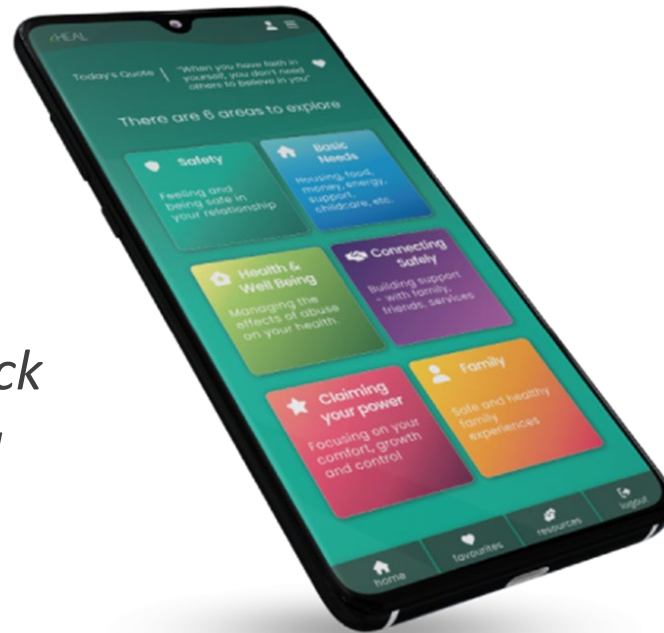


# We've got an app for that!

Improving women's safety, health and well-being with the iHEAL app

*Marilyn Ford-Gilboe, Western University*  
*Kelly Scott-Storey, University of New Brunswick*  
*Colleen Varcoe, University of British Columbia*  
*For the iHEAL App Team*



Public Health  
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé  
publique du Canada



Western



UNB



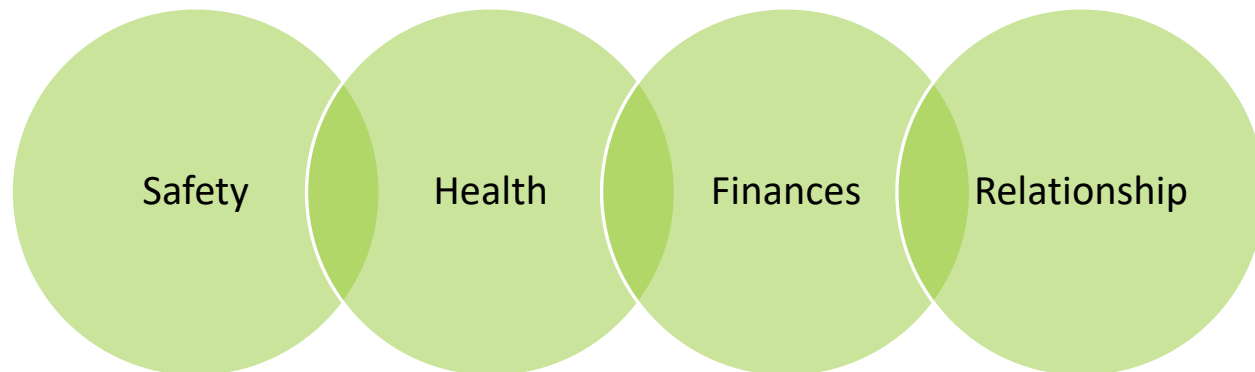
UBC

Acknowledging the diversity of the lands we live on, the First Peoples who have stewarded those lands, and our collective obligation to mitigate the ongoing colonial violence against those people and lands.



# IPV in Canada: A Public Health Epidemic

*More than 40% of Canadian women experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime (Cotter, 2021)*

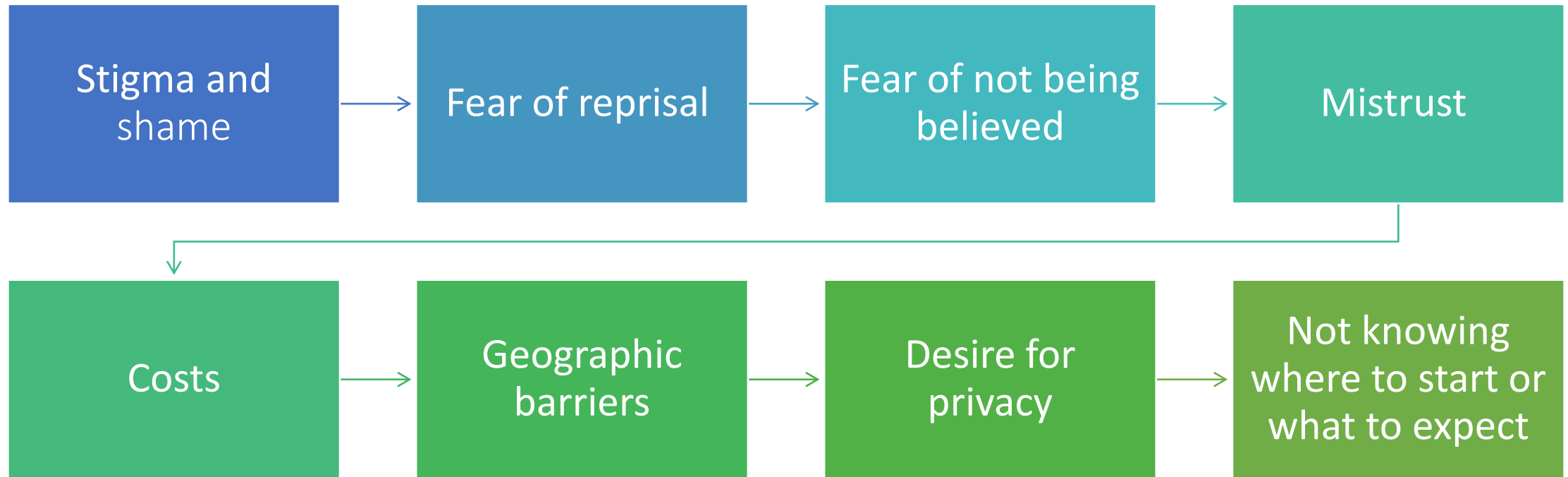


Significant impacts that can persist



# Barriers to Support for Women Experiencing IPV

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# Evidence: Well-designed Apps can Benefit Women

Women who used the online tool reported:

- better *mental health* (fewer symptoms of depression and PTSD)
- increased *confidence* in safety planning
- stronger sense of *control* over their lives
- *less coercion* from their abusive partners



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## In Women's Words .....

... a big *eye opener* and made me have to think about what is most important. It was occasionally upsetting ...but helpful.

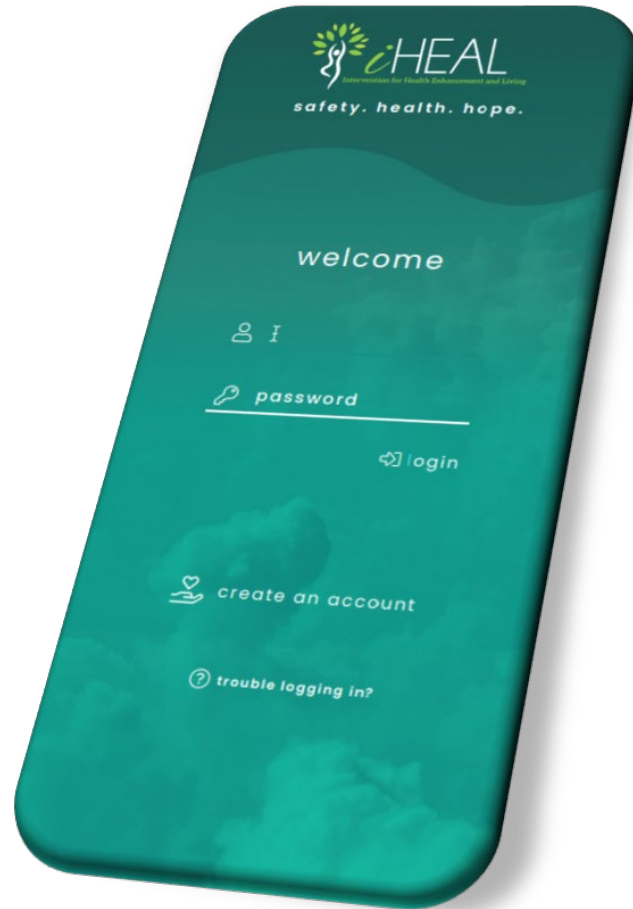
Amazing to get an outside view of the risks and benefits in my own personal life and get tips on *how to build myself*.....  
LOVED IT!

....like somebody knew which questions to ask..... somebody had experience... [I felt] comfortable. It was *friendly*...It wasn't judgmental.

Because the tool was focused on *safety*, not on convincing me to leave my partner, it helped me feel *empowered*



# iHEAL App Design Aims



- Inclusive without stereotyping
- Prioritize women's safety and privacy
- Woman-led: Choice and control
- Inspirational, hopeful and affirming
- Practical: information, tips, resources
- For women at any point in journey
- Complement existing services in Canada

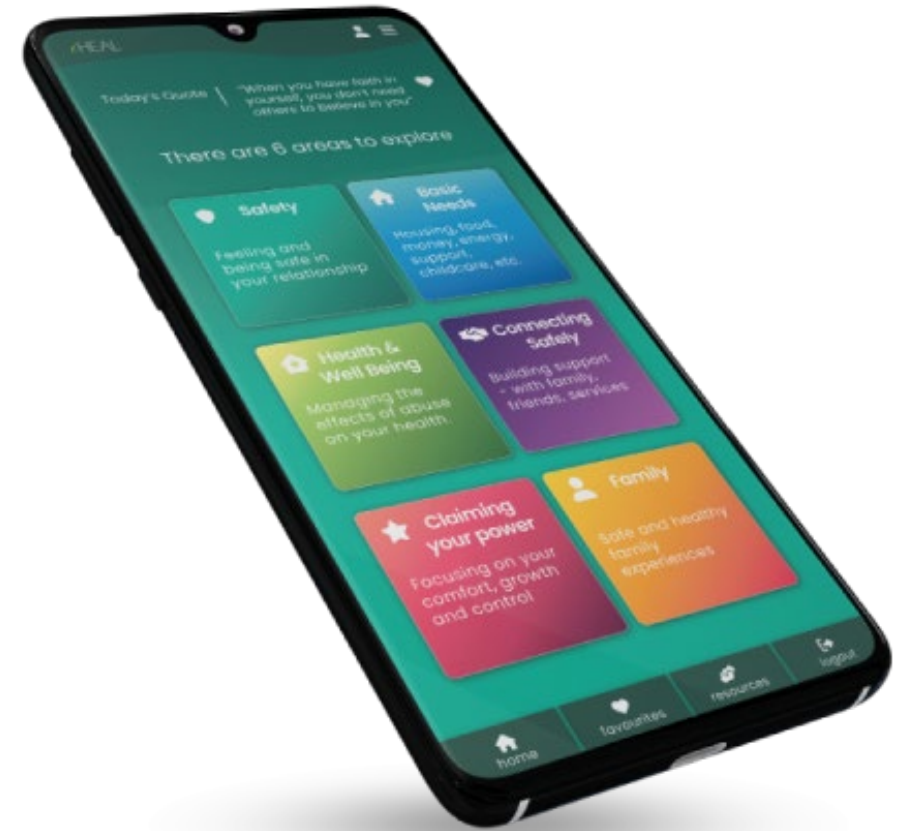


## Finding support for a safe and healthy path forward

Backed by years of research and testing, the free, private and secure iHEAL app helps Canadian women who have experienced abuse from a current or past partner to find personalized ways to stay safe and be well.







# Introducing the iHEAL App

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# Using the iHEAL app in Service Settings



**No flags for violence**  
*All Settings*

**Offer to ALL women**  
“If you know anyone who is in an unhealthy or unsafe relationship, please share this with them...”

**Post or Share Information (stickers, videos)**

**Flags for violence**

**Episodic Contact**  
(e.g. police, Emergency Dept, mental health crisis service)

**Ongoing contact**  
(e.g. VAW service, public health, primary care, counselling)

“I am concerned about your [safety, wellbeing, health] in your relationship. This app can help you think about your relationship”

“This app can help you think about your relationship. I could walk through some of it with you if you would like”

**Safety Planning**

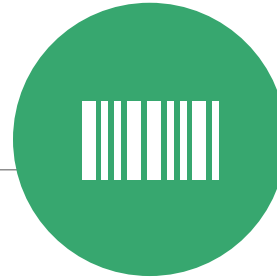
# Service Providers: Use the iHEAL app in many ways....

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- ✓ help women assess their risk (Danger Assessment) and make a plan for safety
- ✓ Help women consider how violence is affecting their health, well-being, and relationships -- identify options for their concerns using the many topics in the app
- ✓ explore resources and services that could be helpful to women
- ✓ provide an immediate response to women who have identified that they are experiencing violence, including those who are waitlisted for services
- ✓ provide a resource for women to use on their own when programs/services end
- ✓ find credible information about issues that fall outside their expertise
- ✓ and much more ...



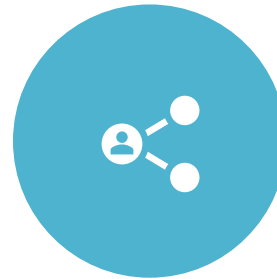
**Posters with QR Code**  
(available to download  
from our website)



**Stickers and Cards with  
QR codes**



**Brief Videos** (for women  
and service providers)



**Webinars** for groups  
interested in using the  
app

## Resources for the iHEAL App



# With Thanks

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We gratefully acknowledge the many people who contributed to this work, sharing their energy, insights, and expertise towards change.

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**Questions?**

**Feedback?**

**Discussion?**