

Domestic
violence
against
immigrant
and refugee
women



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(as of July 2014)

AMSSA is an association of Member Agencies providing immigrant settlement and multicultural services in communities throughout BC.

Our Vision

A just and equitable society in which everyone benefits from social and economic inclusion.

Our Mission

AMSSA facilitates collaborative leadership, knowledge exchange and stakeholder engagement to support member agencies that serve immigrants and build culturally inclusive communities.

Our Values

Inclusiveness • Integrity • Mutual Respect
Equity • Diversity • Collaboration

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Message from the President



...while crime rates in Canada are falling, violence against women is increasing at an alarming rate.

A recent wave of violent assaults against women in British Columbia is helping to break the silence on a topic that often gets overlooked, or swept under the rug. That topic is domestic violence, also known as family violence, spousal abuse, wife assault or intimate partner violence.

And while crime rates in Canada are falling, violence against women is increasing at an alarming rate. Did you know that in this country on average every six days a woman is killed by her intimate partner? Or that each year, police make more than 40,000 arrests due to domestic violence? That's about 12% of all violent crime in Canada. Consider also that some 800,000 children are exposed to partner violence each year. Studies suggest that children who witness such violence are more likely to develop emotional, behavioural and cognitive problems.

In this edition of *Cultures West* our collection of stories illustrate that domestic violence is a serious social issue with devastating impacts on children, women, families and communities.

To begin, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women **defines this as a global issue and outlines ways for various levels of governments to protect women and children.** Closer to home, learn about **Canada's sexual assault laws**, and also examine how **federal laws often inadvertently put immigrant and refugee women at risk.** A related

story **calls on the federal government to introduce policies and programs to protect immigrant women.**

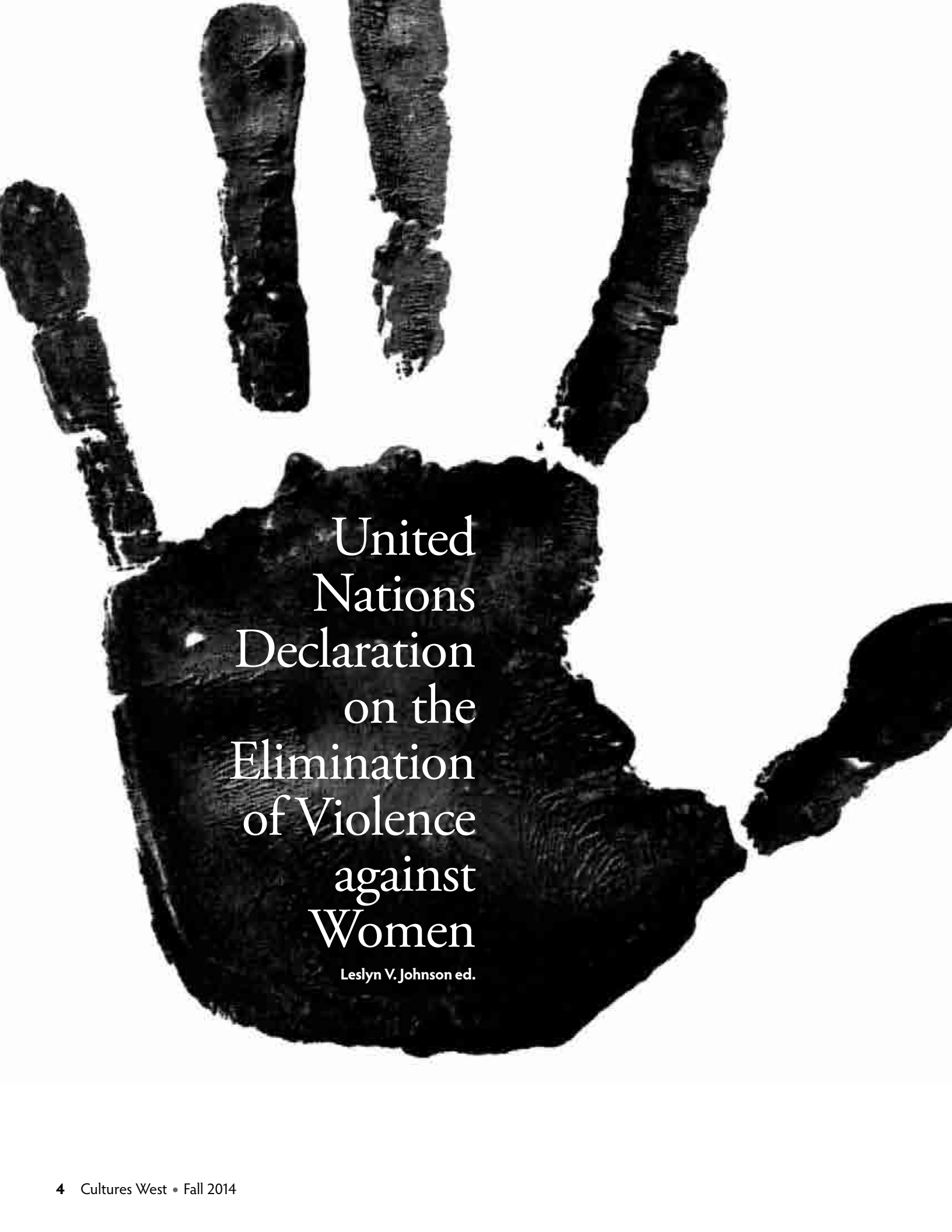
Safe housing is critical for women and children fleeing abuse. Read about **housing supports for immigrant and refugee women leaving violence.** A real life case study shows **abuse in action and how seeking help can lead to a positive outcome.** Our interview with a medical doctor offers insights into the **roles of cultural expectations and family honour in intimate partner violence.**

The centre-fold feature **provides an overview of domestic violence, identifies 19 risk factors, and ends by pointing out that settlement workers are an untapped resource for assisting victims of domestic violence.**

Don't miss *Cultures West's* popular departments! The **Mind Buster Quiz** is chock full of facts and figures to test your knowledge on domestic violence, while **Member Achievements** provides an opportunity to learn about the important programs and services that AMSSA members offer. Finally, the **Post Script** takes a look back at interfaith bridging – the theme that we discussed in the last edition of *Cultures West* magazine.

We must all work together to break the silence. I hope that the stories we've shared in *Cultures West* will empower you to join the efforts to end violence against women.

Jean McRae, President



United
Nations
Declaration
on the
Elimination
of Violence
against
Women

Leslyn V. Johnson ed.

In 1993, the United Nations recognized the urgent need to address violence against women on a global scale. In so doing, it issued a lengthy declaration to ensure that women were entitled to equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity. Following are some highlights of the *United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*:

- effective implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women would contribute to the elimination of violence against women [...];
- violence against women constitutes a violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women and impairs or nullifies their enjoyment of those rights and freedoms, and [is] concerned about the long-standing failure to protect and promote those rights and freedoms in the case of violence against women;
- violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men;
- some groups of women, such as women belonging to minority groups, indigenous women, refugee women, migrant women, women living in rural or remote communities, destitute women, women in institutions or in detention, female children, women with disabilities, elderly women and women in situations of armed conflict, are especially vulnerable to violence;
- the role that women's movements are playing in drawing increasing attention to the nature, severity and magnitude of the problem of violence against women;
- opportunities for women to achieve legal, social, political and economic equality in society are limited, inter alia, by continuing and endemic violence.

The Declaration defines violence against women as "...any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.

Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following: (a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation; (b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution; (c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs...."

The Declaration continues by outlining responsibilities for governments and urges them to condemn violence against women. It also cautions them against invoking any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination. Governments are expected to use every means at their disposal to develop policies to eliminate violence against women. Specifically, they should:

- Exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons;
- Develop penal, civil, labour and administrative sanctions in domestic legislation to punish and redress the wrongs caused to women who are subjected to violence; women who are subjected to violence should be provided with access to the mechanisms of justice and, as provided for by national legislation, to just and effective remedies for the harm that they have suffered; States should also inform women of their rights in seeking redress through such mechanisms;

- Include in government budgets adequate resources for their activities related to the elimination of violence against women;
- Take measures to ensure that law enforcement officers and public officials responsible for implementing policies to prevent, investigate and punish violence against women receive training to sensitize them to the needs of women;
- Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines to assist in the implementation of the principles set forth in the present Declaration;
- Recognize the important role of the women's movement and non-governmental organizations world wide in raising awareness and alleviating the problem of violence against women;
- Facilitate and enhance the work of the women's movement and non-governmental organizations and cooperate with them at local, national and regional levels;
- Encourage intergovernmental regional organizations of which they are members to include the elimination of violence against women in their programmes, as appropriate.

Governments are expected to use every means at their disposal to develop policies to eliminate violence against women.

How federal and provincial immigration policies can put immigrant and refugee women at risk

Megan Suehn and Maria Sokolova

Canadian immigration policy has often been criticised as marginalizing all newcomers. However, women face specific types of systemic, gendered marginalization, victimization, and oppression that men do not generally encounter. As such, women of all immigrant classes face unique systemic barriers.

The social restrictions built into wages, employment, and education opportunities for many women in their home countries restrict them from accessing immigration options as economic or skilled worker classes. These male-dominated classes are the primary and most efficient means of obtaining status in Canada. Therefore, any change in Canadian policy that favours economic immigrants or that takes rights away from family class migrants, refugees, or temporary workers directly disproportionately hurts women over men.

Any woman who migrates can experience traumatic family separation and reunification, as well as a loss of identity, a sense of belonging, and control. Below are just a few examples.

When a woman seeks refugee status in Canada, she may be unaware of her rights and have no timely access to legal counsel. She may also be pressured by the Canada Border Services Agency (CSBA) for an interview and may be legally obligated to recount experiences of rape or other past persecution for the sake of her refugee application. Usually, no support is present during the interview, especially if it occurs at the port of entry. If a woman fails to reveal details of her identity and past persecution, this may be used to detain her or to deny her status. As the claim progresses further through the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), screening for mental health concerns or other features that may make a woman a vulnerable person falls primarily to lawyers and other non-professionals.

Proving past persecution is significantly more complicated for women who may be transgender or lesbian. Bisexual women face the most stigma and suspicion from officials

and have the lowest acceptance rates for their refugee applications. Prevalent social stereotypes, such as disbelief in the existence of bisexual people and the perception that bisexual women should easily be able to protect themselves from harm by partnering with a man rather than seeking refugee status no doubt affect their claims. In addition, bisexual, transgender, and lesbian women have greater financial hardship when seeking status in Canada due to systemic pay and employment inequalities for women, compared to gay or bisexual men who may more easily pass as straight, and who already benefit from hiring and pay privileges from societies recognizing male labour as more productive.

Women in abusive or arranged marriages who are sponsored as family class immigrants by their husbands may face hardships that our immigration laws do not recognize as exceptional and gendered. A woman whose husband forces her not to report her legal identity or any incidents of violence or abuse in the relationship within a joint immigration claim may place her status in jeopardy. Abusive husbands may use sponsorship applications as a means of control. If a woman flees an abusive relationship while a sponsorship application is outstanding, she risks losing all status. In addition, abusive men often restrict a woman's access to social supports and occupation outside of the house, resulting in the woman being unable to establish herself outside of the home – a primary requirement for most kinds of status applications that women have access to.

Moreover, recent policies that severely restrict parental and family sponsorship by imposing quotas for applications and placing heavy financial burdens on the sponsor, prevent many women from sponsoring their family altogether. One consequence is that many women are left isolated from their primary support networks. A second implication is that if relatives in the country of origin fall ill, women, as traditional primary caregivers, must return to care for them. This is

significant since leaving Canada for lengthy periods of time can have adverse consequences for a woman's status as a permanent resident, refugee, or citizen.

Only some immigration applications are decided through an adjudicative process requiring an oral hearing before the IRB. The rest are written. IRB board members are appointed by the government but in most cases they are not lawyers and the tribunal is not a court. The evidentiary rules before the tribunal are more relaxed and decision-makers often exercise a measure of discretion. These factors increase the effect of cultural beliefs or stereotypes about a woman's role in society, and how women can or should be treated by their partners. If left unchallenged, these unspoken assumptions may hurt a woman's claim for status.

Any woman facing urgent removal or whose status is in jeopardy due to any of the reasons above should contact legal aid as soon as possible. So should any service provider seeking to support these women. Agencies who have the means to do so, may further assist by finding ways to intervene and help connect immigrant and refugee women with supports at their port of entry and within detention facilities whenever possible. Most lawyers would agree that any community or agency support for a client is generally welcome, appreciated and has tangible benefits for their claims.

Megan Suehn is currently completing her graduate thesis research as the final requirement for completing her MA in Counselling Psychology at UBC. Her thesis explores the experiences of service providers in their work supporting LGBT immigrant clients.

Maria Sokolova (J.D., LL.L) is a lawyer in British Columbia. She practices mostly immigration law, especially refugee law, before the IRB and at all court levels. She has also previously worked in the field of human rights, with particular projects focused on the rights of women.

Sexual assault and the law

Nour Kachouh

When discussing sexual assault and the law, it is critical to understand that sexual assault is an act in which the perpetrator uses power to control their victim, is gendered in nature, and is a direct impact of the culture in which we live. The topic of sexual assault and the law as it pertains specifically to immigrant and refugee women, is one that we can discuss for hours on end. However, one of the most important discussions surrounding this topic is how Canadian law can fail immigrant and refugee women in relation to reporting sexual assaults.

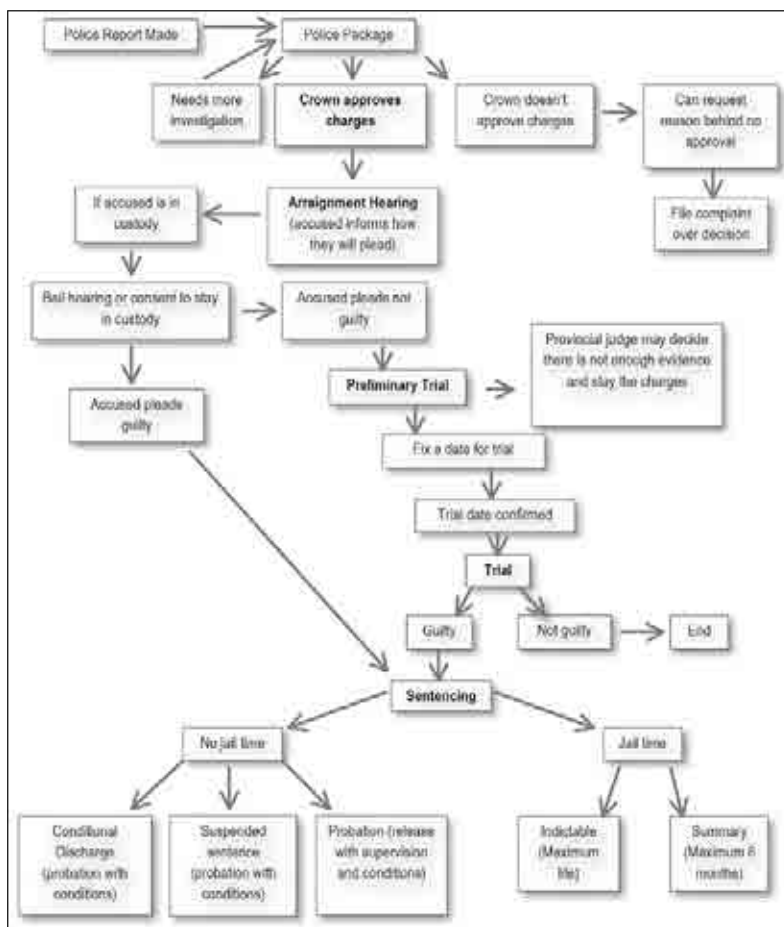
In Canada, it is estimated that less than 10% of sexual assaults are reported. For immigrant and refugee women, this number is even smaller, as they are less likely to report a sexual assault compared to Canadian-born women. This is due to the various barriers that immigrant and refugee women must navigate when attempting to access support services. Before discussing these barriers, we must first take a look at the Canadian Criminal Code.

In 1983, the Federal Government made amendments to the Criminal Code

of Canada that specifically abolished some rules that perpetuated bias against women in relation to sexual assault cases. With the amendments, the legal definition now included all incidents of unwanted sexual activity, including sexual attacks and sexual touching. The new law contained several important differences, including an amendment to the previous crime of rape, which was replaced with three levels of sexual assault. The three levels now included an escalation of sexual assault violations, along with an escalation of penalties the perpetrator may face. It is important to note that these levels are subject to police reporting and the amount of physical injury, and does not necessarily take into account the emotional, psychological, mental, or spiritual effect on the survivor.

These factors are not taken into account in sexual assault reports, so they can have detrimental and lasting effects on survivors. In addition to these factors, immigrant and refugee women must also navigate other barriers such as cultural differences, linguistic isolation, social isolation, economic insecurity, as well as community alienation, service inaccessibility, and fear of deportation and loss of children. More often than not, immigrant and refugee women are not well-versed about their rights in Canada as immigrants, or as sexual assault survivors. These factors can further isolate survivors and deter immigrant and refugee women from seeking support. As a result, more than 90% of violent incidents in newcomers' homes go unreported. The flowchart shows that even if a survivor chooses to report a sexual assault, the reporting process from the initial report to the final result is an arduous one. This, in most cases, can continue to trigger the survivor and affect her overall wellbeing. It is important for police and for service providers to actively pursue supporting immigrant and refugee women, as they are part of the most vulnerable and marginalized population.

Nour Kachouh is an Unmarketing Coordinator with Atira Women's Resource Society. Atira is a not-for-profit organization committed to the work of ending violence against women through providing direct service, as well as working to increase awareness of and education around the scope and impact on our communities of men's violence against women and children.



Strengthening the Protection of Women in our Immigration System

Brief to House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CIMM)

Poran Poregbal, MA, RSW, RCC

Greater Vancouver Counseling and Education Society for Families recognizes both the government's responsibility to protect women in our immigration system, and the challenge it encounters in doing so. Through years of delivering services to families in our communities, it has become clear to us that domestic violence among our newcomer community requires public awareness, education, discussion, and professional attention.

As a result of countless public workshops, seminars, and educational programs for our communities, we've explored the issues of migration, loss of identity, boundaries, marital relationship, victim rights, parenting responsibilities, mental health, relationship health, and anger management. We've learned that prior to marriage, the women and their families minimize the risks of arranged marriages and sponsored relationships. On the other hand, the glamour of coming to Canada leads women to enter into relationships that they would otherwise avoid.

Our clinical assessment and the scope of the problem

Our clients are Iranian, Afghan, Tajik and Uzbek immigrants who report experiencing several challenges during their prolonged period of migration, separation from family and cultural adjustments. The women experience psychological impact of abuse, neglect, violence and relational hardship. These issues are intertwined with mental health issues, psycho-somatic pain, separation from emotional support systems, long-term disabilities, and dysfunctional coping mechanisms.

Much of the pain and distress immigrant women and men face when they enter into a new sponsored

relationship are directly related to past traumas and hidden mental health issues. Domestic violence victims tend to live with an overall sense of dissatisfaction with life, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, anger, hopelessness and helplessness. Some children in these families suffer the most as they witness the power imbalance, while others are forced to get involved in the systematic abuse of their mothers. Many women tend to believe that they are a part of the problem, so it takes them a longer time to come forward. The internalized trauma interferes with the victims' ability to deal with everyday life. The loss and grief that they experience destroys their ability to connect, to feel a sense of belonging and to concentrate on daily tasks.

Reported patterns of behaviour

Between January 2006 and December 2013, in the role of a social worker and therapist, I have taken care of over 240 individual cases. [...] More than 80% of these clients have been female. Of these female clients, more than 70% reported the existence of one or more type of partner violence. About half of those women had come to Canada through marriage and sponsorships by their husbands. The other half had been either married in Iran or elsewhere before coming to Canada as new immigrants. What follows is a pattern of behavior that the women reported:

- The men who were attracting women to these marriages were financially and socially established in Canada.
- Women were entering relationships with a power imbalance that favoured the husband.
- Women were forced to provide large amounts of cash; the traditional bride dowry is \$10,000 to \$20,000.
- Husbands were the women's only

connection to Canada, and were presumed to know it all because they were here first.

- There was a cultural belief that marriage is the cure for loneliness, isolation, and or mental health problems.
- Women were unsure how to live without their husband since they considered men to be their protection.
- Abusive husbands were controlling, manipulating, accusing, attacking, harassing, alienating, threatening, belittling, ignoring, and punishing.
- There was often a vicious cycle of abuse that began during the honeymoon, and involved repetitive sexual, physical, emotional and financial abuse, regrets, promises, reconciling, control, abuse of power, and violence.
- Abusive husbands prevented their wives from learning about their rights in Canada, or attending schools and social gatherings.
- Sponsored women often lived with the threat of being deported, losing their children, and in cases where they did not receive help, they feared returning to the abusive husband who threatened revenge.
- Women tended to believe that controlling husbands can change if they were to be obedient.
- The existence of previous violence in the relationship before coming to Canada, or knowledge of the husband's "bad attitudes" before getting married.
- The women may have ignored the signs of abuse because they wanted to come to Canada, a land they know respects human rights.
- Often the signs of abuse and violence were not recognized prior to or during the process of marriage.

Recommendations to the Canadian Immigration and Citizenship (CIC) program

The Canadian government needs to take the lead in protecting women, particularly vulnerable sponsored women. We recommend that the government provides support around the process of resettlement or settlement in Canada that includes the following elements:

- CIC should request that the sponsored partner attend and complete mandatory information sessions upon arrival in Canada.
- The application forms for the sponsored wife should include information about women's rights and importance of family health.
- This process should be mandatory with both spouses being required to attend the session(s) before they receive other important documents from the CIC or other government agencies. Women are more inclined to show up for meetings if they know there's a record of their activities.
- The goal for the session(s) would be to offer the couple information about their rights and responsibilities regarding their life together in their new community. Similar orientation sessions are offered to the Government

Assisted Refugees in their first week of their arrival to Canada, and this has to be offered to the sponsored wives and husbands as well.

- The newly arrived person should be required to attend individual and couple based counselling sessions, where they receive important information and resources such as legal, counseling, settlement, housing, employment, family planning and health.
- One of the sessions should provide specific information on the dynamics of domestic violence and the many diverse types of abuse.
- Information should be available to educate couples that abuse and violence are considered serious criminal offences in Canada, and if either spouse is

charged with this crime, they will get a criminal record, which will be permanent (most of the time) and may have some serious consequences.

- If a sponsor is charged and convicted of domestic violence, they should not have the right to sponsor anyone else.

Finally, to stop and prevent fake marriages, it would be important that CIC considers allowing young men and women from the ages of 20-35 to apply for immigration by themselves. Canada is attractive, and the desire to come here encourages women to take risks and become involved with men who may use marriage for financial and human trafficking purposes.

Poran Poregbal is a Trauma Therapist, and the Founder & Executive Director for Greater Vancouver Counselling & Education Society for Families.



Mindbuster Quiz

- 1. What percentage of women in Canada have been sexually and/or physically abused or assaulted at some point in their life?**
 - a. 30%
 - b. 40%
 - c. 50%
 - d. 60%
- 2. In Canada, intimate partner violence (IPV) accounts for what percentage of female murder victims?**
 - a. 5-10%
 - b. 10-20%
 - c. 20-40%
 - d. 40-70%
- 3. According to Statistics Canada, what percentage of women who were victims of domestic violence actually made a police report?**
 - a. 11%
 - b. 22%
 - c. 33%
 - d. 44%
- 4. Which of the following statements is true?**
 - a. Violence against women happens in all cultures and religions, in all ethnic and racial communities, at every age, and in every income group.
 - b. Violence against women only happens in certain "problem" families, ethnic minorities, uneducated or poorer areas.
- 5. The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) crime statistics indicate the number of sexual assaults remained stable at around 450 per year between 2003 and 2008, but increased to how many in 2013?**
 - a. 482
 - b. 500
 - c. 572
 - d. 612
- 6. Which of the following is not a sign of domestic violence?**
 - a. When a male puts down his partner.
 - b. When a male does all the talking and dominates the conversation.
 - c. When a male acts like he is superior and of more value than others in his home.
 - d. When a male encourages his partner to have her own friends and social activities.
- 7. How much does sexual assault and partner violence cost Canada each year?**
 - a. \$9 million
 - b. \$9 billion
 - c. \$19 million
 - d. \$19 billion
- 8. According to a Statistics Canada study on residential shelter facilities in Canada, how many women stay in shelters in a given night to escape abuse?**
 - a. 3,000
 - b. 3,500
 - c. 4,000
 - d. 4,500

See page 22 for answers



WORKING together to end violence against women

Ending Violence Association BC (EVA BC)

What is Violence against Women?

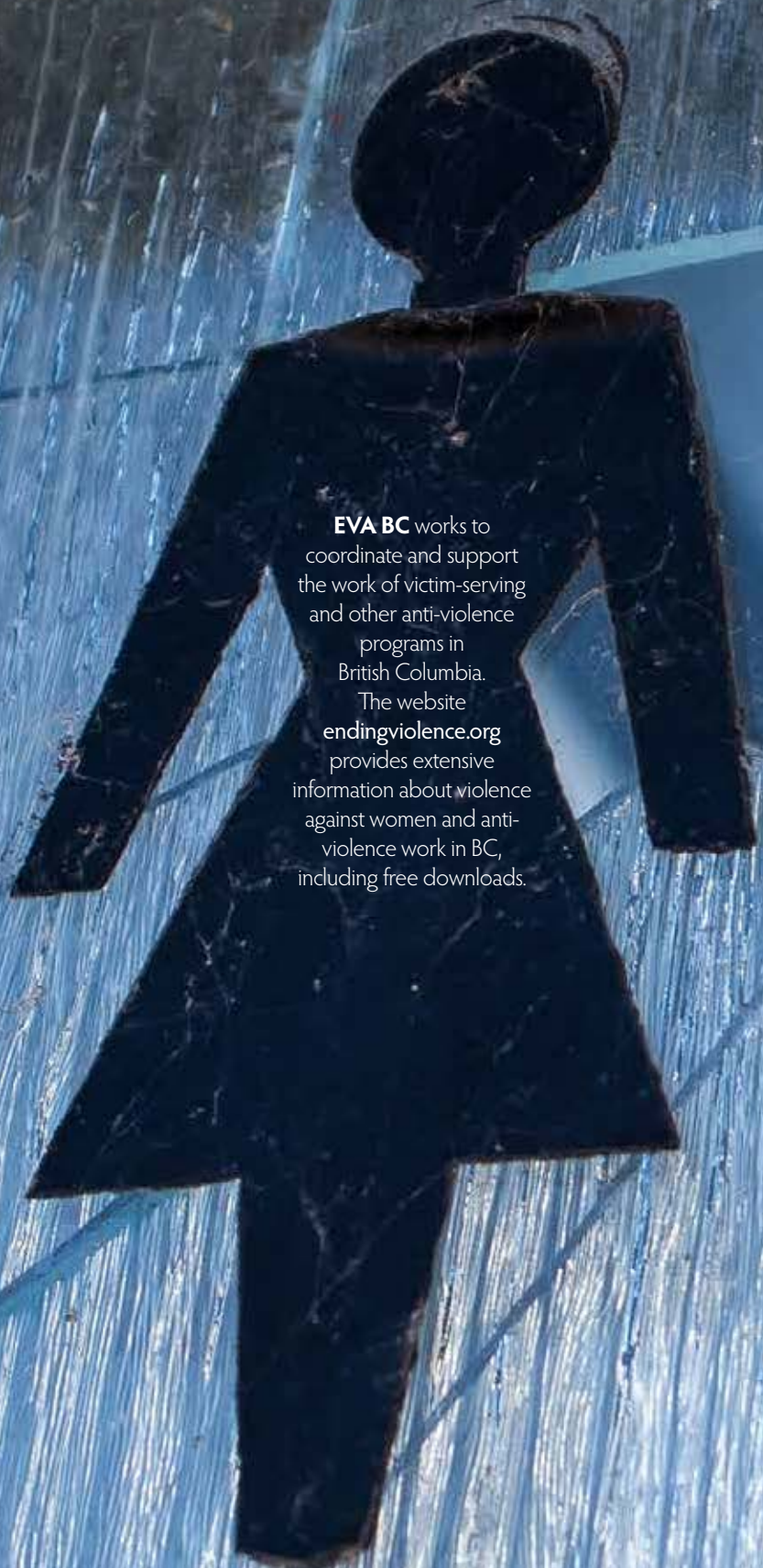
In their agreed conclusions written in 2013, the United Nations Commission of the Status of Women stated that violence against women and girls is “...rooted in historical and structural

inequality in power relations between women and men, and persists in every country in the world as a pervasive violation of the enjoyment of human rights ...and fundamental freedoms.”

Sexual and domestic violence belongs to no one community but cuts across all socio-economic, cultural and geographic lines. And while much needs to be done across all sectors, each sector must also pay attention to the specific and unique needs of Aboriginal women, women who are immigrants or refugees, those living with disabilities, women with mental health or substance use issues, women living in poverty, transgendered women, and others. We know that marginalized women need all the same protections and services that “mainstream” women need. However, they often need additional help, like special assistance to access services, services in their own language or language interpretation, and affordable housing. They also need information about their rights and increased advocacy to help them navigate all the complex systems some of which may lack the awareness and training on violence and the intersections of oppression.

Issues of equality are integrally linked with violence against women. Without social and economic equality, women and their children will not be free of gender-based violence. It is important to note that addressing inequality is a key element of both prevention and effective intervention of violence. This inequality includes sexism, poverty, racism, and other forms of discrimination that contribute to women’s powerlessness and vulnerability to violence.

Coordinating the many sectors involved in responding to sexual and domestic violence is imperative for women’s safety. A woman’s reluctance to involve the justice system, for example, may be linked to her economic situation, to her status as an Aboriginal, immigrant or refugee woman. She may also lack access to adequate legal aid services to help her extricate herself from the abuse. Some of the core sectors that respond to sexual and domestic violence include police, Crown, Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), community based victim assistance, transition houses and other anti violence services, income assistance, court services, health care, and mental health services. They all have differing policies and procedures, so coordination is necessary to ensure all the resources available are working to keep women and children safe. Lack of effective coordination and risk-related information-sharing may contribute to a wide range of system failures, including a lack of victim access to specialized support services, a lack of consistent risk assessment and safety planning, and a lack of offender management.



EVA BC works to coordinate and support the work of victim-serving and other anti-violence programs in British Columbia. The website endingviolence.org provides extensive information about violence against women and anti-violence work in BC, including free downloads.

A Coordinated Approach to Combating Violence against Women

Since the early 1980s, British Columbia has played a leadership role in Canada in developing progressive and innovative approaches to addressing violence against women. This leadership includes developing crisis responses, outreach and counselling programs to address the needs of victims; comprehensive policies to improve the justice system response to violence against women; and coordinated community hospital responses to sexual assault and domestic violence. BC has also developed local and provincial initiatives to foster a coordinated response to violence against women.

Further to improving the coordinated response across systems in BC, there has recently been significant progress as a result of an agreement between the Ministry of Justice, MCFD and the RCMP. These agencies now uniformly use a system of 19 Domestic Violence Risk Factors as the standard tool for assessing domestic violence related risk and safety planning.

The risk factors are grouped within two main categories: Relationship History and Complainant's Perception of Risk. Several risk factors are earmarked* as being associated with an increased likelihood of future violence and also an increased severity or escalation of future violence. Specifically, the 19 risk factors are:

1. Has the status of the relationship changed/ended?*
2. Has there been escalation in the abuse?*
3. Have children been exposed to the violence?
4. Have threats to harm been made?
5. Has there been forced sex?
6. Has strangling, choking, biting occurred?*
7. Has the offender been stalking the victim or her family?*
8. Does the victim have few resources, i.e. job, language skills?
9. Is the victim saying she is afraid?
10. Does the victim believe there will be future violence?*
11. Does the offender have previous criminal or violent history?
12. Is there previous domestic violence history?
13. Is he or has he been subject to any court orders?
14. Is he using alcohol/drugs?
15. Is his employment unstable?
16. Does he have a mental illness?*
17. Has he threatened suicide?*
18. Has he used weapons/firearms (or threatened)?
19. Does he have access to weapons/firearms?

Services and Resources for Women Experiencing Violence

A variety of services and resources exist in BC for women and children impacted by violence. These include programs for community-based and police-based victim services, Stopping the Violence Counselling, Stopping the Violence Outreach and multicultural outreach. There are also transition houses, safe homes and second and third stage housing programs in various communities throughout the province, along with Children Who Witness Abuse programs.

These programs provide a range of services within their specific mandates, offering supports that range from information and referrals to advocacy and systems liaison to counselling, transportation and shelter.

You can find complete listings of these related services through the government of BC's website www.domesticviolencebc.ca or at www.victimlinkbc.ca.

Extensive information and resources for workers in the anti-violence field or general information for people seeking help are available on the Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC) website at www.endingviolence.org.

How can Settlement Workers Assist Victims of Domestic Violence?

Settlement workers can call VictimLinkBC at 1.800.563.0808 for information about services that are available throughout BC.

How a referral is made for a traumatized person is as critical; your body language or tone of voice is just as important as the information you provide about the service. Ideally, if you wish to refer someone, call the referral program and get comfortable with who they are and what they do so that your referral will be as informed and as confident as possible.

If you are confident that the survivor of violence will accept a direct referral, give her the name and phone number of the agency or individual. Explain to her that community-based victim service programs have training and expertise in working with survivors of sexual assault/domestic violence.

If the survivor of violence seems slightly hesitant, discuss her concerns and/or suggest that you arrange the contact for her and have her follow up with you after she has met with them. Again, explain that the outreach program can help her with what she needs.

Again, if the survivor is still hesitant, and is still in your office, ask her permission to call the agency you are referring her to. You can speak to the worker briefly about the woman's situation, and then pass her the phone. Ask the woman if you can follow up with her after the appointment.

Another alternative would be to suggest that you make the appointment together and offer to go with her to the first appointment to introduce her. Make sure you have checked this out beforehand with the staff or agency to which you are referring.

Help the survivor reframe any negative perceptions related to 'seeking help' and let her know just how important it is that someone with training and experience help her assess her risk and develop a safety plan. It is also important for her to understand that everyone deserves extra care and support at difficult times in their life.

Settlement workers: an untapped resource

Ending Violence Association
of BC (EVA BC)



Immigrants make up about 25% of the overall population in BC. Our province also has the highest level of language diversity in Canada with 26.5% of British Columbians speaking only a non-official language. While it is common knowledge that our province is culturally and racially diverse, seamless response or support systems are not yet a reality for newly arrived families.

Recent high profile domestic violence incidents in BC have raised concerns about the safety of immigrant, refugee and non-status women. While there is no statistical evidence to indicate that violence against women is more prevalent among immigrant groups, evidence indicates that immigrant, refugee and non-status women who experience domestic violence face economic, social and language barriers that make it more difficult for them to report and access critical support services. This has to change.

Settlement workers are often the first point of contact for immigrant women experiencing domestic violence. Provided settlement workers have a basic understanding of the needs of domestic violence victims, along with appropriate tools and resources, settlement workers will be in a unique position to respond to their clients' safety needs in a timely and effective manner. The 2010 BC Domestic Violence Death Review Panel stressed the need to ensure that service providers from all relevant sectors are able to identify domestic violence and make appropriate referrals for those who are at-risk.

The Ending Violence Association, in partnership with MOSAIC and Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services Society, conducted

focus groups as part of the 2009 – 2011 Immigrant Women's Project. Settlement workers who we interviewed said that in order to identify risk factors for domestic violence and make appropriate referrals, they need more information and awareness about mainstream domestic violence response systems. This includes anti-violence services and the criminal justice system.

Immigrant, refugee and non-status women in abusive relationships are often forced into making "unsafe" decisions due to limited options. For example, the woman may decide to remain in an abusive situation due to fears about losing her immigration status if she leaves or because she cannot legally work in Canada and has no financial resources. She may also be dealing with cultural pressures including potential shame associated with openly acknowledging the abuse, or a perception that she will bring dishonor on her family if she reports. If this woman is referred on by the settlement worker, a trained antiviolence worker can help the woman navigate some of these challenges.

A coordinated, collaborative response to domestic violence helps keep women and children safer. It will also contribute to improved short- and long-term settlement and integration outcomes. Our Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person. Let's work together to make this right a reality for women who come to Canada in hopes for a better life.

You can find more information on safety issues for immigrant women and referral options at the EVA website at www.endingviolence.org

EVA BC works to coordinate and support the work of victim-serving and other anti-violence programs in British Columbia.

The website www.endingviolence.org provides extensive information about violence against women and anti-violence work in BC, including free downloads.

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Vancouver: November 14, 2014

MEDIATION - Facilitating Difficult Conversations
Vancouver: December 3-4, 2014

DIVERSITY AT WORK - From Conflict to Asset
Victoria: December 3, 2014
Vancouver: December 5, 2014

LEADERSHIP - The Essential Foundations
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Vancouver: February 12, 2015

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE
Vancouver: March 10, 2015
Victoria: March 11, 2015
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Member Achievements

Peter Sajgalik's 5th Anniversary for the "Grandfather of Trades"

DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society



Peter Sajgalik, a career counsellor for the immigrant trades program at DIVERSEcity, is celebrating his 5th anniversary this year. Peter has been with the Immigrant Trades Training Initiative (ITTI) since its inception, and is instrumental to the program's success.

"It's my great enjoyment to witness the clients achievement after they pass the Red Seal," exclaimed Peter, in his wise grandfatherly, matter-of-fact way.

Funded by the Industry Training Authority (ITA), the purpose of ITTI is supporting newcomers who have trade skills and work experience to navigate the Canadian Red Seal certification and apprenticeship system. "With the proper Canadian credentials, newcomers will be able to move away from survival jobs to better positions with higher pay!"

Having immigrated from Slovakia in 1986 with a degree in geology, Peter's first job was that of a causal worker who collected garbage at a hotel. He was eventually able to return to working as a geologist, before finding a new calling as a career counsellor. "For me, the most important thing at my age, closer to retirement, is helping those in need and to see their progress. Indeed, life is not about money, but people."

The ITTI program served 463 clients in the past five years; two out of three clients who graduated from the program have seen an increase in their hourly wage. For more information on how your newcomer clients may benefit in a career in trades, you can contact Peter at 604.547.2031.

ePortfolio a winning tool for immigrant jobseekers

Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC)

Social media plays an increasingly important factor in job searches. For this reason, ISSofBC incorporated ePortfolios into employment-focused language training for immigrants (LINC for Employment classes). An ePortfolio is a dynamic, interactive social media resume. ISSofBC recognized that with limited or no Canadian work experience, immigrants especially need a mechanism to display the many positive attributes they can bring to a workplace. ISSofBC began piloting the ePortfolio-framed curriculum in September 2013 with full implementation in classes in April 2014.

A typical ePortfolio includes an audio or video introduction, visuals of the job seeker's qualifications such as degrees, training certificates, and awards, and brief descriptions of past employment. Clients who showcase accomplishments are architects, engineers, entertainers, cooks, hairdressers. However, anyone who creates a product can include images or even video tours of their work. Doctors and other technical professionals can provide direct links to published papers. Clients creating an ePortfolio also describe and provide evidence of their Essential Skills relevant to the NOC (National Occupation Classification) code for the position they are seeking. Through ISSofBC's innovative ePortfolio-framed curriculum, many employment-focused LINC clients have now gained a unique and comprehensive tool to stand out to employers – and find work!

Compassionate Leaders – Cowichan Intercultural Society (CIS)



In partnership with SD 79, CIS launched the Compassionate Leaders, a project that works with five secondary schools in the district to develop leadership skills and create more welcoming and inclusive schools. The project also aims to help participants build positive community connections.

Nearly 400 students attended full day leadership workshops at the participating schools to increase their cultural awareness and to learn skills to Stand up for Diversity. Students who were inspired to continue exploring diversity and inclusion were invited to a two and a half day residential leadership camp. At the camp, participants attended a variety of skill-building workshops such as the popular Anti-Discrimination First Aid workshop. At the end of the camp, the participants formed into school Diversity Teams and began creating action plans for youth-led projects to address issues they were most concerned about. Our project coordinator met weekly

with teams over the rest of the school year to help participants complete their action plans and implement their projects.

In summing up the project, one of the participants said, "I think this project is extremely important. For me, it was a way to figure out what to do if you were interested in making a difference with any issue. We need to know that it is possible to make a change. It pushed us to look into our schools and find out what we could do to make it a better place."

Compassionate Leaders receives funding from the Government of BC, Vancouver Foundation, Coast Capital Savings and the RBC Foundation. For more information, contact the project coordinator, Ray Anthony, at ray@cis-iwc.org

AMSSA Strengthening Diversity in BC Safe Harbour Champions' Breakfast

Please join representatives from businesses, financial institutions, non-profit agencies, and local governments at AMSSA's 6th Annual Safe Harbour Champions' Breakfast to recognize two Safe Harbour Champions for their outstanding diversity leadership in B.C.

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7:30am – 9:30am

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Building Supports: Housing access for immigrant and refugee women leaving violence

**Katherine Rossiter and
Louise Godard**

Housing is a human right and an important resource for women leaving domestic violence. Housing is also linked to women's health and well-being. Research reveals that immigrant and refugee women face multiple barriers to leaving relationship violence due to a range of social factors including racism and poverty. One of the significant barriers women face is in accessing both short- and long-term housing.

The Building Supports project is a three-year community-based project that seeks to understand the barriers to accessing short- and long-term housing for immigrant and refugee women leaving violent relationships, and to identify practices and policies that can facilitate removing barriers to safe, secure and affordable housing. The objective of **Phase 1** is to understand the experiences of immigrant and refugee women attempting to secure safe, affordable and culturally appropriate housing after leaving violence. **Phase 2** will involve the development and piloting of promising practices in transition houses throughout the province. The aim of **Phase 3** will be to develop a policy action plan.

We established two advisory committees to guide the project. The first includes service providers in the housing and anti-violence sectors, and federal and provincial governments. The second includes immigrant and refugee women with lived experiences of violence and housing issues, and we are still seeking representatives.

We conducted an online survey with 75 transition house workers and 14 service providers in multi-service agencies. Preliminary findings from the survey revealed that immigrant and refugee women in BC continue to be under-represented in the participating transition houses. This may be due in part to cultural and language barriers, suggesting a need for cultural competency training, cultural and religious accommodations, and greater access to language supports. Other barriers to securing long-term housing included a lack of affordable housing (market and subsidized), the absence of a rental history and references, language barriers, and having fewer social supports.

We will explore barriers to housing in greater detail through individual interviews with housing managers, and immigrant and refugee women with lived experiences. We will also conduct focus groups with immigrant and refugee women in several communities throughout BC, in English and other languages.

The research findings will provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of immigrant and refugee women in attempting to secure housing that is safe, affordable and culturally appropriate after leaving violence. These findings will provide a strong foundation for the development, piloting, and evaluation of promising practices in transition houses to improve support for immigrant and refugee women leaving violence.

The Building Supports project is a collaborative, community-based project co-led by the BC Non-Profit Housing Association (bcnpha.ca), BC Society of Transition Houses (besth.ca), and Simon Fraser University's FREDa Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children (fredacentre.com). The project receives funding from the Vancouver Foundation and the Office of the Representative for Children and Youth. For more information, please contact Louise Godard, Research Coordinator, at louisegodard1@gmail.com.



Case Study: the Singh family

Gary Thandi

Gary Thandi is the Executive Director of Genesis Family Empowerment Society which provides linguistically and culturally responsive support for communities, families and individuals. He is also a researcher at the Justice Institute of BC and a freelance writer.

Jaswinder* is 32-years old and has lived in Canada for 20 years. She sponsored her husband, Charnjit, age 34, and the couple have two children, ages nine and seven. Charnjit has worked steadily as a labourer since arriving in Canada. Jaswinder works full-time as a cashier at a grocery store. Her parents look after the children when they are working.

Charnjit comes home after work one night and finds his wife and children are not there. He is hungry and wants dinner. He calls Jaswinder's cell phone and she tells him she is at her parents' home; she went to pick up the children, and then decided to stay for a short visit. Angry, he slams the phone down and then he begins to drink alcohol.

When Jaswinder comes home, Charnjit begins to yell at her and accuses her family of causing problems in their relationship. Jaswinder also becomes upset, accusing him of drinking too much and not spending enough time at home with their children. Charnjit then pushes Jaswinder, and kicks her several times while she is on the ground. Their son Harmeet, worrying about his mom's safety, calls the police.

The police arrive and arrest Charnjit; he is later released on a bail supervision court order. After several months and several court dates (where he cannot have contact with Jaswinder and the children), Charnjit is placed on a probation court order and referred to a domestic violence group program. In this group, he gains

better insight into the harm his actions had caused his children, his wife and himself.

Jaswinder, while hesitant initially to speak to the police, ultimately appreciated their support. They refer her to counselling, where she learns that without the police involvement, the abuse was likely to continue and most likely escalate. She also attends a group support program and is able to share her experiences with other women who have survived abuse. After realizing the impact the violence has had on her children, Jaswinder decides to involve her children in counselling programs for children who witness abuse.

Charnjit is eventually allowed to return home. In those first few days, he seems to be different: while Jaswinder suspects that her husband is on his best behaviour because he fears further police and court involvement, she is cautiously optimistic. Through counselling, Jaswinder knows it is not her responsibility or fault if Charnjit returns to his former ways. She also knows how to better protect herself and her children if any safety concerns arise.

Through their counselling programs, both Jaswinder and Charnjit realize the importance of having a healthy relationship not only for their sake, but also for the sake of their children.

**All names in this case study are fictionalized*

*Through counselling,
Jaswinder knows it is not
her responsibility or fault
if Charnjit returns to his
former ways.*



Intimate Partner Violence – a view from the front line

Interview with Dr. Amritpal Arora

In the past few years, several high-profile cases of domestic violence in BC's South Asian community have led to an increased focus on an oft-neglected subject. As a part of Dr. Amritpal Arora's residency in family medicine, he explored the effects of domestic abuse on South Asian women in BC. His goal was to develop a better understanding of their experiences, coping strategies, and possible barriers to seeking support. In a combination of one-to-one and group interviews, Dr.

Arora interviewed 11 South Asian women who identified themselves as victims of domestic abuse. He analyzed common themes from the interviews and used them as inspiration to produce a work of fiction, *Burdened Whispers*.

Dr. Arora shares insights on Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) from both his research as a resident and current work as a family physician.



“

“Unfortunately, too often women who are current victims of abuse are isolated and are not able to reach out for any help or access any services to help them cope.”

To start, how did you come to be involved in IPV?

I first became interested in IPV during my residency training. For my residency research project I decided to interview South Asian Victims of IPV to see if I could identify any common themes within their experiences. I was particularly interested in the relationship between victims and their family physicians. Through this research I feel I was able to provide my colleagues some insight into some of the culture specific issues victims face and training on how to better understand a South Asian victim's perspective.

A few years ago, I was involved in a community initiative called "I am Community." This initiative was aimed at South Asian single mothers (most of whom were victims of IPV) and their children. We had monthly meetings where the women were able to get together share their experiences as well as listen to various presentations on health promotion. The children were provided with a safe environment where they could play, participate in workshops and be exposed to positive role models.

Currently, I am a family physician in Burnaby and IPV is an issue that most physicians deal with from time to time. I also co-facilitate a workshop on IPV with second year family medicine residents at UBC.

What were some of the main themes that you heard from the women that you interviewed?

Cultural expectations, a need to preserve familial honour and a fear of an inability to survive independently were found to be important factors for the women I interviewed. A perceived lack of understanding of these issues by the broader community often deterred them from seeking help. Family physicians were seen as potentially important allies by the women. However, they felt that physicians failed to recognize or ask about their abusive situations. The women were frustrated by the tendency of their physicians to swiftly prescribe medications without delving into the cause of their chronic complaints. When the women did confide in their family physicians, they were frustrated at divorce being presented as the only option.

In "Burdened Whispers" you write about "the complex interplay of patriarchy, cultural expectations and the desire for autonomy." Can you tell me more about that?

Cultural expectations emphasize the importance of a patriarchal family. The indoctrination of the ideals of a good wife often begins in childhood. Often these ideals include a sacrifice of personal autonomy. When women face difficulties in their marriage, tradition dictates that these are kept within the family. A woman is expected to uphold the honour of her husband's family and that of her parents.

Separation or divorce may give a woman's parents the reputation of raising unstable or unruly girls and affect the marriage prospects of siblings. Women are often concerned about their own daughters' eligibility for marriage should they decide to leave.

What are some of the most prevalent circumstances around abuse in the South Asian community?

First let's be clear that IPV takes place in relationships of all races, religions and socio-economic statuses. I don't know if there are a set of circumstances in the South Asian Community that are prevalent around abuse. I feel limiting ourselves to that perspective will cause us to miss recognizing abuse in circumstances where we may not expect it.

What kinds of coping mechanism were the women you interviewed using?

The women in my study found great comfort in sharing their experiences with other women who had faced similar situations. Unfortunately, too often women who are current victims of abuse are isolated and are not able to reach out for any help or access any services to help them cope.

Tell me about the barriers that prevent the women from seeking support?

Some of the major barriers identified in my study were cultural expectations, a need to preserve family honour, isolation and the stigma of divorce. Cultural expectation, family honour and the stigma around divorce have been touched on above.

New immigrant women are often kept extremely isolated. They are financially,

socially and psychologically dependent on their husbands. Many are discouraged from working and if they do work their finances are controlled solely by their husbands. Consequently when they are faced with abuse, fear of not being able to survive independently serves as a significant barrier.

You currently run workshops with medical residents on how to identify and help victims of IPV. What are some of the tell tale signs?

The one thing I stress to the medical residents is that they should screen every woman in their practice. IPV can be taking place in relationships one least expects. If the question is not asked, we will never find out. Having said that, there are some things we advise the residents to look for such as chronic somatic complaints, low mood, appointments where the partner often controls the agenda, repetitive injuries etc.

What advice would you give to a lay person who recognizes signs of abuse and wants to help the woman who is impacted?

This is a good question. I guess the best thing to do would be to ask the possible victim in a respectful and caring way. He/she (remember, males can be victims too) may not admit it right away but at least the door for communication has been opened. One may do some research into available community resources that are available and provide these to the person of concern.

Of course, if one is worried about the physical safety or life of a potential victim, the appropriate authorities should be alerted.



Women are often concerned about their own daughters' eligibility for marriage should they decide to leave.

2015 MULTIFAITH CALENDAR – “Stillness”



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Mindbuster Quiz

ANSWERS

- 1. What percentage of women in Canada have been sexually and/or physically abused or assaulted at some point in their life?**
c. 50%
- 2. In Canada, intimate partner violence (IPV) accounts for what percentage of female murder victims?**
d. 40-70%
- 3. According to Statistics Canada, what percentage of women who were victims of domestic violence actually made a police report?**
b. 22%
- 4. Which of the following statements is true?**
 - a. Violence against women happens in all cultures and religions, in all ethnic and racial communities, at every age, and in every income group.
- 5. The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) crime statistics indicate the number of sexual assaults remained stable at around 450 per year between 2003 and 2008, but increased to how many in 2013?**
c. 572
- 6. Which of the following is not a sign of domestic violence?**
 - d. When a male encourages his partner to have her own friends and social activities.
- 7. How much does sexual assault and partner violence cost Canada each year?**
b. \$9 billion
- 8. According to a Statistics Canada study on residential shelter facilities in Canada, how many women stay in shelters in a given night to escape abuse?**
c. 4,000

Post Script: Interfaith projects build strong communities

Progressive
Intercultural
Community
Services (PICS)

PICS is an active member of the Surrey Interfaith Council, where several faith based associations and organizations collaborate on multi-faith goals. The collective was a direct result of the first interfaith project that PICS led in 2011, and it has been functioning ever since with a mandate to promote multiculturalism and to build an inclusive community. Due to the diverse nature of the Lower Mainland's demographics, we found that there was a need for ongoing sharing of knowledge and expertise of different faith precepts and cultural values. One goal of the interfaith project was to meet that need through facilitating dialogues about commonalities in safe settings.

Another goal of the interfaith project was to help new immigrants settle, and to generate a sense of multicultural belonging. This was done through dialogues with trusted community figures and employers, and by encouraging mutual respect and understanding between different faith groups. At PICS we think it is important to inform the general public about other cultures and belief systems in order to reduce stereotyping, misconception, bullying, hatred and religious crimes.

One major activity of this project was Community Expo of Beliefs and Ideas – One World, Many Worldviews which took place in February 2014 at the Surrey City Centre Library. The purpose of this event was to create a safe and comfortable atmosphere to display and to share interfaith discussions. Participants were able to speak honestly without offending each other and without fear of being judged or rejected for their faith.

Major partners for the event were the Surrey Libraries, Global Clergy Association of Canada, World Sikh Organiza-

tion and the Surrey Interfaith Council. More than 20 participants from Surrey hosted tables with information about their religious, spiritual or philosophical ideas and beliefs. The event opened with a blessing from a First Nation Elder, and included performances from Sahaja Yoga, the Punjabi Masihi Church choir and the Muslim Children's Nasheed group; chanting with the Soka Gakkei Buddhist group; and a Satsang with the Art of Living. The Global Clergy Association of Canada also held an interfaith panel discussion with five local faith groups together with music and meditation.

Our second major event took place at the Alexandra Neighbourhood House in South Surrey in March 2014: The Surrey Spiritual Summit featured Mo Dhaliwal, Chair of the Provincial Multicultural Advisory Committee as keynote speaker. It was a daylong event that attracted more than 80 registered participants who had the choice of attending ten different workshops. Dialogue streams covered youth, children, environment, social justice, spirituality, technology, education, art, music, values, contemplative practice and parenting.

The project has had a huge impact on participants. The City Centre Library recorded 300 more visitors than usual, and a review of more than 50 random feedback forms clearly showed that visitors learnt about different faith groups, enjoyed the event and thought this project helped Surrey become a more welcoming and inclusive community. The second measurable impact was attitudinal change among all faith and religious groups. Several faith groups indicated that they became aware of others beliefs and realized that we are all to be respected for our beliefs and practices. The third impact was behavioural change among participants who attended these events. The participants, especially the immigrants, learnt that in Canada people not only tolerate, but respect each other's beliefs and faith.

This project is made possible with funding from EmbraceBC.



PICS is a United Way agency and provides programs and services that assist new immigrants, seniors, farm workers, women and youth.

PROVINCIAL

BC Human Rights Coalition (BCHRC)
 BC Teachers Federation – Social Justice Program (BCTF - SJP)
 Canadian Cancer Society
 Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) - BC Division
 Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC)
 Legal Services Society of BC (LSS)
 LISTN
 SCOUTS Canada
 Social Planning & Research Council of BC (SPARC BC)
 Society for Intercultural Education, Training & Research (SIETAR BC)
 Tenant's Resource & Advisory Council (TRAC)
 The Association of BC Teachers of English as an Additional Language (BC TEAL)

NORTH

Fort St. John Literacy Society
 Hecate Strait Employment Development Society
 Immigrant & Multicultural Services Society (IMSS)
 Multicultural Heritage Society of Prince George
 North Coast Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society (NCIMSS)
 Skeena Diversity Society
 Terrace & District Multicultural Association (TDMA)

VANCOUVER ISLAND

Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS)
 Communica: Dialogue and Resolution Services Society
 Cowichan Intercultural Society (CIS)
 Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA)

Multicultural & Immigrant Services Association of North Vancouver Island (MISA)
 Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS)

FRASER VALLEY

Abbotsford Community Services (ACS)
 Chilliwack Community Services (CCS)
 DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society (DCRS)
 Langley Community Services Society (LCSS)
 Mission Community Services Society (MCSS)
 Options Community Services Society
 Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society (PICS)
 Umoja Operation Compassion Society

INTERIOR

Kamloops Immigrant Society (KIS)
 Kamloops Multicultural Society
 Kelowna Community Resources Society (KCRS)
 Shuswap Settlement Services Society
 South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services (SOICS)
 Vernon & District Immigrant Services Society (VDISS)

LOWER MAINLAND

Association of Neighbourhood Houses British Columbia (ANHBC)
 Burnaby Family Life
 CHIMO Crisis Services
 Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH)
 Family Education and Support Centre
 Family Services of Greater Vancouver (FSGV)
 Family Services of the North Shore (FSNS)

Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC)
 Inland Refugee Society of BC (IRS)
 Jewish Family Service Agency (JFSA)
 Kiwassa Neighbourhood Services Association
 Little Mountain Neighbourhood House Society (LMNHS)
 Multilingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities (MOSAIC)
 Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House (MPNH)
 Multicultural Helping House Society (MHHS)
 Multifaith Action Society (MAS)
 North Shore Multicultural Society (NSMS)
 Pacific Community Resources Society (PCRS)
 Pacific Immigrant Resources Society (PIRS)
 REACH Multicultural Family Centre
 Richmond Multicultural Community Services (RMCS)
 Richmond Youth Service Agency
 Settlement Orientation Services (SOS)
 South Vancouver Neighbourhood House (SVNH)
 S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
 Supporting Women's Alternative Network (SWAN)
 Vancouver & Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services (VLMFSS)
 Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture (VAST)
 Vancouver Multicultural Society (VMS)
 Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre
 Westcoast Family Centres Society (WFC)
 YMCA of Greater Vancouver
 YWCA Metro Vancouver