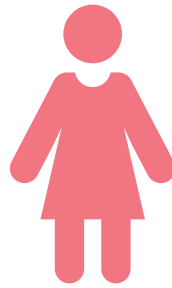


# WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF HOUSING INSTABILITY & HOMELESSNESS IN ST. THOMAS-ELGIN

This snapshot highlights key findings gleaned from surveys completed by women with lived experience and service providers along with information gathered during a variety of focus groups.



According to the 2018 St. Thomas and Elgin County Homeless Enumeration Report, 45% of the participants identified as female.

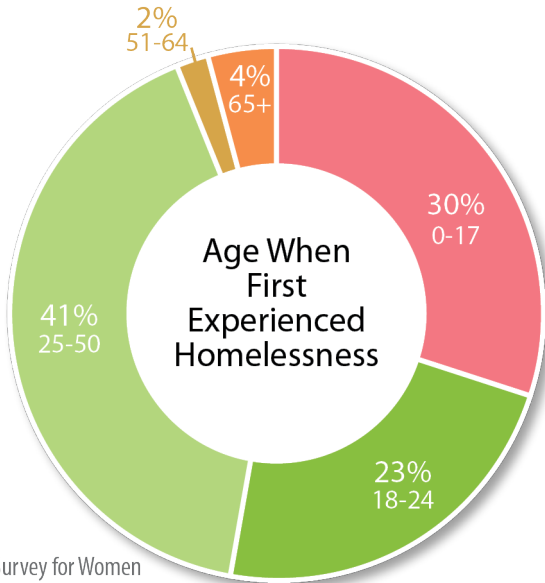
**45%**

**47%**  
over 24 years old



**53%**  
under 24 years old

53% of the survey respondents identified that they were younger than 24 years of age when they first experienced homelessness.



n=60, Survey for Women with Lived Experience

*“It's not safe out here, especially when this is a new experience for you. Homelessness is a lonely and hopeless experience.”*

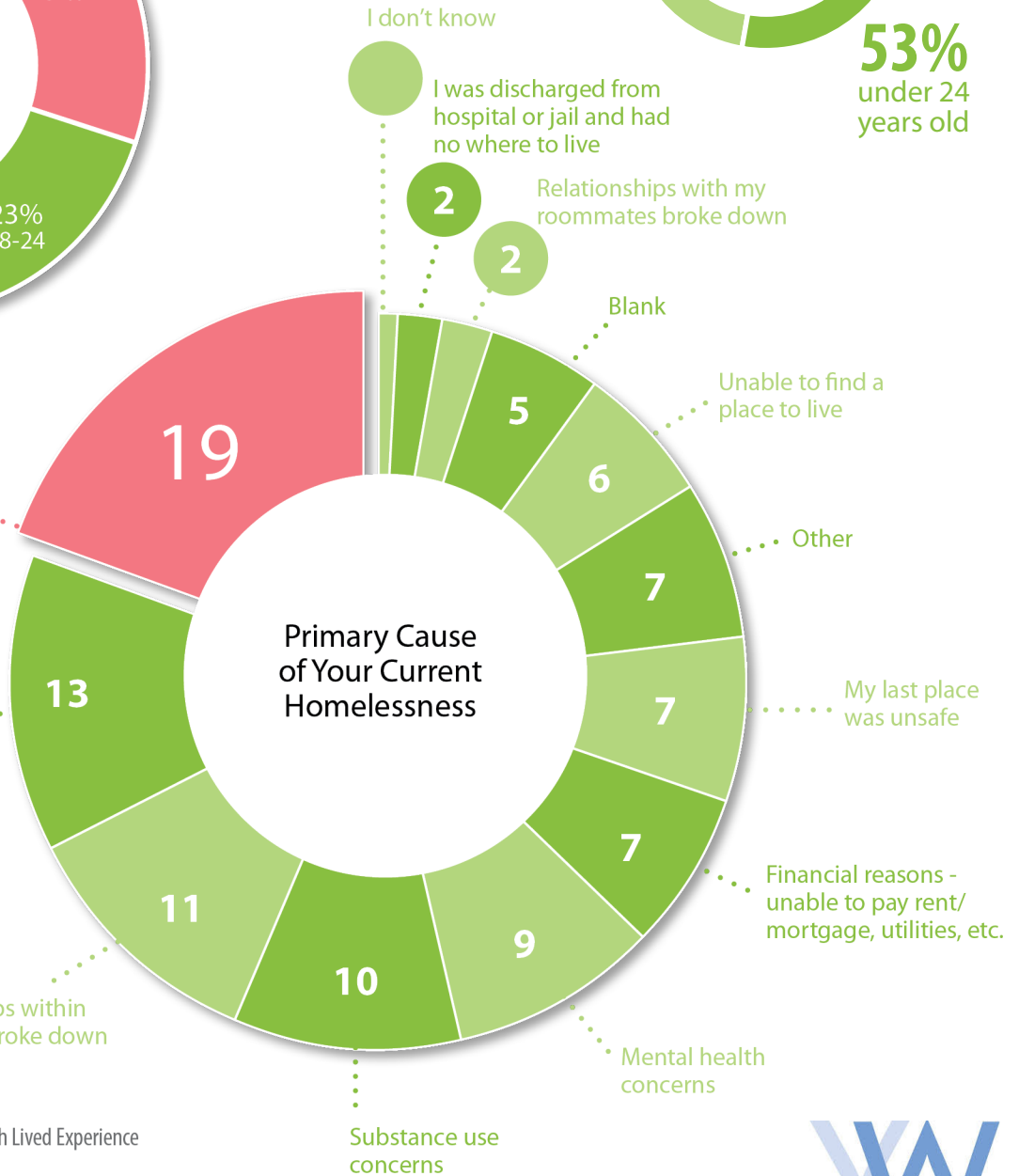
I was fleeing violence

Relationship with intimate partner/spouse broke down

**57%**

Exposure to violence continues to be a common experience during homelessness, with 57% of women reported being a victim of violence as they navigate homelessness locally.

n=60, Survey for Women with Lived Experience



**CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS**

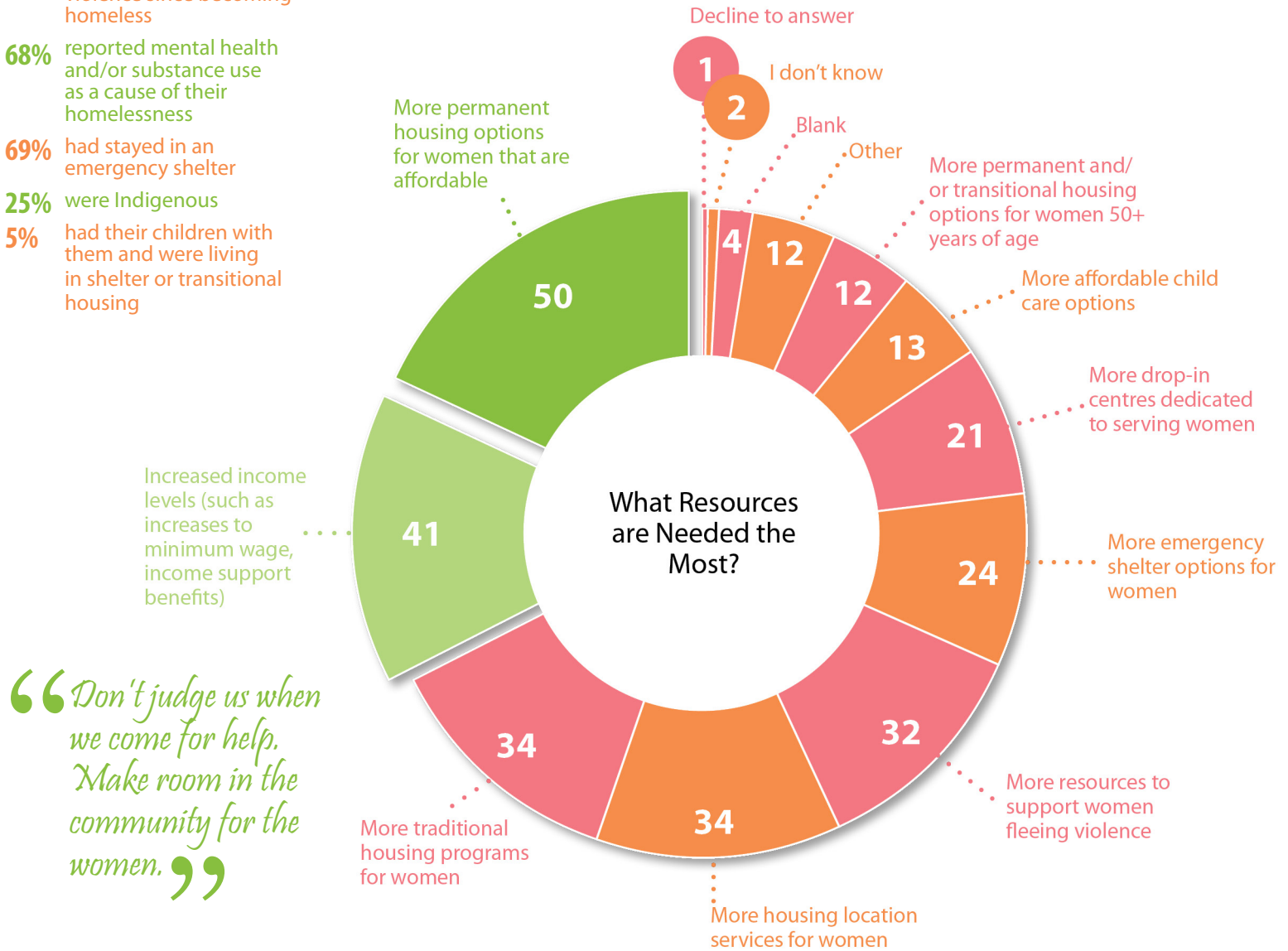
Of the 16 women who identified themselves as chronically homeless:

- 85%** reported that they had been victims of violence since becoming homeless
- 68%** reported mental health and/or substance use as a cause of their homelessness
- 69%** had stayed in an emergency shelter
- 25%** were Indigenous
- 5%** had their children with them and were living in shelter or transitional housing

*“Homelessness affects a woman in more ways than just the physical need for shelter.”*

**THE BIGGEST GAPS IN SERVICE IDENTIFIED BY THE WOMEN WERE:**

- 1** Not having a safe space, including emergency shelters and women-specific drop-ins
- 2** The lack of affordable housing
- 3** The lack of housing supports to assist in the journey back to stability
- 4** Insufficient income
- 5** Difficulties in accessing health supports and coaching



*“Don't judge us when we come for help. Make room in the community for the women.”*

n=60, Survey for Women with Lived Experience

**INDIGENOUS WOMEN**

are more likely to remain homeless for a longer period of time in St. Thomas-Elgin

- 75%** reported that they had been victims of violence since becoming homeless
- 63%** reported that their primary cause of homelessness was issues of safety and fleeing violence and abusive relationships

**In Their Words**

What Women Want:

- 1** More mental health and addiction supports
- 2** More case management and counselling services
- 3** Rapid access to housing
- 4** More options for affordable housing especially for families with children
- 5** Improved communication between community agencies
- 6** Making it easier to talk about the needs of women in a housing crisis