

Brighter Futures for Women and Families



UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S UNIQUE NEEDS

It would be easy to assume that men and women have parallel experiences when it comes to poverty, homelessness, and addiction—but from what we've seen over our 84 years of care, women face nuanced challenges to accessing recovery and health. Women experiencing addiction often face gender-based trauma, abuse, and societal stigmas. Many turn to substances as a coping mechanism, leading to cycles of addiction that are difficult to break.

- Over the last decade, unregulated drug death rates among women have increased significantly—in British Columbia, the rate has risen by six times (BC Coroners Service, 2023).
- Approximately one in four people who overdose in British Columbia are female (BC Coroners Service).
- Indigenous women are particularly vulnerable to drug-related deaths, being more than 11 times more likely to die from toxic drugs compared to other women in the province (First Nations Health Authority, 2023). This disparity highlights the intersection of addiction, trauma, and systemic challenges faced by Indigenous women.
- Women's homelessness is not always visible through traditional Point-in-Time (PiT) homeless counts. Many women avoid shelters due to safety concerns, opting instead for temporary accommodations with increased risks of exploitation and abuse.

These statistics paint a stark picture of the challenges faced by women dealing with addiction and homelessness. They emphasize the critical need for tailored, compassionate recovery programs that address underlying traumas and support women on their paths to healing and stability. UGM's commitment is to fill this gap by offering comprehensive and compassionate care designed for women's healing.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHOICE IN RECOVERY

Choice is a fundamental principle in UGM's women's recovery programs. Women are empowered to select environments and programs that resonate with their individual needs and preferences. This includes options for urban, suburban, or rural settings, as well as varying program sizes to accommodate personal comfort levels. UGM's approach recognizes that recovery is a deeply personal journey requiring tailored support.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Even when it seems hopeless, there is a way forward. UGM is privileged to witness the incredible life transformation that happens when a woman is offered a doorway into a safe and supportive environment where they build the skills to move beyond their unique barriers to well-being.

With the expansion of UGM beds in Victoria and Langley, UGM is one of the largest providers of women's recovery in the province, with a total of 53 beds in four locations. UGM's Women's Recovery Programs are designed to meet diverse needs and stages of recovery.



Lydia Home (Mission, BC) - 8 beds

A recovery community offering a supportive environment for up to eight women at a time. Women engage in intensive counseling, education, and spiritual growth over a year-long program.

Women & Families Centre (Downtown Eastside Vancouver) - 27 beds

A unique urban facility providing wraparound care for women and women-led families. This centre offers live-in units, childcare services, and comprehensive support for recovery and reintegration.

Arrow Home (Saanich, BC) - 6 beds

Opening in July 2024, this home in Greater Victoria aims to bridge geographical barriers by offering a tranquil, community-focused recovery environment. Women will find healing and support within a nurturing setting.

Cedar Haven (Langley, BC) - 11 beds

Also opening in July 2024, this rural recovery centre provides a nature-inspired therapeutic setting where women can rebuild their lives over a 12-month program.

“Through healing and recovery, I feel like I’ve been made new. I am so thankful for my recovery. I am so thankful for my life.”

— JENNIFER, WOMEN’S RECOVERY ALUMNA



Feeding hope. Changing lives.

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Union Gospel Mission acknowledges with humble gratitude that our sites are located on the traditional, unceded lands of the x̱məθkʷəjəm, Skwxwú7mesh, and salilwatał Nations, the Halq'emeylem-speaking peoples, the q̱ʷa:níʔari, q̱içəj, Máthxwi, Se'mya'me, Stó:lō, Ləkʷəŋən-speaking People, W̱SÁNEĆ, Schian'exw, T'Sou-ke Nations, and the Coast Salish Peoples