ADVANCING THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN NORTHWEST BRITISH COLUMBIA

TRAINING AND EDUCATION FOR FRONT-LINE SERVICE PROVIDERS RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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Advancing the Safety and Well-being of Immigrant Women in Northwest British Columbia

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MOSAIC BACKGROUND

A Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities-accredited multilingual non-profit agency, MOSAIC is committed to supporting the successful integration of newcomers (immigrants and refugees) to Canada through family, settlement, language and employment programs and interpretation and translation services. On the violence-prevention side, MOSAIC is a leader in the non-profit sector in taking on complex and contentious programming that responds to the needs of the most vulnerable members of the newcomer community, mainly women.

Not only have the agency’s violence-prevention programs excelled at providing counselling services and advocating for immigrant and refugee women that have been victims of domestic violence, MOSAIC is also recognized for having piloted the first culturally and linguistically sensitive program for men convicted of violence, and for developing anti-violence programming and community activities – including a nationally recognized annual conference – for youth. It is, additionally, the only agency to house a community-based multicultural program for victims of all crimes.

MOSAIC’s expertise in working with newcomers and its commitment to anti-violence work has allowed it to lead several violence awareness, prevention and reduction research-based projects, including Engaging Young People to Prevent Violence Against Women on Post-Secondary Campuses, Preventing and Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls in the Name of “Honour,” Enhancing Community Capacity to Respond to and Prevent Forced Marriage and the A Grassroots Project to Promote Gender Equality within Visible Minority Communities in Metro Vancouver, and deliver legal education and violence-prevention awareness workshops and training to diverse groups of women and front-line service providers in underserved, rural and isolated communities in British Columbia. Informational materials and resources regarding the Family Law Act (FLA), changes to the Spousal Sponsorship Policy and There is No Honour in Violence Against Women project have also been produced, translated and distributed by the agency.

Recognized for its work within vast and diverse communities, its standards in service delivery and its reputation as a collaborator, MOSAIC values its community partnerships and the support of its funders, and remains committed to providing client-centred services to meet the evolving needs of the communities that it serves. The agency’s ongoing aim is to assist its clients in achieving their full potential and integrating into every aspect of life in Canada – social, economic, cultural and political.
PROJECT OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

In the last decade funds from the Law Foundation of Ontario, the Law Foundation of B.C. and the BC Ministry of Justice’s Civil Forfeitures Office (CFO) have allowed MOSAIC to deliver violence-prevention, legal education and awareness-raising workshops and training to women and service providers alike. Based on the success of this work, the agency received funding from the CFO to design and deliver training for front-line service providers in northwestern B.C.

Research indicates that immigrant and refugee women living in rural and remote areas face unique barriers in attempting to seek help to end the violence in their lives. These barriers may include transportation, language and geographic isolation. Fewer community resources and biased/entrenched attitudes toward newcomer women may also hinder their access to support. Feedback from front-line service providers involved in past collaborations with rural and isolated communities indicates the need for more information and knowledge to better meet the needs of immigrant and refugee women.

In response to this need, and with aforementioned funding from the CFO, MOSAIC successfully delivered three full-day training sessions to front-line service providers in Kitimat, Prince Rupert and Terrace. This training guide, developed to supplement the in-person training, provides information on working with newcomer women that are experiencing or are at risk of family violence and/or violence committed in the name of “honour.” It also addresses the issues and complexities of working with culturally marginalized women, and lets users further explore issues beyond their own culture that are at play and look at how cultural bias and stereotypes can impact their work.

The information in this guide is provided in three parts or sections: first, content and information on violence against women for engaging female immigrants and refugees that may be experiencing or are at risk of family violence and violence committed in the name of honour; second, information, tools and materials for providing one-on-one support to newcomer women that are accessing services; and, third, a sample agenda, outline and reference to materials for delivering a three-hour culturally sensitive workshop to newcomer women that focuses on increasing the safety of female immigrants and refugees through violence prevention and creating awareness of legal information/family law.

Overall, the aim of this training guide is to provide service providers with techniques and strategies they can use to increase their skill base/ability to support culturally and linguistically marginalized women. At the end of training, service providers will be able to utilize the content of this guide to deliver
awareness-raising and prevention education workshops on their own. Additionally, service providers who participated in the training can (and are encouraged to) access more tools and reference materials online, at www.honourforwomen.ca.

A final note: This guide contains information cited from other, referenced sources. In addition, references are frequently made to ideas and information that can be explored further in a previous MOSAIC publication, *There is No Honour in Violence: Ensuring Safety in Our Own Homes and Communities – Facilitator Guide and Resources Manual for Training Front-line Service Providers*, available at www.honourforwomen.ca. Another useful resource, the End Forced Marriages website at www.endforcedmarriages.ca, is part of the Enhancing Community Capacity to Respond to and Prevent Forced Marriage project produced by MOSAIC in partnership with the Ending Violence Association of B.C. and funded by the Department of Justice Canada.
SECTION 1: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

A. Defining Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a pattern of intentional, abusive behaviour used by one partner within an intimate relationship against the other to gain power and control. The term “domestic violence” is interchangeably used and can include intimate partner violence, battering, relationship abuse, family violence, violence against women, dating violence and spousal abuse.

Gender-based violence is systematically and universally entrenched in culture/society and reinforced by the power of patriarchy. Historically, patriarchy has been used to define how power is primarily held by men, which allows for the oppression of women. Patriarchy also allows men the privilege to maintain their male beliefs and their right to victimize and abuse women.

There are many forms of coercive control – physical, sexual, emotional, economic and psychological, to name a few – used by abusers to maintain power. The Power and Control Wheel diagram can be used to demonstrate and explain the different types of control tactics used by abusers. Another diagram, the Immigrant Women’s Power and Control Wheel, shows the complexities of the coercive tactics used against immigrant and refugee women1.

Women in abusive relationships are often left feeling vulnerable, hopeless and fearful for their lives. In 2009, Statistics Canada data indicated that 75.7 per cent of all victims of murder were male, while 75.3 per cent of all victims of domestic homicide (murder) were female. Sadly, the number of women killed by their intimate partners was the same as the number of men dying at the hands of strangers. Some women may defend themselves and fight back – while it is important to acknowledge that women will use violence at times, many studies indicate that women who use violence are themselves victims of intimate partner abuse2. Women perceiving

1 Look for these and other useful diagrams/materials at the back of this guide.
immediate threat or harm may fight back and use violence to protect themselves and/or their children, usually without regard for the increased risk and potential of reciprocated violence from their abusive partner. Studies also show that self-defence is the most common reason for women's use of violence toward their intimate male partners.

When women use violence, it is often in response to severe, long-term and ongoing violence by their partners, and may take on one of the following forms:

- **Violence in self-defence:** A woman may use as much force as is necessary to defend herself against an attack and assault in order to protect herself from further violence.

- **Violence to resist oppression (retaliation from past harms):** A woman may strike back after experiencing a long history of violence and abuse by her intimate partner. Though she may use violence to fight back and protect herself, she is not the most powerful or dangerous person in the relationship. In fact, she puts herself at increased risk and may continue to fear for her safety.

- **Violence to control (pre-emptive strike):** A woman may use violence against her abuser to deter or prevent an anticipated, usually unpleasant, situation or occurrence. A woman deeply entrenched in the vicious cycle of violence may purposely aggravate her abuser and/or spur the abuse in order to “get it over with,” rather than wait in anticipation (this may be referred to as walk-on-eggshells syndrome).

While the use of violence is never condoned, it is helpful to understand that the violence used by women against their intimate partners can take on several forms: - self-defence - resistance to oppression - violence used to control.

Not only are immigrant and refugee women at higher risk for family violence, they may face additional barriers to accessing services – barriers that include language and economic limitations, a lack of understanding of Canadian societal norms and values and/or difficulty integrating into mainstream culture. They may also hold certain beliefs that create some level of acceptance around/normalization of certain forms of abuse. Newcomer women may also face discrimination and racism – also a barrier.

Statistics show the vast majority of victims of violence within intimate relationships are women, and that females experience a far greater risk of serious injury or death in violent relationships. Further, research by Statistics
Canada gives insight into why some victims of abuse do not report their situation to police\(^3\). According to this research, a woman who is abused may endure the violence for a long time before seeking support – or never tell anyone at all. The reasons why a victim may keep her abuse secret may relate to her circumstances, feelings, beliefs and/or level of knowledge about domestic abuse. In other words, she may be:

- afraid to leave
- staying for her children
- fearful of losing her children to her abuser
- dependent on her abuser
- lacking financial support
- unaware of available community resources
- fearful of police and the court system
- isolated from social or family connections
- hopeful that the abuse will stop
- in love with her abuser
- concerned with the notion of family honour

In preparing to provide support to these women, service providers and front-line advocates need to be both accessible and able to meet the diverse needs of newcomer females in order to increase their safety, provide access to resources and help build a trusting relationship with the client.

Service providers and front-line advocates can use the information in this guide and incorporate it into their work to enhance their skill capacity and service provision.

**Note:** It is helpful to remember that all violence against women is embedded in societal perspectives globally.

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B. Culture and Honour

Many experts have addressed the issue of “culture,” defining it from their own perspective. Generally speaking, we can agree that everyone has culture and everyone’s culture is constantly changing, evolving and adapting. No one’s culture is fixed. It is often easier to recognize diversity within one’s own culture than within a culture that’s been identified as “different” or “foreign.”

Beyond describing the fluidity and malleability of culture in her Culture Handbook, author and director of the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence Sujata Warrier states that culture is not just about norms and values regarding particular racial or ethnic groups, and elaborates on the commonly shared view that a more critical definition of culture refers to shared experiences that develop and evolve according to changing social and political landscapes⁴. That said, a concept for further exploration includes understanding culture as being fluid, evolving and changing (as opposed to the idea of cultural essentialism, which identifies culture as rigid and unchanging and creates an “us and them” mentality).

It is not possible to develop guidelines and set principles to address cultural competency, as that may lead to cultural stereotypes. Rather, emphasis is placed on comprehension of the complexities of culture from within for service providers. Acknowledging that culture is changing and evolving for all groups allows service providers to give support and meet the needs of women seeking services.

Women from diverse cultures (ethnic, community, LGBTQ, etc.), and people in general, live multi-layered lives. Service providers need to understand the complexities and be open to exploring what is presented to them beyond what they are physically observing. Many have adopted the view of cultural relativism and the belief that no culture is superior to any other.

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⁴ For more information/insight see MOSAIC’s There is No Honour in Violence: Ensuring Safety in Our Own Homes and Communities – Facilitator Guide and Resources Manual for Training Front-line Service Providers.
The reduction of violence to something cultural offers an opportunity to turn away. Rather than naming the violence for what it is – violence against women and girls – culture may be used to justify violence by evoking sentiments associated with traditional cultural beliefs about how women should behave and/or be treated. Patriarchy is often what sets the boundaries and limits of a common group, place, country, religion and identity. Culture does not commit violence, nor does culture justify violence – people commit violence, and people need to be held responsible for their actions. Not intervening in violence in the name of culture is demeaning and dismissive.

As we reflect on what culture means to us and how it is interpreted by others, we must also explore the concept of “honour.” Definitions of honour include high self-esteem, respect, privilege, distinction, worth, allegiance to moral principles, family dignity and merit, to name a few. Our knowledge and understanding of honour is based on influences from the society and culture to which we belong. An individual’s beliefs, values and morals are passed on from preceding generations. Bearing in mind that culture is fluid and malleable to change, individuals form their own identities; there are opportunities to incorporate new thinking and adaptations as connections are made to new groups, societies and/or communities.

In studying the concept of honour, we find it is a complex notion that is tied to both a man’s “self-worth” and “social worth.” What is more evident is the impact of patriarchy, which defines the relationship between men and women and is the underlying cause of gender-based violence. A man’s honour is his “claim to pride,” which may be reflected in such factors as his family, status, wealth and liberality. A privileged man measuring his self-worth in relation to his pride and his “honour” may devalue the role of women in his society.

The loss of control over the behaviours of their wives and daughters may result in men believing that they and their family are losing “honour.” Shamed by their own inability to control their property in the way they think is demanded of them,
they respond by engaging in controlling patterns of violence that include control over sexual behaviours, decision-making abilities and so on.\(^5\)

To maintain his “honour,” a man may subjugate and control women whom he fears will strip him of said “honour.” The role of feminism counters this by allowing women to exert confidence, demand equality and address violence against females by males.

The general attitude on what people think about violence committed in the name of honour and the kind of events that come to mind are often negative and stereotype certain communities. Individual response is often based on one’s own, personal perspective and “culture,” which may differentiate individuals from the culture and lived experience of others. Media further ingrains these sentiments by reporting on events with a particular stance, often for the purpose of ratings and sales. Violence committed in the name of honour is not particular to a certain cultural group or community; rather, it needs to be viewed as a larger issue. Violence committed against women in the name of honour is located within the dynamics and patterns of violence against women within patriarchal societies. Violence committed in the name of honour can be placed on the larger continuum of violence against women.

Service providers need to understand that having preconceived notions of certain cultural groups may hinder service provision and resources. Most women, when accessing services, will not identify themselves as “victims of violence in the name of honour.” Many women attending and participating in various violence-prevention workshops delivered by MOSAIC indicate that, when accessing services, they want to be heard and provided with support and resources. In other words, if they disclose the nature of their abuse, they simply wish to be offered support, period, rather than have their situation viewed as “honour-related” or “cultural.”

That said, service providers are encouraged to engage in self-exploration and question their own beliefs about culture/thoughts on honour.

\(^5\) For more information/insight see MOSAIC’s There is No Honour in Violence: Ensuring Safety in Our Own Homes and Communities – Facilitator Guide and Resources Manual for Training Front-line Service Providers.
Note: When we look closely at violence in the name of honour we see that it fits into a continuum of violence against women.

Additional reading material:
Principles and Assumptions for Developing Cultural Competence (see end of guide).

C. Working With Newcomer Women

Unique Challenges Faced by Immigrant and Refugee Women

Violence transcends all boundaries and impacts women and children universally. Violence against women occurs across culture, religion, caste, ethnicity, race, economic status and class, and is about power and control. Since research and studies on violence against newcomer women is limited, so is the data on the actual number of immigrant and refugee women experiencing violence. There are many reasons why these women may not report the violence they have experienced.

Service providers and front-line advocates need to be skilled in order to screen, identify and understand the complexities faced by newcomer women from diverse communities. There are many factors associated with the immigration process and the dynamics within new immigrant and refugee families that may lead to an increase in the incidence or severity of violence against women by their intimate partners.

Because newcomer women may find themselves isolated and/or disconnected from community and social supports, the pressures of adapting to a new culture and environment – possibly even to new employment and to social isolation – may create stresses within the family that leave women vulnerable to domestic violence.

Additionally, many women may face economic dependence and language barriers and may be prevented from seeking help and community services when
they are at risk. They may not be aware of the resources available to them, or may harbour the belief that support outside of the home is not to be trusted. Newcomer women are less likely to report physical or sexual violence for fear of further victimization or fear of deportation⁶.

Lack of access to information about their rights and relevant/applicable resources puts all women at risk of victimization. However, immigrant and refugee women living in rural and/or underserviced communities are at even greater risk, as these communities often lack the appropriate culturally and linguistically sensitive services.

To increase safety for immigrant and refugee women, two distinct themes were identified in a 2007 report prepared for the Justice Institute of B.C. (JIBC) entitled Empowerment of Immigrant and Refugee Women Who Are Victims of Violence in Their Intimate Relationships. First, priority was placed on addressing the multitude needs of immigrant and refugee, including language barriers, lack of information/lack of access to information, sponsorship and immigration issues, material needs and social isolation. The second theme highlighted the importance of a “comprehensive, caring service,” which includes “proactive intervention; advocacy and sensitivity to women’s cultural and immigration realities.”

Newcomer women experiencing violence and victimization may choose to not report or get help for many of the reasons identified in the JIBC report. Research and data collection is therefore incomplete and does not reflect what, in fact, reality is – that there are more women experiencing violence and/or harm than accounted for. Many women fear reporting; for example, “a study with young women of colour in Toronto found that one in five women experienced racism in the health care system which included cultural insensitivity, racial slurs and poor quality care.”⁷

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D. Violence Against Women in the Name of Honour

MOSAIC has taken the initiative and lead in dispelling the misconception identifying violence justified by men in the name of honour. Mainstream media and society have labelled this form of violence as “HBV” (honour-based violence), inadvertently attaching the acronym to immigrants. This in turn has led to a racist and discriminatory view stigmatizing communities and creating an “exotic other” phenomenon. Service providers are encouraged to read further into the topic of naming the issue for what it is, namely by accessing Marai Larasi’s Imkaan presentation to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (57th session), in which she shows how the focus is shifted away from the root issue – violence against women – not only minimizing it but redirecting the spotlight to “specific communities from specific regions of the world.” Such groups as government, policy-makers and the general western population have benefitted from adopting this cultural essentialist view to further the agenda on curtailing immigration trends.

The concept of violence that is committed against women in the name of honour deserves more thought and context. As touched on earlier, the predominant view held by western society is very much “us and them” – this is referred to as cultural essentialism. The argument we are faced with, then, is that “honour-related violence” is applicable only to certain identified cultures. This perspective has led to a dominant societal belief that the culture of western society is not patriarchal or violent – at all. Gender violence is assumed to be inherent in newcomers (immigrants and refugees) who bring with them their “cultural barbaric practices” – practices that have now been identified in Canadian federal legislation, with punitive measures in place to respond to this behaviour.

The implementation of the Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act received royal assent on June 18, 2015. It specifies that the age of consent to marry is 16, with a requirement that parental consent be given for marriage of those aged 16 to 18. The provisions of the bill include the following:

- making it an offence to celebrate, aid or participate in a forced marriage ceremony or a marriage ceremony where one of the partners is under 16;
- making it an offence to remove a child from Canada with the intent of participating in a forced marriage; and
- giving a judge the power to issue a peace bond to prevent someone from conducting or participating in a forced marriage.
The reality is there is no culture that is identified or can be identified as supporting violence in the name of honour; in fact, the reality is that there is no honour in violence perpetrated against women and girls.

It is important to understand that certain factors can be attributed to culture. In all communities, western or otherwise, traditional values and beliefs may be part of the problem. The focus on this mindset is discouraged to avoid stereotyping and harbouring preconceived notions that lead to stigmatizing certain communities, and seeing these communities as backward or as “other.”

The main issue to focus on is that there is no difference between women who experience violence and/or are killed by their intimate partners and women who are impacted by violence that is rationalized and committed against them in the name of honour. As previously stated, violence committed in the name of honour is located on the larger of continuum of violence against women experienced by women universally and within patriarchal societies.

Violence that is committed against women in the name of honour includes all factors that are applicable to all other types of crimes and violence against women in general. These factors include patriarchy, jealousy, physical aggression and assault, psychological abuse, sexual coercion, controlling behaviour, isolation from friends and family/restricted access to information and assistance, and misogynistic attitudes toward women. It is also worthwhile to look at the definition for the term “domestic violence” more closely and in relation to violence that is committed against women in the name of honour, which should include the following three key elements:

1. control over a woman’s behaviour;
2. a man’s feelings of shame over his loss of control of the behaviour; and
3. community or familial involvement in augmenting and addressing the shame.

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8 For more information/insight see MOSAIC’s There is No Honour in Violence: Ensuring Safety in Our Own Homes and Communities – Facilitator Guide and Resources Manual for Training Front-line Service Providers.
A closer look at the definition will reveal that “control over a women’s behaviour” is applicable to violence against women in general. “A man’s feelings of shame over his loss of control of the behaviour” is reflected in the use of control to regain power on the larger continuum of violence against women.

The last point, regarding “community or familial involvement in augmenting and addressing the shame,” is the primary factor indicating concepts of “honour.” MOSAIC’s previous report, *There is no Honour in Violence*, states that when violence in the name of honour is collectively imposed, there are challenges for protection agencies. It is critical to understand and explore challenging family and community dynamics, but it is helpful to remember that all violence against women is embedded in societal perspectives toward women, in every society. When we look closely at violence in the name of “honour,” we see that it fits into a continuum of violence against women.

In providing support services to immigrant and refugee women, some of the factors pertinent to the issue of violence committed against women in the name of honour include:

- the vulnerability of newcomer women and all women universally as they are impacted by power and control issues in the larger patriarchal society;
- little data, research and published materials addressing this issue;
- gaps in services and lack of resources and relevant tools to support female victims; and
- lack of training for service providers to support female victims.

Examples of the barriers faced by a woman or girl at risk of violence in the name of “honour” are:

- feelings of shame;
- fear of leaving and not knowing where to go for help;
- belief that the whole family is against her and supporting the violence;
- belief that she is responsible for maintaining the family’s honour, which means acceptance of the abuse/violence;
- isolation from friends and people who would support her;
- fear of not being believed; and
- fear of being discriminated against/stereotyped.

It is important to note that women vulnerable to violence committed in the name of honour belong to very diverse communities and may or may not be immigrants or refugees. Service providers will find it much easier to support female victims when there is only one abuser; more attention is needed to work with a woman or girl experiencing abuse from her larger, extended family and/or
community. To ensure client-centred support and not increase the risk for the woman in question, service providers need to take caution in moving forward during the assessment/intake process. The service provider must build trust, ensure confidentiality and be open to understanding the situation in full in order to increase safety and engage in a culturally sensitive manner.

**Note:** Service providers are encouraged to visit the following websites to obtain further information: [www.endforcedmarriages.ca](http://www.endforcedmarriages.ca) and [www.honourforwomen.ca](http://www.honourforwomen.ca)

**E. Systemic Barriers Experienced by Women Impacted by Violence in the Name of Honour**

We are aware that immigrant and refugee women face additional complexities when confined to a rural, underserved community. Examples of the systemic and personal barriers faced by women and girls at risk of violence in the name of “honour” include:

- fear;
- lack of knowledge about available support;
- maintenance of familial honour;
- language barriers that prevent women from connecting with resources and help;
- impact of immigration regulations and policy;
- racism and insensitivity within various sectors that prevent women from accessing their services;
- xenophobia; and
- service providers who lack the training to support women experiencing violence in the name of honour.

Remember, women vulnerable to violence committed in the name of honour belong to very diverse communities and may or may not be immigrants or refugees.

**F. Organizational Challenges in Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Women Victims**

In addition to service providers absorbing this material and being cognizant of culturally sensitive support services, the agencies they are affiliated with must
be accessible and equipped to provide support. Though there is little data to refer to here, as part of MOSAIC’s Preventing and Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls in the Name of “Honour” project (with funds by Status of Women Canada), a needs assessment was implemented, including a series of focus groups and online surveys aimed at women and girls, men and boys and service providers, in order to determine gaps in services and needs of women impacted by this type of violence. A total of eight focus groups and two online surveys were held, with feedback from 102 participants received, yielding a plethora of information – including feedback from women showing that the following factors would help them better access services:

- education on their legal rights;
- increased awareness and understanding of community resources;
- resources with built-in language capacity; and
- workers who to take clients seriously.

According to 2011 research by Statistics Canada, a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner approximately every six days. In the 89 police-reported spousal homicides that occurred in Canada that year, 76 of the victims – more than 85 per cent – were women. On any given day in Canada more than 3,300 women and children are forced to sleep in an emergency shelter to escape domestic violence. Every night about 200 women are turned away because the shelters are full.

Regardless of the impact of victimization and the abuse, women may stay in an abusive relationship for a number of reasons. Women will reach out and seek help when they sense imminent danger and/or are ready to leave, and when they feel not only safe but also supported, with relevant information and resources offered in a safe and sensitive manner.

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SECTION 2: IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE AND APPROPRIATE PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Best Practices for Service Providers

Community agencies and service providers need to be prepared to meet the needs and increase the safety of immigrant and refugee women. Service providers are encouraged to refer to the following list of best practices (dos and don’ts), which have been reprinted and slightly modified with permission from the 2013 Quebec Counsel on the Status of Women report Honour Crime: From Indignation to Action:

Best Practices (Dos):

- take the victim seriously if she feels threatened, placing the priority on her safety;
- adopt an approach that is centred around the victim and her empowerment;
- make a thorough assessment of the situation, including the possibility of multiple perpetrators within the family and community;
- hold interviews in a place that is safe and secure for the victim, ensuring her confidentiality;
- if needed, call on an independent and trustworthy interpreter (not her children or siblings);
- document the abuse, including any history of violence, and keep this detailed information in a safe and confidential manner;
- work with the victim to assess her needs and her resources/strengths;
- direct the victim to an appropriate resource that will respect the way she “does culture” (i.e., language, food, gender, etc.); and
- apply the “one chance rule” by considering that the person asking for help may not have another chance and that later could be too late. Swift intervention and/or steering to resources may be needed.

Practices to avoid (Don’ts):

- sending the victim away without intervention/resources;
- racial discrimination through stereotyping/essentialism – i.e., focusing on her culture instead of her abuse;
- violating confidentiality by reporting a victim’s statements to her husband or other members of the family or community, including community or religious leaders, or by letting them see the abuse report (even accidentally);
• using the husband, a child or other member of the family (unless specifically requested by the victim) as an interpreter or allowing them to be present when you question the victim; and
• leaving messages for the victim that could alert her husband, family or members of the community about her allegations, putting the victim or others at risk.

Agencies are encouraged to support their staff in building and establishing a specialized, co-ordinated response to meet the needs of diverse women. Service providers should always keep women’s safety in mind in their response/provision of service.

Risk Assessment Framework (RAF)

Generally speaking, agencies have either adopted or developed risk-assessment tools to assist with the intake and assessment process within their violence-prevention programs. The RAF presented by MOSAIC (see Appendix) draws from and expands upon risk-assessment questions from diverse sources, including the Vancouver Police Department and Best Practices for Stopping the Violence Counselling Programs.

Service providers are encouraged to focus on assessing the safety of the women accessing their services. In addition to being “client-centred,” it is important to build trust, confirm confidentiality and be aware of/prepared to gently explore the full family situation. It’s also essential to avoid curiosity and getting drawn into learning more about the woman’s cultural background as this can detract from the process of meeting her needs. Further, it is important for service providers to set clear boundaries with the client in order to help keep personal viewpoints and opinions out of the service-delivery process. Trust that careful interviewing and assessment will draw out the important information about the woman and her situation.

To assist with the interviewing/intake and assessment process, MOSAIC’s RAF expands on standard risk assessments used by the anti-violence sector. It has also been enhanced to include questions that draw out the patterns and dynamics related to violence committed in the name of honour – some of these questions, for instance, are designed to draw out dynamics within the woman’s extended family and community, addressing the possibility of collusion and active participation of multiple family/community members in threatening and abusive behaviour and thus helping the service provider gain further insight into the client’s situation, to increase safety and reduce risk.
**Note:** It’s essential to avoid curiosity and getting drawn into learning more about the woman’s cultural background, as this can detract from the process of meeting her needs.

**Additional reading materials:**

Risk Assessment Framework

Handout “Best Practices” (Dos and Don’ts)

Advocacy Wheel
SECTION 3: DELIVERING AWARENESS-RAISING AND PREVENTION EDUCATION WORKSHOPS FOR IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN

Workshop Preparation Tips

This section contains a sample agenda for a three-hour workshop addressing issues that may impact immigrant and refugee women experiencing family violence. The facilitator is encouraged to refer to the Legal Services Society (LSS) website\(^{11}\) and publications, as well as MOSAIC’s website\(^{12}\) for supplemental materials to assist in developing and delivering this workshop. The information provided in the sample workshop below is taken from various LSS publications and, in addition the content developed by MOSAIC, has been reviewed and approved by both a family law and immigration lawyer. Many of the publications have been translated into multiple languages; facilitators should have these and other relevant materials on hand for clients.

The timing of the workshop is important; facilitators should take into account their clients’ daily routines (in many communities, for instance, women will plan their days around the activities of their children, like walking or driving to and from school). Also, incorporating some social time and refreshments into the workshop may help meet the multi-faceted needs of women and create a welcoming atmosphere.

A good way to get women engaged in the workshop is to open with an icebreaker activity that’s fun and enjoyable without being overwhelming or intrusive. For instance, going around the room, have each woman say her name and tell the group the meaning behind it. After each woman shares, the rest of the group can clap.

Start the workshop by reviewing the agenda and giving the women an idea of the topics to be discussed. Facilitators can refer to section 1 of this guide and the various resources provided to help them convey the necessary information, and should have resource materials available in English and the other languages for the women to access.

\(^{11}\) [www.legalaid.bc.ca](http://www.legalaid.bc.ca)

\(^{12}\) [www.mosaicbc.com](http://www.mosaicbc.com)
Below is a sample agenda for developing and delivering the workshop. Feel free to use the content as is, or develop your own workshop to meet the needs of your target group.

**Sample Three-Hour Workshop**

**Materials:**
- PowerPoint presentation
- Laptop and projector
- Speakers for sound
- Flipchart paper and markers
- Sign-in sheet
- Handouts for group activity
- Pens for participants
- Feedback forms
- Translated feedback forms

**Resources:**
1. List of community resources for the women participants
2. LSS publications
3. PowerPoint presentation
4. MOSAIC’s overview of Family Law Act (translations available)\(^\text{13}\)
5. MOSAIC’s overview of Changes to Spousal Sponsorship Policy (translations available)\(^\text{14}\)

**Instructional Strategies:**
1. PowerPoint presentation
2. Post-presentation Q&A

\(^{13}\) Available at [www.mosaicbc.com/publications](http://www.mosaicbc.com/publications).

\(^{14}\) Available at [www.mosaicbc.com/publications](http://www.mosaicbc.com/publications).
Sample Agenda:

**Three-Hour Workshop for Women**

Registration & Coffee

- 10 minutes Ice-Breaker and Introduction to Workshop
- 45 minutes Dynamics of Violence against Women
- 45 minutes Family Law Act
- 45 minutes Overview of the Change to Spousal Sponsorship Policy
- 30 minutes Question & Answer
- 5 minutes Workshop Feedback Survey

**Activity 1: Dynamics of Violence against Women**

Goals:

1. To define what domestic violence is.
2. To identify what abuse by men against women in intimate relationships is.
3. To define and show what a healthy relationship is.
4. To encourage and engage women in dialogue throughout the activity.

Resources Required:

- Cycle of Violence
- Power and Control Wheel
- Equality Wheel
- Immigrant Power and Control Wheel

Time Required: 45 minutes

Activities:

1. **Definition of Domestic Violence:**
   *Domestic violence* is the wilful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault and/or other abusive behaviour as part of a systematic *pattern of power and control* perpetrated by one intimate partner against another.
Notes:
The term domestic violence is interchangeably used and can include intimate partner violence, battering, relationship abuse, family violence, violence against women, dating violence and spousal abuse.

Statistics show that the vast majority of victims of violence within these relationships are women.

Statistics also show that women experience a much greater risk of serious injury or death in violent relationships.

2. Explain the **Cycle of Violence** using the visual (see end of guide). Shown is a pattern of non-consensual abuse experienced in an intimate relationship. There are three phases that highlight the abuse experienced: the tension-building, honeymoon and explosion phase. Denial that the abuse is occurring and minimizing the consequences allows the pattern to repeat itself and leads to escalation of the abuse experienced by the victim.

3. Discuss what a **healthy relationship** looks like. The facilitator can refer to the Equality Wheel at the back of this guide to highlight some of the characteristics of healthy relationships where the power is equally shared among two individuals, including:
   - Non-threatening behaviour: Acting and speaking in such a way so that she feels comfortable expressing herself and doing things.
   - Sexual safety: Respecting her decision to engage or not engage in sexual behaviours.
   - Financial/economic independence: Making financial decisions together, making sure both partners benefit from financial decisions, not withholding financial information from one another.
   - Negotiation and fairness: Coming up with solutions to conflicts that are fair to each other; accepting change; both partners are willing to compromise.
   - Responsible parenting: Being a positive role model for children and grandchildren.
   - Honesty and accountability: Accepting responsibility for self, admitting being wrong, communicating openly and truthfully.
   - Connections with others: Being involved with peer groups or friends.
   - Trust and support: Supporting her goals in life; respecting her right to her own feelings, friends, activities and opinions.
4. Distribute copies of the **Power and Control Wheel** and explain, using the examples in the diagram, how abusive tactics are used to exert and maintain power and control. Engage women in the discussion by encouraging them to give examples.

Batterers use a variety of tactics to control their partners, with behaviours that fall within four domestic violence continuums: physical, sexual, psychological and/or emotional. Below are some examples of the coercive behaviours and tactics used to control another individual:

- Using the children
- Using religion to impose certain sanctions
- Jealousy and intimidation
- Controlling behaviour to restrict activity
- Unrealistic expectations
- Isolation from family and friends
- Blaming the victim for personal problems
- Use of animals (cruelty to animals)
- Forcing the victim to have or perform sex
- Breaking things
- Using remorse to instill sympathy

5. Distribute copies of the Immigrant Power and Control Wheel and explain, using the examples in the diagram, the added layer of complexity that **immigrant and refugee women** experiencing violence face.

**Note:** Newcomer women may face difficulty in accessing support services due to some or all of the following barriers: language, immigration status, mobility, lack of knowledge of resources, fear of the police, social and cultural factors, lack of confidence and social isolation. Other barriers may also apply.

6. Share and discuss the **Immigrant Power and Control Wheel**, which emphasizes the added layer of abuse that newcomer women endure. Encourage the women to share their experience, if they are comfortable doing so.

Some of the common threats that prevent the women from leaving the relationship are:
• Threatening to report her to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to get her deported. Threatening to withdraw the petition to legalize her immigration status.
• Hiding or destroying important documents (passports, ID cards, health-care cards, etc.). Destroying her only property from her country of origin.
• Lying about her immigration status. Writing to her family and telling lies about her. Calling her racist names.
• Isolating her from friends, family or anyone who speaks her language. Not allowing her to learn English.
• Failing to file papers to legalize her immigration status. Withdrawing or threatening to withdraw papers filed for her residency.
• Threatening to take her children away from Canada. Threatening to report her children to the CIC.
• Calling her a prostitute or “mail-order bride.” Alleging on legal papers that she has a history of prostitution.
• Threatening to report her if she works “under the table.” Not letting her get job training or schooling.

**Note:** Regardless of your participant group, the two wheels should help to convey the difficulties faced by all abused women, being on the larger of continuum of violence against women. Abusers may choose a variety of different tactics as part of the systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against the other.

**Activity 2: Family Law Act**

Goals:
1. To highlight and outline women’s rights and responsibilities.
2. To show how the Family Law Act (FLA) can help women make arrangements for the future care of their children, support payments and division of family property and family debt.

Resources Required:
- Facts on FLA translations, available in Mandarin, Punjabi and Spanish
- Legal Services Society (LSS) published and online materials

Time Required: 45 minutes
Note: It is important for the facilitator to highlight that the FLA outlines certain rights and responsibilities for women when they have left their abusive relationship and there are children involved. It may be helpful to refer to some of the resources suggested for this activity for more information.

Share the following information with the group:

1. The FLA replaced the Family Relations Act (FRA) on March 18, 2013. The FLA gives both provincial and federal courts significant new enforcement powers.
2. The FLA outlines your rights and responsibilities
3. You can use the FLA to help you make arrangements for the future care of your children, support payments, division of family property and family debts.
4. Definition of “spouse”: Both the FLA and the Divorce Act use the word “spouse.” Who qualifies as a spouse is very important to know for the purposes of child and spousal support applications.

You are a “spouse” if...

- You are married
  - you had a legal marriage ceremony (you will need an original marriage certificate to get a divorce order – under some circumstances you can start your divorce action without the marriage certificate)
- You are unmarried
  - you and your partner have lived together in a marriage-like relationship (common-law) for a continuous period of at least 2 years
- You have a child together
  - You are a spouse only for the purposes of child support and spousal support – does not apply for property and debt division.

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5. The FLA defines family violence as follows (examples are given to further illustrate each point):
• Physical abuse: Includes confinement or deprivation of the necessities of life but does not including the use of reasonable force to protect oneself or others from harm.

• Emotional/psychological abuse: Intimidation, harassment, coercion or threats (including threats against other persons, pets or property), unreasonable restriction on or prevention of a family member’s financial or personal autonomy. Stalking, intentional damage to property.

• Sexual abuse: Forcing or coercing sex (rape), insisting on sexual acts, accusing partner of unfaithfulness, assaulting breasts or genitals.

• Child’s direct or indirect exposure to family violence: “Best Interest of the Child” is the only consideration when deciding issues to be settled in court.

**Note:** Abuse is any behaviour that is used to gain and/or maintain power and control over another person. Abuse is never the fault of the victim.

6. Protecting your family: A women who has decided to leave her abusive relationship can apply for a **Family Law Protection Order** in either provincial court or Supreme Court if she or someone else in her family is at risk of family violence.

A protection order could contain the following conditions that your abuser must abide by:

• not to contact you, your children or other family members who may be at risk of abuse;
• to stay away from your home, your work, school or other places where you, your children or other family members spend time;
• not to follow you, your children or other family members;
• not to have a weapon; and/or
• the police can go with you to your home while you get your personal belongings, or make the person named in the order leave the family home.

**Note:** Breaching the conditions of a protection order is considered a criminal offence. Police can arrest and charge a person who has breached the conditions of an order.
7. Use the FLA fact sheet prepared by MOSAIC as well as the Family Law in BC Quick Reference Tool developed by the LSS to share the following information:

There are two different sets of laws that the courts use to decide family matters when parents no longer live together. The FLA is provincial while the Divorce Act is federal.

![Which Laws Apply to me?](image)

8. Financial support: When things don’t work out and a woman decides to leave, she needs to know the following:
   - Child support is the right of the child and generally lasts until he or she turns 19 years old.
   - The Federal Child Support Guidelines tables set the amount of child support that a parent or a former spouse who is a step-parent should pay. A Child Support Calculator can be accessed at [www.fmep.gov.bc.ca](http://www.fmep.gov.bc.ca).
• **Spousal support** is **not** a right. A spouse asking for spousal support must show that she should get it depending on circumstances during the marriage and since separation. All spouses can apply for spousal support including:
  - married spouses who have separated;
  - common-law spouses who have separated; and
  - people that have a child together, even though they have not lived together.

**Note:** It is important for the facilitator to convey to the participants that their child is entitled to parenting time with the other parent (pending a court order). A child cannot be prevented from seeing the other parent because he or she has not paid child support.

9. Before March 18, 2013, under the FRA, law only applied to married spouses, and almost all the property they owned could be divided. Now there are exceptions to what can be divided.

✓ Under the FLA, dividing property and sharing debts are now the same for married and unmarried spouses. The general rule is that family property and family debt will be divided equally between the spouses. However, if following the rules would be “significantly unfair,” the judge can decide on something else.

**Family Property:**

- all real and personal property owned by one or both spouses;
- all real and personal property that a spouse has beneficial interest in;
- any increase in the value of “excluded property” that happens during the relationship; and/or
- assets that are acquired with family property/money by either spouse after separation.

**Excluded Property:**

- assets acquired before the relationship started; and/or
- gifts, inheritances and certain types of court awards and insurance payments that were received during the relationship by one spouse.
Family Debt:
- debts that either spouse accumulated during the relationship that were still owing when they separated, or that have to do with taking care of family property after separation. In general, these debts must be shared equally, but this can be changed.

Again, it is necessary to share this information with women so that they are aware of their responsibilities in regards to the sharing of debts and their right to keep what they are entitled to – as well as their right to ask for their entitled share as identified under the FLA.

Activity 3: Overview of the Change to the Spousal Sponsorship Policy
Goals:
1. To highlight the changes that will impact women being sponsored.

Resources Required:
- Overview to the Change in Spousal Sponsorship Policy (MOSAIC)
- Legal Services Society (LSS) published and online materials

Time Required: 45 minutes
Activities:
1. Share with the women the most important change to the immigration policy, which may affect them. CIC has introduced the following change to the Spousal Sponsorship Policy (SSP):
   - For all spousal, common-law or conjugal sponsorship applications received on or after October 25, 2012, sponsored spouses who have been in a relationship with their sponsor for two years or less and do not have any children in common with their sponsor will be landed on a Conditional Permanent Residence Status.

2. Refer to MOSAIC’s Overview to the Change in Spousal Sponsorship Policy document and explain the following timeline, which shows the impacts of the policy on a newcomer:
It is important to let the women know that, if they have been sponsored by their husbands, their first five years in Canada are very critical for the following reasons:

- sponsored spouses land in Canada with a *Conditional Permanent Residence Status*;
- sponsored spouses must *live with their spouses for two years* before the removal of condition from Permanent Resident Status;
- the *sponsoring* spouse remains financially responsible for the sponsored spouse until the end of the *three-year undertaking period*, even if the relationship breaks down; and
- the sponsored spouse will be prevented from sponsoring a subsequent spouse for five years after landing, regardless of why the first relationship ended. This change came into effect on March 2, 2012.
Note: Only after co-habiting with their sponsor for two years will the conditions be removed.

It is important for all women to be aware that a sponsored spouse does not have to live in an abusive relationship – there is a way out, thanks to two important exceptions to the condition:

1. If a sponsor dies within the two-year period, the sponsored spouse becomes “permanent” and the condition is removed.
2. If there is evidence of abuse or neglect by the sponsor, or a failure to protect from abuse or neglect by a person related to the sponsor.

Note: In some cases, there may be an increase in risk of harm for women who sponsor their spouse to come to Canada. If the sponsored spouse has no intentions of continuing a relationship with his sponsor, it may put her at risk of harm or death.

If the sponsored individual is experiencing abuse or neglect, she will have to prove that the abuse/neglect is taking place by providing evidence. Women must be informed that they will need to collect and provide evidence of the abuse or neglect. Examples of such evidence are:

- Police or incident reports
- Letter or statement from women’s shelter or domestic abuse support organization
- Letter or statement from family services clinic
- Letter, statement or report from a medical doctor or a health-care professional
- Sworn statement (affidavit)
- Photos showing the victim with injuries
- Voicemail or hard copies of email messages
- Affidavit from a friend, family member, neighbour, co-worker, staff members of support agencies, law enforcement, etc.
3. Aware of the complexities facing immigrant and refugee women, the reality remains that many will be reluctant to get help and report the abuse. It is important to share with women the option of utilizing any exceptions to the condition that apply to them and documenting the abuse, as well as being aware of their rights and having the right information and resources in their hands. Abused women who are still within the two-year period of the Conditional Permanent Residency Status can make use of the exceptions to the conditions and will need to be prepared to do the following:

- Report the abuse to police
- Report the abuse to their doctor and/or social worker
- Keep a log (if it is safe to do so)
- Report to CIC
- Talk to community workers

Get help! Explain to women the various resources available to them, and clearly identify those that exist in your community. It is important for women to understand the different types of services available to them, as well as the objectives of relevant/applicable programs.
The following list gives some examples of services available; service providers will need to prepare an up-to-date list of resources relevant to their own community.

**Stopping the Violence (STV) Counselling Program:** Free and confidential counselling services for women who have or are experiencing any form of domestic abuse.

**Victim Services:** Short-term emotional support and guidance for victims of crime or trauma.

**Victim Link B.C.:** Phone assistance available in multiple languages 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at 1-800-563-0808.

**Legal Aid:** This non-profit organization provides legal services to people who can’t afford a lawyer, as well as legal education and information.

**Legal Advocates:** These workers can help with and advocate most family law matters.

- [www.legalaid.bc.ca](http://www.legalaid.bc.ca)
- [www.clicklaw.bc.ca](http://www.clicklaw.bc.ca)
- [http://bcfamilylawresource.blogspot.ca/](http://bcfamilylawresource.blogspot.ca/)
- [http://www.lss.bc.ca/](http://www.lss.bc.ca/)

**Income Assistance:** This government ministry provides financial support to individuals who cannot work or are having difficulties finding work. Applicants must meet certain criteria to be eligible for assistance.

**Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEP):** If a maintenance order is put in place through family court, the payee is responsible for providing financial support to the primary caregiver of the child. If the payee fails to provide ongoing ordered maintenance, FMEP workers can assist by enforcing payment on the payee.

**Court Services:** Various services available, including help from family justice counsellors.

**Transition Homes, Safe Houses and Second Stage Housing:** Safe places for women to stay if they are fleeing a situation of domestic abuse.
Activity 4: Wrapping up
Build in enough time to offer the women an opportunity to ask questions, clarify information and engage in discussion. Some women may want to share their experience or knowledge with the others, or meet one-on-one with the facilitator.

Activity 5: Feedback from participants
Develop and distribute a workshop survey to obtain feedback from participants. Find out what they thought of the workshop and/or if more/additional information is needed.

Conclusion:
Women need to be reassured that violence against women in relationships is not a private family matter. Help is available, whether the victim wants to stay in the relationship or leave!

Help to identify and make available information on resources and options available to women. Create a safe environment that includes trust and confidentiality via an open-door policy to embracing diversity. Offer hope and empowerment, support and easy access to safety and resources so that women can lead healthy, violence-free lives. As service providers, we need to allow and encourage women to make their own informed and autonomous decisions.
WORKS CITED


MOSAIC. There is No Honour in Violence: Ensuring Safety in Our Own Homes and Communities – Facilitator Guide and Resources Manual for Training Front-line Service Providers. 2015.


PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ASSAULTS, or threats to commit them, are the most apparent forms of domestic violence and are usually the actions that allow others to become aware of the problem. However, regular use of other abusive behaviors by the batterer, when reinforced by one or more acts of physical violence, make up a larger system of abuse. Although physical assaults may occur only once or occasionally, they instill threat of future violent attacks and allow the abuser to take control of the woman’s life and circumstances.

The Power & Control diagram is particularly helpful in understanding the overall pattern of abusive and violent behaviors, which are used by a batterer to establish and maintain control over his partner. Very often, one or more violent incidents are accompanied by an array of these other types of abuse. They are less easily identified, yet firmly establish a pattern of intimidation and control in the relationship.

DIAGRAMS

POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

Physical and sexual assaults, or threats to commit them, are the most apparent forms of domestic violence and are usually the actions that allow others to become aware of the problem. However, regular use of other abusive behaviors by the batterer, when reinforced by one or more acts of physical violence, make up a larger system of abuse. Although physical assaults may occur only once or occasionally, they instill threat of future violent attacks and allow the abuser to take control of the woman’s life and circumstances.

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512.489.9950 (phone and fax) • www.ndsv.org
POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

Domestic abuse is reinforced by social beliefs which give men the right to dominate women.

1. Physical violence
2. One-sided power games
3. Mind games
4. Using restrictions
5. Isolation
6. Unkindness Violation of trust
7. Degradation
8. Separation abuse
9. Using social institutions
10. Denial Minimising Blaming
11. Using the children
12. Economic abuse
13. Sexual abuse
14. Symbolic aggression
15. Domestic slavery

Power and Control

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IMMIGRANT POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

Produced and distributed by:

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Adapted from original wheel by:
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512.477.0074 (phone and fax) • www.ndsv.org
ADVOCACY EMPOWERMENT WHEEL

RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY:
All discussions must occur in private, without other family members present. This is essential in building trust and ensuring her safety.

BELIEVE HER AND VALIDATE HER EXPERIENCES:
Listen to her and believe her. Acknowledge her feelings and let her know she is not alone; many women have similar experiences.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE INJUSTICE:
The violence perpetrated against her is not her fault. No one deserves to be abused.

HELP HER PLAN FOR FUTURE SAFETY:
What has she tried in the past to keep herself safe? Is it working? Does she have a place to go if she needs to escape?

PROMOTE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES:
Know the resources in your community. Is there a hotline and shelter for battered women?

RESPECT HER AUTONOMY:
Respect her right to make decisions in her own life, when she is ready. She is the expert in her life.

Empowerment Through Advocacy

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THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

Tension Building (Longest Phase)
Victim is nervous around their partner in this phase. There are many small situations of physical or emotional abuse. In this phase the victim cannot

Honeymoon Phase
The abuser makes promises, apologizes, and says “I’m sorry”. Gifts may be given during this phase to show romance.

Explosion
The real and full abuse which includes physical, emotional, sexual, etc.
READING MATERIALS

Facilitator Guide and Resources Manual for Training Frontline Service Providers: *There is No Honour in Violence – Ensuring Safety in Our Own Homes and Communities*

“Imkaan” Presentation on So Called ‘Honour-Based’ Violence, by Marai Larasi MBE, Executive Director, Imkaan

Family Law in BC – Quick Reference Tool, Legal Services Society, March 2013

Principles and assumptions for developing cultural competence

- All cultures contain a spectrum of conditions: on one end there may be a perceived widespread acceptance of domestic and sexual violence, while on the other end, there are long standing traditions of resistance to violence against women and children.
- Survivors come from different communities and possess different values and norms; each person is unique, with experience and responses shaped by a host of factors.
- It is important to work against institutional disparities that adversely affect underserved communities, especially working for equal access to services.
- Competency must be at both the individual and institutional level and balancing flexibility with standardization.
- Training must be provided to advocates and professionals and must be an ongoing process of increasing complexity rather than a one time event.
- Competency is complex, and includes self-awareness of diverse filters and biases that influence decisions and ways of seeing.
- View critically offered information on cultures.
- Reach out and collaborate with different communities; encourage diverse perspectives.
- Culture cannot and should not be used as an excuse for domestic and sexual violence.

(Edited from ‘The Culture Handbook’ by Sujata Warrior)
Do’s and don’ts for frontline staff

Best Practices (Do’s)

- Take the victim seriously if she feels threatened, putting the priority on her safety
- Adopt an approach that is centred around the victim and her empowerment
- Make a thorough assessment of the situation, including the possibility of multiple perpetrators within the family and community
- Hold the interview in a place that is safe and secure for the victim, ensuring her confidentiality
- If need be, call on an independent and trustworthy interpreter (not her children or siblings)
- Document the abuse, including any history of violence, and keep this detailed information safe and confidential
- Work with the victim to assess her needs as well as her resources/strengths
- Direct the victim to an appropriate resource that will respect the way she “does culture” (i.e.: language, food, gender, etc.)
- Apply the “one chance rule,” i.e.: consider the person asking for help may not have another chance because “later” could be too late. Swift intervention and/or steering to resources could be needed

Practices to Avoid (Don’ts)

- Sending the victim away without intervention/resources is never a good option
- Racial discrimination through stereotyping/essentialism, i.e.: focusing on her culture instead of her abuse
- Violating confidentiality by reporting a victim’s statements to her husband or other members of the family or community, including community or religious leaders, or by letting them see the abuse report (even accidentally)
- Using the husband, a child or other member of the family (unless specifically requested by the victim) as an interpreter or allowing them to be present when you question the victim
- Leaving messages for the victim that could alert her husband, family or members of the community about her allegations, putting the victim or others in a risk situation

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(Adapted slightly and reprinted with permission from Honour Crime: From Indignation to Action, 2013, Quebec Counsel on the Status of Women)

Reprinted and modified from the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, 2013 Presentation
Working Together: Engaging communities to end violence against women and girls
Preventing and reducing violence against women and girls in the name of “honour”

RISK ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

This risk assessment framework was developed as part of a Status of Women Canada funded project entitled Preventing and reducing violence against women and girls in the name of “honour.” The objective of the project was to develop and implement a multi-agency strategy to benefit women and girls from immigrant communities who are experiencing or at-risk of violence committed against them in the name of “honour.” For more information on the project, please visit www.honourforwomen.ca.

SUMMARY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RISK FACTORS
(WITH SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ASSESSING A PATTERN OF VIOLENCE COMMITTED IN THE NAME OF SO-CALLED HONOUR)

This risk assessment framework expands standard violence against women assessments to include questions that draw out the patterns and dynamics related to violence committed in the name of ‘honour.’ In particular, questions draw out dynamics within the wider family and the community that the woman might belong to. This gives a broad sense of safety and risk and also addresses questions of collusion and active participation of multiple family members and wider community members in threatening and abusive behaviour.

It draws on, and expands, risk assessment questions from diverse sources including the Vancouver Police Department and Best Practices for Stopping the Violence Counselling Programs (2006)

The assessment framework uses the term ‘abuser’; referring to the primary abuser. It is important to remember, however, that a significant feature of violence committed in the name of ‘honour’ is that there can be multiple abusers within the family and also that community members who are not direct relatives might be involved. It is possible that the family is being pressured and threatened externally to commit violence.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenting Situation</th>
<th>Describe the presenting situation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can you give me more details about exactly what happened in the incident(s) you describe? (Consider what is necessary to know in terms of the woman’s safety and in terms of understanding the dynamics at play).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is there any other person in the family who has threatened you? Any other person you are afraid of? How about in the extended family beyond the home?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is there anyone else in the family you think might be in danger at this time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Who knows you are here? Who would be supportive of you being here? How would they show that support? Would there be any consequences to them for showing their support?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Who in your family would not be supportive? Why?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is the abuser’s attitude toward the police and the law? Is he afraid of them or does he disregard them? How did he learn these beliefs? What about other people in the family? Do they agree or disagree?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you feel threatened by people outside the family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What do you think about why this is happening?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Family Situation</td>
<td>• Is this the first time you have been (hurt or frightened) or has this happened before?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are you currently pregnant?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are you currently living with your partner? If not, when did you leave and what has happened since then? Are you currently involved with someone else?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have there been separations in the past? Has there been talk of separation in the present?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• For adult children: How do you perceive your relationship to your family members? Has this changed over time? In what way? What was your relationship with (father, mother, siblings) like before this last situation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Status of the Relationship</td>
<td>Note: Research indicates that an actual or pending separation, as well as a history of domestic violence in the current relationship, is the two most significant risk factors associated with an</td>
</tr>
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</table>
increased severity (escalation) of future violence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIFIC VIOLENCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Threats</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has the abuser ever threatened to kill or harm you, a family member, another person, children or a pet? How about threats against members of the family who don’t live in the home?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do you believe these threats?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How do you think the abuser) would go about it? Do you think anyone would help him?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has anyone else in the family made such threats or agreed with the person making them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have there been threats coming from people outside of the family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weapons</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have objects been used to hurt you (or others?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the abuser have weapons? What are they? Do others have access to them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strangling, Choking, Burning, Drowning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has the abuser ever strangled, choked, suffocated burned or attempted to drown you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stalking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has the abuser displayed jealous behaviours, stalked or harassed you? What about others in your family? Have they show jealousy or harassed you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is this behaviour escalating? Is it persistent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has anyone ever stalked you? Do you know who this person was? Do they have a relationship to anyone in your extended family?</td>
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</table>

**Note:** Social science experts say that where there are controlling coercive behaviours like stalking, the intensity and lethality of violence often escalates after the complainant leaves the relationship.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forced Sex</th>
<th>Hurting Others</th>
<th>Control/Isolation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Does the person do or say things of a sexual nature that makes you feel bad or ask you to do something that you don’t want to do or that physically hurts you?</td>
<td>• Has the abuser hurt other members of the family in any of these ways?</td>
<td>• Do you feel you are being policed at home or watched in the community? Who do you think is doing that? How? Do you think they are sharing that information with others in the family? Who do you think they might be sharing that with?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Are your movements outside the home restricted? How? Have there been attempts to confine you to your home? Who has been involved in these? Did anyone else support these restrictions?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• For example, have you ever been prohibited from going to school or work as a punishment? Do you have access to your identify papers such as your passport? Has your use of the internet or telephone been restricted?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What are the consequences if a family member cannot reach you when they expect to, or if you do not arrive home at an expected time?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you think that (name of person/people) is suspicious of your behaviour? Is he jealous?</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>• Are there any restrictions on what you can or cannot wear or who you can or cannot socialize with?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• What happens if you do not comply?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Is there any attempt to control which friends or family members you can visit?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you ever feel that you are being punished? What are you being told about why you are being punished? What do you understand about why this is happening?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Has anyone in your family had to do something that they didn’t want to do? (IE Arranged marriage, FGM, etc.)? Why was it seen as important that they do this?</td>
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</table>
**COMMUNITY INTERVENTION and RESOURCES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIOR INTERVENTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Have the police ever come to your house? What brought them there? How did the abuser and others in the family respond?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Has the abuser (or anyone else in the family) ever been charged?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Has a restraining order ever been issues? Was it violated?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have you ever gone to court? What was your experience there? Did you feel that there were limits on what you could say there? Can you explain?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have you or anyone in your family had contact with any kind of community or social services, outside of the police? Was there contact a secret from others in the family? Why? Did anyone find out? Were there consequences?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What was helpful and what was not? Did you feel understood? In what way did you feel understood or misunderstood? What do you think I need to know that would help me understand your situation?</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSSIBLE RESOURCES INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE FAMILY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What is the safest place for you outside the family? (IE religious institutions, education institutions, community organizations, etc.). Who do you feel safest with inside that organization?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are there people not affiliated with those organizations that you also feel safe with and that you trust?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Has anyone helped you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is there anyone you consider a friend whom you could feel comfortable telling the truth about your situation?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who does your family trust? How do you feel about those people?</td>
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