

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE



Indigenous Housing Series: Ksan House

Ksan House is the transition house at Ksan Society (Ksan). It provides safe, short-term transitional housing for women with or without children fleeing violence. Wrap-around supports and services are accessible on-site.

The purpose of this case study series is to highlight housing providers and programs that serve Indigenous women, youth, and families who are in need of housing support and facing child welfare intervention. The case studies, developed Summer 2016, provide information on program components and support. They also examine key practices, program highlights, challenges and successes. It is hoped this information may inform practices of other housing providers looking to create or expand wrap-around support services to help families stay together.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND SUPPORTS

- › **Housing:** Transitional housing
- › **Education and skills training:** Parenting information
- › **Personal development:** Family support worker, link worker, personal support and self-care planning, counselling, women's groups, addictions day program
- › **Other services and activities:** Sexual Assault Response Team, Pet Program, Community-Based Victim Services program, Stopping the Violence Counselling, Stopping the Violence Outreach, Children Who Witness Abuse counselling, kids' summer programs, Donation Room, Furniture Shed, food security programs, advocacy, community place, community outings, transportation and accompaniment to appointments, social housing and rent supplements, Homelessness Prevention program, external referrals





KEY PRACTICES

Ksan House residents are provided with wrap-around housing and supports through access to Ksan’s suite of programs. Ksan programs are available in four Terrace locations.

Ksan has moved away from formal mandatory programming, and there are currently no mandatory program requirements for residents at Ksan House. Instead, program participation is decided by the women themselves, an important practice that promotes empowerment and trust. Should a woman choose to leave Ksan House and indicate she may be returning to an abusive situation, Ksan will work with her to develop a safety plan.

As part of its mission to empower women fleeing violence, Ksan is focused on providing a safe, non-judgmental environment. Ksan supports staff in challenging their own attitudes and assumptions, and encourages staff development through online and in-person training.

Ksan staff observed that many repeat clients at Ksan House have a shared history of trauma, such as residential schools, addictions, or mental illness. To strengthen support for these clients, Ksan requires that staff attend Trauma Informed Practice workshops which promote an informed and anti-oppression approach.

As a variety of cultures are represented at Ksan House, Ksan provides an open cultural environment where women are encouraged to culturally express

KSAN HOUSE STATISTICS

Housing units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 beds, including 1 Support Recovery bed
Estimated clients per year (#)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 240/year • Repeat clients: 10-15/year
Length of stay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum: 30 days, with significant flexibility
Estimated Indigenous clients (%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected reflects 70% • Potentially 85-90%
Referrals, intake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals: Self-referral, MCFD, other organizations, general public • Intake: Continuous
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – support staff: 24/7 (7:00am to 7:00pm/ 7:00pm – 7:00am) – link staff: 7 days per week (12:00pm – 9:00pm) – family support worker: Monday to Friday (8:30am – 4:30pm) – manager: Monday to Friday (8:30am – 4:30pm) • Full time: 6 • Part time: 3 • Casual: 4
Key funding sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government: BC Housing and local health authority (for Supportive Recovery bed only) • Other: public and private foundations, grant programs, private donations
Key partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terrace & District Victims Assistance Program (TVAP), Violence Against Women in Relationships (VAWIR), community agencies, police, Community Corrections

themselves. Ksan recognizes that cultural expectations vary, and continually seeks ways to make Ksan House more inviting to Indigenous women.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- › **Adaptability:** Ksan increased the level of flexibility and openness to promote a more empowering environment for women. Work continues to ensure that staff and residents understand the new expectations.



- › **Partnerships:** Ksan identified a service gap of free preventative counselling services for men. To fill the gap, Ksan negotiated an agreement with a counsellor to provide free counselling for men who cannot afford to pay for support.
- › **Pet Program:** Some women are reluctant to leave abusive situations because they do not wish to leave their pets. Developed in collaboration between Ksan and the Terrace Animal Shelter, the Pet Program allows residents to board their animals free of charge during their stay at Ksan House. Recently, Ksan created its own on-site pet room so owners and pets can stay together. Each year Ksan holds a 'Howleen' dance to raise funds for its Pet Program. In addition to the Pet Program, Ksan House has a resident, on-site cat.

CHALLENGES

- › **Market and social housing:** Ksan faces challenges in moving women and families to next-stage housing due to the limited amount of market and social housing in Terrace. Additionally, women are frequently discriminated against when searching for market housing. A limited 30-day stay at Ksan House does not typically provide sufficient time for women to locate stable and adequate housing.
- › **Transportation:** Women accessing Ksan House frequently travel long distances due to a lack of services in their own communities. Transportation to Ksan House can be difficult and expensive, creating a barrier for women in need.
- › **On-call and casual staff:** It is difficult to attract and retain on-call and casual staff.
- › **Traditional foods program:** Ksan plans to incorporate traditional foods by developing a cooking program residents can connect to. Barriers to this are funding limitations and Food Safe requirements.

SUCCESSES

- › **Transportation funding:** Ksan received funding for two fiscal years for the transportation of women accessing services and travelling to other safe locations.
- › **Flexibility:** Ksan adapted its approach, becoming more empowering and better meeting the needs of women staying at Ksan House.
- › **Pet Program:** Ksan received feedback that the Pet Program and resident cat at Ksan House have significantly and positively impacted the well-being of resident women and children.
- › **Open door policy:** Women who are not Ksan House residents can drop-in for a comfort drink, use the facilities, gain emotional support, or be connected to other services.

SPOTLIGHT

EXTREME WEATHER SHELTER PROJECT

Ksan recently purchased a building in downtown Terrace to provide additional extreme weather shelter. Although Ksan already operates a 16-bed, 30-day emergency shelter, it is frequently over capacity. The new facility provides an additional 20 beds. It is anticipated that the new shelter will be low-barrier, able to assist the segment of the homeless population who cannot access the existing 'dry' shelter.



Kermodei Tourism Society