**Data Analysis**

In the City of Hamilton, gender-based violence and safety remains a pervasive issue with significant implications for societal safety and well-being of individuals within vulnerable populations. Comprehensive quantitative datasets on gender-based safety within Hamilton is very limited. As a result, the data used for visualizations and analysis are few. Datasets used include domestic violence charges between 2015 and 2023 and hate crimes between 2019 and 2023 (Hamilton Police Service, 2023), victims of violent crime (Statistics Canada, 2018), shelter occupancy and bed availability (City of Hamilton, 2023A; City of Hamilton, 2023B), and emergency shelter data (Parlette et al, 2023; Social Planning & Research Council of Hamilton, 2022). This analysis aims to uncover patterns that can inform policy decisions, resource allocation, and the design of more targeted interventions to support vulnerable populations.

As per Hamilton Police Service (2023), between 2018 and 2020 there was a rapid increase in the number of domestic violence charges laid. 2020 saw a peak of 5229 domestic violence charges laid, which has since slowly decreased to 4405 reported for the year of 2023 (Hamilton Police Service, 2023). Comparing the number of males and females charged with domestic violence, men are charged with domestic violence at a substantially higher rate than women, nearly 4 times the number of females charged (Hamilton Police Service, 2023). Hamilton Police Service (2023) reported an increase in motivated and bias overtone hate crimes in 2021 and onwards, the biggest increases being sexual orientation, racial and religion, racial bias overtone crimes being the highest increase. For the year of 2023, Hamilton Police Service (2023), added a new category on their hate crimes reported, language, there was 1 hate crime with this bias overtone. In Hamilton from 2009 onwards, the rates of violent crime victims of both genders had declined (Statistics Canada, 2018). However, following 2015, the rate of female violent crime victims increased rapidly, while the rate of male violent crime victims decreased rapidly (Statistics Canada, 2018). Statistics Canada (2018) reported that the rate of female victims of violent crimes in Hamilton surpass the province’s recorded rate of female victims of violent crimes.

Hamilton has 4 emergency shelter systems, men, women, family, and youth, in addition there are overflow systems for women and family. Emergency overflow system had a large increase of available beds between July of 2020 and December of 2022 before it began to decline rapidly (City of Hamilton, 2023A). At the end of each month, the number of available beds is higher for men (City of Hamilton, 2023A). Family overflow makes up the largest percentage of beds in a system, men are second. Family shelter system needs to have additional beds to accommodate families, so, they have 288 beds for regular and overflow. Men have more beds in their system, so more readily available at the end of each month, 198 beds in the system (City of Hamilton, 2023A). Women and the women overflow system are 11.5% combined of the total number of beds per system at 66 rooms. Family and youth shelter system currently have the lowest number of beds available (City of Hamilton, 2023A). Throughout the bulk of the pandemic, women’s number of beds available at the end of the month was low and remained stagnant until late Sumer of 2022 (City of Hamilton, 2023A). For both men and women shelters, their occupancy percentage is above the capacity for most months throughout 2020 and 2024 (City of Hamilton, 2023B). Highest reason for shelter turnaways is no beds being available, and no appropriate beds available (Social Planning & Research Council of Hamilton, 2022).

In conclusion, while available data on domestic violence, hate crimes, and shelter usage in Hamilton is limited, the patterns that do exist clearly demonstrate the critical role of shelters in ensuring the safety of victims of gender-based violence. The relationship between domestic violence, hate crimes, and the availability of shelters is a critical area of study in understanding the broader social dynamics of victim support and protection. The lack of shelter capacity, combined with the growing rates of gender-based violence and hate crimes, highlights significant gaps in the city’s support system for survivors. To address these gaps, it is essential for Hamilton to invest in expanding shelter resources, improving the inclusivity of services for marginalized gender identities, and increasing funding for preventative programs. Furthermore, better data collection and research into gender-based violence are necessary to inform policy decisions and ensure that all survivors, regardless of gender or gender identity, have access to the safety and support they need to recover and thrive.

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