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How Gender-Mainstreamed Spatial Programming in Emergency Shelters Can Mitigate Gender-Based Violence Against Women Following Disaster Events

There is a notable trend of gender-based violence rates increasing against women following disasters. A lack of adequate shelter is a contributing factor that exacerbates this social issue. A lack of the consideration of gendered needs in planning these shelters' spaces may result in women being more vulnerable to violence when utilizing emergency shelters. This study employs a case study with data drawn from literature and interviews with practitioners in the field.

The cases considered are the Southern Alberta Flood in 2013 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005, focusing on two municipalities with significant evacuations due to overland flooding: Calgary, Alberta, and New Orleans, Louisiana. The findings point to a need to consider gender in spatial programming decisions in shelters. Practitioners demonstrated a robust understanding of the unique role that space can play in women's safety.

A key finding is that while gender-based violence stems from existing patriarchal arrangements; and is exacerbated in disaster as men cope with

trauma, this phenomenon has spatial components that are also a reflection of the gender gaps in society. How women are considered, or not, when organizing space affects their sense of safety, as well as their vulnerability. Reducing stress where possible for those who rely on emergency shelters while simultaneously integrating gender-mainstreamed spatial programming in planning emergency shelters will support women following a disaster event.

Presentation Theme: Gender Equity in Disaster & Emergency management practices

Collaborators, Advisor(s) and Department(s) that assisted with this research: Time Haney, PhD. (Mount Royal University) and Jean Slick, PhD. (Royal Roads University)

Institutional Review Board Proof of Regulatory Committee Approval: Royal Roads Ethics Board, Royal Roads Advisory Committee for the Thesis Committee