnerable to it.

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Next Steps to Engage Key Decision Makers:

Municipal

Everyone and anyone:

- Ask municipal election candidates how they will address both violence and poverty as interconnected community safety and wellbeing issues.
- Advocate for the development of both a Gender-Based Violence Plan and Poverty Reduction Action Plan in your municipality.
- Do a deputation to your municipal council
- Call for Community Safety and Wellbeing Plans to explicitly integrate gender-based violence prevention and poverty reduction, making both priority pillars of CSWB Plans.
- Call or write your ward Counsellor, Mayor, and Deputy Mayor

Organizations:

- Participate in community tables, and regional Community Safety and Wellbeing Committees, advocate for integrated anti-poverty anti-violence priority pillars.
- Encourage municipalities to adopt prevention-focused approaches that include housing, transportation, income security, and trauma-informed supports.

Regional

Everyone and anyone:

- Call for future Community Safety and Wellbeing Plans to explicitly integrate gender-based violence prevention and poverty reduction as priority pillars.
- Advocate for gender-based violence prevention and poverty reduction to be embedded within regional housing, community safety, health, and social planning initiatives.
- Ask regional leaders how women, single mothers, survivors of violence, and low-income residents are being included in community safety priorities.

Organizations:

- Actively support the development of integrated regional strategies focused on life stabilization, economic security, and violence prevention

Next Steps to Engage Key Decision Makers:

Provincial

Everyone and anyone, call or write your MPPs and ask that they:

- Expand and strengthen Ontario's response to gender-based violence by integrating Ontario STANDS and Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy as complimentary protocols that address economic security and life stabilization for everyone.
- Commit to increased investment in prevention-first approaches that address root causes of violence and social determinants of safety, including economic empowerment.
- Investment in healthy masculinity, violence prevention education, and early intervention initiatives for men and boys, including an integrated cross-government response to rise in masculinism and online misogynistic culture.
- Increase operational funding for Violence Against Women organizations, Sexual Assault Centres, Indigenous women's organizations, and community-based supports.

Federal

Everyone and anyone:

- Write your MPs to prioritize prevention of gender-based violence with upstream solutions; call for income security, housing, and economic justice as essential violence prevention measures.
- Support national policies that integrate poverty reduction, housing security, and gender-based violence prevention into complimentary interlocking protocols.
- Advocate for federal investments in social infrastructure and community-based anti-violence organizations.

Call to action 4:

Demand that all levels of government strengthen access to safe, affordable, and supportive housing.

System Change Tools

Decision-maker asks:

- Treat safe, affordable, supportive housing as violence prevention, not only as emergency shelter or crisis response.
- Prioritize women leaving abuse on housing waitlists and remove income, credit, household status, and documentation barriers that keep women unsafe.
- **Implementation principle:** Fund transitional, affordable, and supportive housing models that include trauma-informed supports, childcare, optional financial planning assistance, service navigation, and safe-landlord accountability.

Next steps to engage key decision makers:

- **Municipal and regional**: Ask housing service managers, councils, and non-profit housing providers to guarantee dedicated affordable housing allocations for women experiencing violence and poverty.
- **Provincial:** Advocate for trauma-informed, needs-first housing standards and funding for supportive housing models across Ontario.
- **Federal:** Call for national housing investments to include dedicated allocations for women and children leaving violence, including rural and Indigenous-led housing solutions.

Share broadly

- **Key message:** Supportive housing is violence prevention.
- **One-sentence framing**: Women cannot rebuild safety without a safe and supportive, affordable place to live.
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Call to action 5:

Call on all levels of government to fund feminist, trauma-informed, low-barrier, wrap-around services led by Violence Against Women and Indigenous Women's organizations

System Change Tools

- **Decision maker ask:** Move from short-term project funding to sustained operational investment.
- **Key message:** The problem is not women's experiences of trauma, it's systems that refuse to respond.
- **Accountability lens:** Require trauma-informed standards across all publicly funded services, particularly Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program casework.

Next Steps to Engage Key Decision Makers:

- **Municipal and regional:**
  - Ask municipal election candidates if they will commit to funding Indigenous women's organizations and Feminist trauma-informed, violence against women organizations.
  - Ask councils, service managers, community safety tables, and social planning tables to identify whether local services are funded sustainably enough to respond to violence, poverty, trauma, housing instability, rural isolation, and system navigation needs.
- **Provincial:** Write to your MPP and relevant ministries calling for sustained operational funding for Violence Against Women organizations, Sexual Assault Centres, Indigenous-led organizations, and feminist trauma-informed services, rather than short-term project funding.
- **Federal:** Call for federal gender-based violence, poverty reduction, housing, disability, and Indigenous justice strategies to include long-term investment in community-based anti-violence organizations and Indigenous women's organizations as essential social infrastructure.

Share broadly

- **Key message:** Fund feminist, trauma-informed, wraparound services because safety requires more than crisis response.
- **One-sentence framing:** Women need low-barrier services led by organizations that understand them and their experiences.

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Call to action 6:

Call on all government services to explicitly recognize and respond to economic abuse across systems.

System Change Tools

Decision-maker asks:

- Amend housing, income support, family law, benefits, and service eligibility rules so economic abuse and coercive control are recognized as forms of gender-based violence.
- Increase thresholds for legal aid eligibility so women can receive the legal advice and counsel needed to address both family and criminal justice matters.
- Train caseworkers, housing workers, police, court staff, legal professionals and justice personnel to identify economic abuse, document safely, and avoid blaming women for debt, credit damage, benefit disruption, or financial instability caused by abuse.

Next Steps to Engage Key Decision Makers:

- **Municipal and regional:** Ask housing service managers, community safety tables, police services boards, legal clinics, and social planning tables to identify where economic abuse is creating barriers to housing, income supports, legal help, transportation, childcare, safety planning, and service access.
- **Provincial:** Write to your MPP and relevant ministries calling for housing, social assistance, family law, legal aid, and court systems to explicitly recognize economic abuse and coercive control, reduce eligibility barriers, and avoid penalizing women for debt, credit damage, benefit disruption, or financial instability caused by abuse.
- **Federal:** Call for federal gender-based violence, housing, poverty reduction, income security, and financial consumer protection strategies to name economic abuse as gender-based violence and support cross-sector responses that protect women's safety, autonomy, and access to income.

Share broadly

- **Key message:** Economic abuse can cause debt, damaged credit, benefit disruption, and financial instability . Systems must recognize economic abuse so women are not disqualified from safety because of harm caused by violence.
- **One-sentence framing:** When economic abuse is invisible to systems, women are left to carry the costs of violence alone.

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Call to action 7:

Call on all policy makers, ministries, organizational leaders, and staff to reduce the gendered burden of system navigation.

System Change Tools

Decision-maker asks:

- Fund centralized hubs and service navigators within feminist, anti-oppressive, trauma-informed Violence Against Women and Indigenous women's organizations.
- Expand rural transportation supports, including bus passes, subsidies, rides, and flexible transportation funding for work, appointments, childcare, legal supports, housing, and services.

Next Steps to Engage Decision Makers:

- **Municipal and regional:** Ask councils, service managers, community safety tables, and social planning tables to identify where women are being forced to navigate fragmented systems, repeat their stories, travel long distances, or coordinate services alone.
- **Provincial:** Write to your MPP and relevant ministries calling for funded service navigator roles, centralized low-barrier hubs, rural transportation supports, and reduced administrative burden across housing, social assistance, health, justice, and anti-violence systems.
- **Federal:** Call for federal gender-based violence, poverty reduction, disability, rural transportation, and housing strategies to recognize system navigation as unpaid gendered labour and invest in integrated, trauma-informed access points.
- **Organizations and allies:** Document navigation barriers, transportation gaps, repetitive disclosure requirements, and administrative burdens in budget submissions, deputations, coalition letters, consultations, and meetings with decision makers.

Share broadly

- **Key message:** Women should not have to hold broken systems together.
- **One-sentence framing:** Reducing navigation labour is part of violence prevention.

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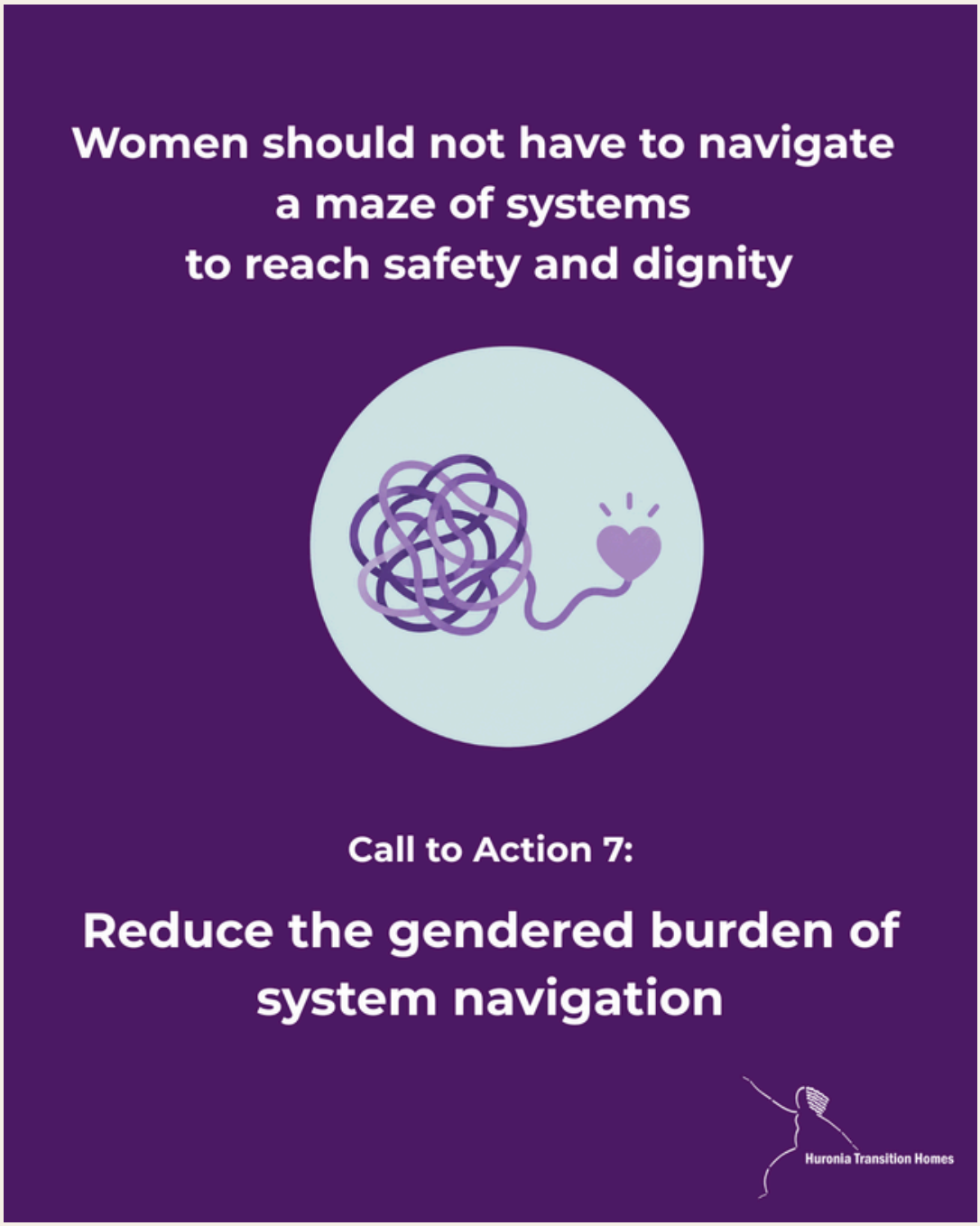

Call to action 8:

Demand that Federal and Provincial governments redesign income supports to promote autonomy and reduce conditionality.

System Change Tools

- **Decision-maker ask:** Raise income support rates to meet basic needs, individualize benefits, remove punitive claw backs, and reduce surveillance and repeated proof requirements.
- **Implementation principle:** Income supports should stabilize women's lives and expand choice, not reproduce dependency, surveillance, or institutionalized coercive control.

Next Steps to Engage Decision Makers:

- **Municipal and regional:** Ask councils, service managers, and community planning tables to document how low income, benefit rules, transportation barriers, and housing costs limit women's safety, autonomy, and ability to leave violence.
- **Provincial:** Write to your MPP and the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services calling for higher OW and ODSP rates, individualized benefits, reduced claw backs, fewer proof requirements, and trauma-informed disability recognition.
- **Federal:** Call for federal income security measures, disability benefits, and poverty reduction strategies that reduce conditionality, prevent claw backs, and support women's economic autonomy, safety, and dignity.
- **Organizations and allies:** Bring women's lived experience into budget submissions, deputations, consultations, and meetings with decision makers, while protecting privacy and ensuring participation is paid, voluntary, and trauma-informed.

Share broadly

- **Key message:** Women should not have to hold broken systems together.
- **One-sentence framing:** Reducing navigation labour is part of violence prevention.

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Call to action 9:

Demand that the Federal government continue expanding eligibility for Disability Tax Credit and Provide Adequate Canada Disability Benefit.

System Change Tools

Decision-maker asks:

- Expand Disability Tax Credit eligibility by reducing barriers for trauma-related, episodic, mental health, chronic pain, and violence-related disabilities.
- Address gendered disability recognition gaps, especially where disability is connected to trauma, violence, mental health, chronic pain, or grief.
- Train Canada Revenue Agency staff and relevant medical system staff on the links between violence, disability, poverty, trauma, and episodic conditions.
- Ensure the Canada Disability Benefit is adequate, accessible, and designed to reduce poverty, support autonomy, and prevent women and survivors from being forced to choose between safety, food, housing, medication, transportation, caregiving, and healing.

Next Steps to Engage Decision Makers:

- **Federal:** Write to your MP, the Minister of National Revenue, the Minister of Employment and Social Development, and the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth calling for expanded DTC eligibility, CRA training, and an adequate Canada Disability Benefit.
- **Provincial:** Ask provincial ministries to work with the federal government to streamline DTC access for people receiving ODSP and reduce duplicative disability assessments and proof requirements.
- **Medical and service systems:** Encourage primary care providers, disability assessors, benefits navigators, and anti-violence organizations to document barriers women face when applying for the DTC, especially where disability is connected to violence, trauma, mental health, chronic pain, or episodic conditions.
- **Organizations and allies:** Include DTC access, Canada Disability Benefit adequacy, and violence-related disability recognition in budget submissions, consultations, deputations, and meetings with decision makers.

Share broadly

- **Key message:** Women should not have to hold broken systems together.
- **One-sentence framing:** Reducing navigation labour is part of violence prevention.

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Call to action 10:

Demand that the Federal government fund Indigenous culturally grounded supports and remove colonial barriers from laws, policies, and programs.

System Change Tools

Decision-maker asks:

- Remove colonial and discriminatory barriers that limit status rights, safety, housing, income, cultural supports, and access to services.
- ncrease sustained funding for Indigenous-led programming, cultural supports, healing approaches, and partnerships with Indigenous women's organizations.
- Call on all levels of government to implement all 231 Calls to Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls; with emphasis on Call to Justice 4.5. " We call upon all governments to establish a guaranteed annual livable income for all Canadians."

Next Steps to Engage Decision Makers:

- **Municipal and regional:** Ask councils, service managers, community safety tables, housing providers, and social planning tables how they are partnering with Indigenous-led organizations and removing local barriers to culturally grounded supports, transportation, housing, income access, and safety.
- **Provincial:** Write to your MPP and relevant ministries calling for sustained funding for Indigenous-led programming, cultural supports, healing approaches, and partnerships with Indigenous women's organizations across housing, health, income support, justice, and anti-violence systems.
- **Federal:** Call on federal leaders to fully implement the 231 Calls to Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and to remove sex-based discrimination in the *Indian Act*.
- **Organizations and allies:** Support Indigenous leadership, include the Calls to Justice in budget submissions, deputations, consultations, coalition letters, and meetings with decision makers, and avoid asking Indigenous women and organizations to carry unpaid responsibility for fixing colonial systems.

Share broadly

- **Key message:** Safety for Indigenous women requires self-determination and culturally grounded support.
- **One-sentence framing:** Systems must stop reproducing colonial harm and fund Indigenous-led solutions.

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RESOURCES

Learn more about the intersections of gender-based violence, poverty, housing, disability, and Indigeneity:

Safety, Dignity, and Economic Security:

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Learn more about how a basic income guarantee prevent gender-based vilolence as and essential part of dignity-based systems change:

Understanding the intersections of Violence, Poverty, and Women's Wellbeing

LITERATURE REVIEW

GET CONNECTED

HOW **YOU** CAN CONTRIBUTE TO
DIGNITY-BASED SYSTEMS CHANGE

Join the North Simcoe BIG Network:

email our project coordinator BIG@rosewood.on.ca

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Calls to action prepared by Katie Woodcroft and Desiree Salis
for Huronia Transition Homes
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Huronia Transition Homes
Po Box 54, Midland, ON, L4R 4K6
Charitable Registration Number: 118965813RR0001

www.huroniatransitionhomes.ca
BIG@rosewood.on.ca
705 526 3221

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